

IRANIANISM

SUNITI KUMAR CHATTERJI



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The Asiatic Society Monograph Series Volume XXII

IRANIANISM

IRANIAN CULTURE AND ITS IMPACT
ON THE WORLD
FROM ACHAEMENIAN TIMES

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1 PARK STREET, CALCUTTA 700 016

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133042

First Published in 1972
Reprinted in 1993

Published by (Reprinted edition)
Dr. Chandan Roy Chaudhuri
The General Secretary
The Asiatic Society
1 Park Street
Calcutta 700 016

Reprinted at
Arunima Printing Works
81 Simla Street
Calcutta 700 006

Price :Rs. 30.00

FOREWORD

Suniti Kumar Chatterji, National Professor of India in Humanities read and discussed a paper at the World Congress of Iranologists on 3rd September 1970. The paper was published in 1972 under the Monograph Series of the Asiatic Society, Vol. XXII.

The monograph deals with the Iranian Culture and its Impact on the World from Achaemenian Times. It may be mentioned that the Achaemenian empire was the first great political and cultural achievement of a people of Indo-European race and language. Scholars interested would be helpful in regard to the History of Herodotos— the Achaemenian Empire, the Development of an 'Iranianism', the Impact of Iranian Imperialism on India, the Cultural Exchange between India and Iran, and the History of Iran and the World of Asia, Europe and Africa, etc.

I have the pleasure to bring out the Reprinted Edition of the monograph on great demand of the academic world.

Calcutta
22nd March 1993

Chandan Roy Chaudhuri
General Secretary

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IRANIANISM:

IRANIAN CULTURE AND ITS IMPACT ON THE WORLD FROM ACHAEMENIAN TIMES*

by

SUNITI KUMAR CHATTERJI

National Professor of India in Humanities

1. *The History of Herodotos—the Achaemenian Empire*

That great Old Greek classic of international history and humanism, the History of Herodotos, in a most natural and spontaneous way established, among other things, the world implications of the ancient Iranian achievement during the period of its inception, its political apogee in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. The narrative of this history, so forceful in its simplicity and so convincing and so enchanting in its unadorned beauty, forms a brilliant record of this achievement. With the naïve curiosity of the Hellenic people just at the time of their intellectual adolescence, when they were at the threshold of their own supreme glory, and with the old-world humility of a young people eager to see and to learn, Herodotos has left for posterity as detailed a picture of the great things which were being done by the Iranians as was possible to draw from the outside. This was a picture in which his own people through the compulsion of circumstances was forced to have a place, and this has enriched his sober account with a warmth and a sincerity which form some of the great virtues of his style. Through Herodotos's book (as it can be said of all similar great works), all the great things that were said and done by all participants in the great drama, of which the climax is the emergence of the Greek miracle on the stage of human history, have become exalted into a great heritage for mankind as 'a possession for ever'. But the factual aspect of it is there, to fascinate and to edify us with the bare outlines of the story of an immortal achievement—the role of Iran in the march of civilization; and these outlines have been supplemented by newer materials, archaeological, literary and otherwise, both from the Iranian people itself and from other peoples. As an almost contemporary of the great events in their latter phase, Herodotos's statements have a unique value.

It is well known that the Achaemenian empire was the first great political and cultural achievement of a people of Indo-European race and language. Previously, other and more ancient civilized peoples of antiquity had occupied the stage and had played their parts—the Sumerians and the Egyptians and the Semites (as Akkadians, Babylonians and Assyrians, and as Syrians, Ugarites and Canaanites), besides some other peoples outside the orbit of these—the Asianics and the Aegians, the Urartians, and the Indus Valley people (Early Dravidians, related to the Asianics and the Aegians?), and far away in the East, the Chinese of the Shang and

* Paper read and discussed on 3 September 1970 at the World Congress of Iranologists, from 31 August to 7 September 1966, Tehran, Iran.

Chou periods. They had built their own civilizations and their respective religions and forms of *Weltanschauung*; and they were making, by their individual and corporate action, the extent of human endeavour and civilization grow from more to more. Some of them through their political and military organization were also spreading their own influence afar, bringing it to bear upon other peoples. The dwellers by the Nile and by the Euphrates and the Tigris had moreover formed stable kingdoms and even powerful empires, which were quite remarkable achievements in their time.

2. *The Indo-Europeans : Different Branches : The Aryan or Indo-Iranian Branch*

The Indo-Europeans, after they were characterized in their speech and culture in the Eurasian plains to the South of the Ural Mountains by 2500 B.C., began to spread West and South, and to settle in Western and Central as well as Southern Europe, and also in the lands of the Near East and Asia Minor. Through the Caucasus Mountains they penetrated into Northern Mesopotamia as well as into Asia Minor. They had developed a culture and a mentality which had some very noteworthy and even quite admirable characteristics (in its sane and sober approach to things and in its graciousness) which were uncommon in the ancient world. This mentality of the Indo-Europeans was intimately connected with their language. In material civilization, they were not so much advanced as the Egyptians and the peoples of Mesopotamia. The Indo-Europeans were partly nomadic, living on their flocks of sheep and herds of cattle and horses and swine, and also partly agricultural, raising crops of barley, and rye, and keeping bees for honey. They did not have any great architecture in stone or brick, their buildings being all of timber. After they learned the use of metals—copper and tin which were turned to bronze, and then iron, besides gold and silver, they developed some high and fine type of metal-craft. But they had some sane and humane notions about man and God and the unseen world, and about the relations between man and man and between man and woman; and they were well organized, and had the virtue of discipline which enabled them to develop a well-ordered society.

The Primitive Indo-Europeans during the most ancient period of their history would appear to have been in close contact with two other peoples of allied origin—the Finno-Ugrians to their north and west, and the Altaics to their east. The Finno-Ugrians, ancestors of the Lapps, the Finns and the Esths, and of the peoples like the Voguls, the Ostyaks, the Cheremiss, the Mordvins, etc., living in Russia, were in a very primitive state, and in most departments of life they would appear to have been borrowers from the Indo-Europeans, who had a higher culture than these *tundra* and *taiga* dwelling nomads. The Altaics, who were the ancestors of the Turks and Mongols, Manchus and Yakuts of later times, had, as a people living primarily on stock-raising (they had flocks of sheep and herds of horses and two-humped camels, to start with), had some points of agreement in their cultural background with the Indo-Europeans (the latter were similarly sheep- and horse-breeders, and maintained pigs—the cow and the goat seem to have come to both the Indo-Europeans and the Altaics from the southern lands of Western Asia at a later period). Their *milieu* of life was very much the same, only the Indo-Europeans had knowledge of agriculture—they tilled the earth with the plough drawn by oxen or horses and raised barley and rye, which the Altaics did not; and their social and cultural atmospheres agreed with each other to some extent (patriarchal society, worship of the Sky Father, etc.). Both of these peoples learned a

lot from the Sumerians, the Semites and the Asianic peoples, who had a higher material civilization, in later times.

After the Primitive Indo-Europeans (or rather, *Indo-Hittites*, when we consider them in their pre-Indo-European stage, which has been opened up to us by the science of historical linguistics through the discovery of the Hittite language as it was current in Asia Minor during the middle of the second millennium B.C.) were established in some sort of a national culture in their area of characterization, possibly in the Eurasian plains, by 2500 B.C., they began to spread out from their original homeland. It is very likely that even before that their exodus started, tribe by tribe. The Hittite or Kanisian people would appear to have been the first to leave the main body of the oldest times, who antedated the Indo-Hittites. They came down South through the Caucasus Mountains into Northern Mesopotamia, and from there they spread into Asia Minor, where, much mingled with the earlier Asianic people and with the Sumerians and the Akkadians, and the Assyrio-Babylonians, they were transformed into the Hittites of history, who flourished during the middle of the second millennium B.C. As Hittites, they preserved the ancient language in some of its most noteworthy traits, phonetic and otherwise. The Hittite language was a sister of Primitive Indo-European; and when we consider some archaic characteristics of Hittite, we shall have to say that Hittite was an elder sister of Primitive Indo-European, and consequently an aunt or a cousin rather than a sister of the different branches of Indo-European, like Indo-Iranian, Greek, Italic, Celtic, Germanic, Baltic and Slavic. We have not much to do with the Hittite people and their language, as these remained in isolation for a long number of centuries. When Hittite came in touch with the early Indo-Iranian or Aryan, early Greek and early Thracio-Phrygian (later Armenian) languages and cultures, it could not influence these latter in any appreciable way. But Hittite religion, probably Asianic in origin (or strongly influenced by the latter), with its cult of a great active Mother Goddess and her passive or neutral and rather inactive counterpart, a Father God—Ma or Cybele, and Atthis, as the later Greeks called them—appears to have influenced the Hellenic branch of the Indo-Europeans and the Indo-Aryan branch of India (the latter only indirectly, it would seem, through Dravidians who were a Mediterranean people of the Pelasgian or Aegean orbit, and the Dravidians appear to have taken this cult to India and made it, jointly with the Indo-Aryans, one of the predominant forms of Indian religion).

Leaving aside the consideration of the Hittite question, we may take up the case of the Aryan or Indo-Iranian Branch of the Primitive Indo-Europeans. They are represented now by the Iranians (including the Ossetes, Kurds, Baloches, Afghans and the Pamir Iranians, besides the Persians) on the one hand, and by sections of the North Indian Aryan speakers—the Dardic tribes—and Vedic Aryans on the other. From the records of the Assyrio-Babylonians and the Hittites and some Asianic peoples, it would appear that this particular branch of the Primitive Indo-Europeans known to present-day investigators as the Aryans or Indo-Iranians first emerged into history, i.e., were found moving among the more advanced dwellers of Asia Minor and Mesopotamia and taking part as a new racial and linguistic element in the events of the area, from after 2500 B.C. They were getting to be known to the earlier peoples of the regions from about 2200 B.C. This branch of the Indo-Europeans is believed to have crossed from their original homeland in Southern Russia through the Caucasus Mountains into Mesopotamia, and probably they were at first slowly infiltrating themselves, rather than coming down as invaders or conquerors

in appreciably large numbers. The various branches of the Primitive Indo-Europeans, with special developments of the original Indo-European language, which spread west and south from their original home, in later times came to be known, each branch (or section or tribe or group) by a specialized name. Frequently these names were their own, but they also were given to them by others, their kinsmen or neighbours. Thus it is likely that one group calling itself 'the Wandering People or Tribe' (*qel-t-oi, q^hel-t-oi) came to be known among themselves and also among others as *Celts*. Another group called itself 'the Strong or Growing Tribe' (*teutoi, *θiudai), and they were known, as an entire community, both to themselves and to the Romans by names derived from this word (*peod*, *diot*, *diot-isk*, *Deut-sch*, *Theot-iscus*, *Teut-ones*, etc.). The tribe which came down to Greece probably by 1500 B.C. (or even earlier) called themselves 'the Dancing or Tripping or Marching People', and they were the *Hellenes* (Indo-European *selyenes, from root, sel=Sanskrit sal, sar, sr 'to move about'). Another group came similarly to be known as 'the High or Mighty Tribe', the *Briges* or *Phruges*, i.e., the Phrygians (*bhrgewes=Sanskrit *Bhrgavas* < *Bhrgu*-). The Slav branch later took up the name of 'the Famous or Glorious or Exalted People' (*slava* 'glory', Sanskrit *śravas*, Indo-European *klewes). The Balts came to be known as 'the White People, or the People living in the White Snow-lands' (Lithuanian *baltas*, Latvian *balts* 'white' from Indo-European *bha-l-tos 'shining, white'). The Armenians also took up the name of 'Lords, or Masters' (Armenian *hai*=Indo-European *potis, Sanskrit *patis*). So this particular branch—the Indo-Aryans—adopted a name the exact meaning of which is not clear—the name was *ārya* or *ariya*, which might originally have meant 'belonging to a Wealthy or Worthy (or Fighting People)', rather than 'Tillers or Farmers', and the name quite early came to mean 'Noble', and words connected with *ārya* are found in Hellenic, and in Celtic, and possibly also in Germanic (see H. W. Bailey, *Iranian Arya and Dāha*, 'Transactions of the Philological Society, London', Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1959, pp. 71-115).

In a similar way we cannot postulate a 'national name' which the Primitive Indo-Europeans might have used for themselves—there are no sure data for this. Some present-day scholars have used the word *Wiros or *Wiros to indicate the Primitive Indo-European people, *wiros being a reconstructed word for 'Man' in the Primitive Indo-European speech, the source of Sanskrit *vīras*, Greek *hērōs*, Latin *vīr*, Old Irish *fer* and Old English *wer*. This is now used as a scientific term, and has not become popular.

These Aryans, as an Indo-European people, thus first settled down, in their various tribes and sub-tribes, each with its special name, first in Northern Mesopotamia. They slowly spread among the settled masses of the local population. As a well-organized and masterful people, they were soon able to make their mark among the local inhabitants. Their bravery and warlike virtues helped them to make an impression on all the nations they met. In their military prowess, what helped them most was that they came with the horse from their original homeland. The non-Indo-European peoples of the south had the donkey, the camel and the ox, but not the horse, in the most ancient times. On the other hand, one great Indo-European contribution in the early progress of civilization was that they were probably the first people to have tamed the horse. (In the same way, it was in all probability the pre-Aryan Austine people of India who first tamed the elephant.) The Indo-Europeans put the horse to use as a means of quick locomotion by riding it or making it draw sleds

and carts. This revolutionized early history by making possible quick movement of peoples (first, of the Indo-European or Aryan people, and then of the Semites, the Egyptians, and others who got the horse from the Northerners). In a similar way, the Northerners—the Indo-Europeans themselves—had obtained the cow (Indo-European *gwous, *gu = Sumerian *gud*, *gu*) and probably also the goat from the Southerners, centuries earlier. The Indo-Europeans in most of their branches can very well be described as a horse-loving people, particularly the Iranians and their close brothers the Indian Aryans, besides the Greeks, the Italians, the Celts, the Germans and the Balts. One of the oldest Assyrio-Babylonian documents in connexion with the Indo-Europeans of Mesopotamia, the Indo-Iranians, before their full emergence into the early morning of ancient history, gives us some details about their preoccupation with the horse. Indo-Aryan terms on horse-breaking, like **aika-wartana*, **tera-* or *tri-wartana*, **panca-wartana*, **satta-*, i.e., *sapta-wartana* and *wasana*, are among the oldest Indo-Aryan words we have found, from Assyrio-Babylonian documents (the words meaning, respectively, 'one course', 'three courses', 'five courses', 'seven courses' and 'a stop').

3. *The Indo-Iranians (Aryans): their Early History*

Aryan or Indo-Iranian settlements started in Northern Mesopotamia, one may be permitted to assume, from round about 2000 B.C., and in about three to four centuries they were able to carve out places for themselves as a *Herrenvolk* or ruling people, supplying the directing aristocracy in some little states in which they were established. The Mitanni (settled among the local Asianic Hurrian people) who formed a powerful ruling nation in North Mesopotamia in the fifteenth-fourteenth centuries B.C. are to be mentioned, and then there were the Kassites, as a branch of the Aryans, whose rulers bore Aryan names, and whose gods had Indo-Iranian affinities—the Kassites had conquered Babylon in the eighteenth century B.C. and ruled there for some centuries before they were absorbed by the local people. So long as that did not happen, these Indo-Iranians preserved their language, and some at least of their gods, whose worship and whose names were preserved or perpetuated in the Vedas and the Avesta, the oldest Aryan religious documents. The Vedas and the Avesta of course represent later and more developed phases of the Aryan religion in India and Iran, but a good deal of the original Aryan (Indo-Iranian) religion is preserved in them. Thus the Kassites worshipped, among other gods who were evidently of local Babylonian origin, *Šuriasš* = Sanskrit *Sūrya*, or the Sun-God (in the Semitic *Šamaš*); *Maruttaš* = the Wind-God (Sanskrit *Marut-*); *Burias*, also a Wind-God = Greek *Boreas*; and *Šimalia*, i.e., *Žimalia*, the Queen of the Snows, probably a Mountain Goddess (cf. Skt. *himāli* = 'snow range', earlier **Žhimali*). The Mitannian gods *Mitra*, *Aruna* or *Varuna* and *Nāsatiya* are found as prominent deities in both the Vedas and the Avesta (*Miθras* = *Mitra*, and *Naonhaiθya* = *Nāsatiya*). The names of the Mitanni kings are remarkable in giving specimens of the Indo-Iranian language (although disguised in the Babylonian script and pronunciation)—e.g., *Dužratha* 'He of the evil or destructive Chariot' (= Skt. *Dūratha*; written in the Babylonian script as *Tušratta*), *Aitagama* 'A deer in speed', *Rta-smara* 'Remembering the Truth' (written *Artašumara*), *Sauksatra* 'Of a Good Kingdom' (written *Šauššattara*), *Subandhu* 'Good Relation' (written *Šubandi*), *Sutrna* 'Good

Rushes' (= *Šutarna*), **Prdāšva* 'Horse like a Leopard' (= *Biridašwa*), *S(u)var-datta* 'Sun-given' (*Šuwardata*), etc., etc.

It may be noted that until very recently it was believed that the oldest specimens of an Indo-European language were to be found among the Indo-Iranians (Aryans), in the Indian Vedas going back to the twelfth-tenth centuries, Greek as in the poems of Homer coming next (ninth century B.C.). Pre-Vedic and Pre-Avestan Aryan is now found to be represented in the few names and words discovered in Mesopotamian and Asia Minor documents written in Assyrio-Babylonian cuneiform as mentioned above, and these go back to the fourteenth century B.C. The recent discovery of what has been called 'Mycenian Greek' by the English archaeologists and linguists Ventris and Chadwick have taken the antiquity of Greek back to the fourteenth century B.C.; these discoveries have brought specimens of Aryan and of Hellenic both, as the oldest forms of Indo-European (barring Hittite), to the same age, i.e., the fifteenth-fourteenth centuries B.C.

A specific Indo-Iranian or Aryan culture, with its own religious notions and ideals, its rituals of worship and sacrifice through the fire, and its special outlook upon life and things, certainly developed between 2000 and 1500 B.C., on the basis of the Primitive Indo-European world combined with what was taken over from the local peoples, Sumerian, Semitic, Urartian, Asianic and others. The Aryan tribes were linked up with each other by their language, no doubt, but in other matters, in the midst of alien surroundings of various sorts, changes were coming up, and sometimes most remarkable changes, separating group from group, tribe from tribe, and even clan from clan. Sections of the Aryans (or Indo-Iranians) were coming down to Mesopotamia and Western Iran in a continuous stream, extending over some centuries, from their *nidus* in the Caucasian regions and in South Russia, and for Iran and India they represented different strata of the same people, established one after the other. Sometimes these different groups or strata were merged and assimilated into one group, and sometimes they continued to keep distinct or separate. The tribal names of the Indo-Europeans were distinctive for the several branches, as suggested above. Within one big tribe there were sections and subsections. Many subsections developed new names, in Mesopotamia and Iran itself, as much as in distant India.

When certain groups of the Aryans came to India and settled there, in the North-West Frontier, in the Panjab and in Kashmir, in the Western Himalayan tracts and in the Upper Ganges Valley, they brought with them some of their old names which became established in India. These are generally not found in Iran, though just a few tribal or sub-tribal names are common to both Iran and India. The original religion of the Aryans, before they split up into the two main bodies of the Iranians and the Indians, is found at least partly preserved in the Vedas and in the Avesta (the *Yāsts*, and the ritual texts). It has been suggested that there was a religious split among the Aryan tribes in Iran, into the *Daiva* (*Dēva* = *Daēva*) worshippers and the *Asura* (*Asura* = *Ahura*) worshippers. But this happened how, when and where, is not known. Before this split the Indian Aryans and the Iranian Aryans undoubtedly felt as one people. In the borderland between India and Iran, in what is now Afghanistan, Iranians and Indians shaded off one into the other, but the bulk of the Aryan tribes who arrived in and settled in India did not appear to have left representatives in Iran. The Alinas, the Anus, the Uśīnaras, the Gandhāras, the Turvaśas, the Tṛtsus, the Druhyus, the Purus, the Matsyas,

the Yadus, the Śibis, the Sātvants, the Sṛñjayas and a number of others have no tribal relations in Iran. But some tribes or clans had connexions or namesakes outside India also. Thus the Bhr̥gu clan of Brahmans in India bears the same name as the Phrygians (Briges, Bruges, Phruges) in Asia Minor who were an Indo-European people but not Aryan or Indo-Iranian. For the Yakṣus, the Turvaśas, and the Śigrus of the R̥gveda, distant Indo-European (non-Indo-Iranian) affinities have been proposed (by Harit Krishna Deb in the 'Studia Indo-Iranica—Festschrift W. Geiger', Leipzig, 1931, reprinted in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Letters, Vol. XIV, No. 2, 1948, as 'Vedic India and Minoan Men': H. K. Deb sought to equate *Śigr̥u* with *Šakarša*, *Yakṣu* with *Axaiwaša* or *Akhuioi*, and *Turvaśa* for *Turva-vaśa* with *Turša* and *Wašša*, as names of Indo-European peoples noted in Egyptian documents of c. 1200 B.C.). The Kambōjas in North-west India, from the evidence of the Vedic linguistic treatise the *Nirukta*, had Iranian affinities: in their dialect, which was nevertheless regarded as being within the Sanskrit orbit, the Kambōja root *śav* meant 'to go, to move' and this is just an Iranian form, the equivalent of the Sanskrit root *cyav*. The name *Kambōja* (or *Kambuja*) recalls the Old Persian name *Kambujiya*: this name in both India and Iran has not been properly explained—although Jean Przyluski sought to find an Austric (Kol or Munda) affinity for it—a tribal name on the Indian frontier, and a personal name in Iran. Similarly, *Kuru* is a tribal name (from that of a king Kuru) in India, but in Iran it never had a tribal appellation—it always indicated a person, and it seems to have been a popular personal name. The tribal name *Kāśi*, found in the extreme east of ancient Aryandom in India, was already the famous name of a powerful tribe of Aryans in Mesopotamia and Iran (the *Kašši*, or Kassites). The Mitanni Aryans appear to have called themselves *Marya* (= 'Men'), a word which is found in the Vedic speech also in the same sense. The word for 'Man' as their own tribal name among a people is found widely all over the world, among all sorts of races. The *Parśu- *Pārśva* ('the Sickle or Battle-axe Tribe') in India, not at all a powerful group, is one of the most famous and puissant in Iran (*Pārśva* > *Pārśa*), and this name was extended to the entire Iranian people, and it is found in its Hellenized form in words like *Persis* and *Persia*. And we have the *Madra* tribe in India, and the *Mada* and the earlier *Manda* in Iran and Mesopotamia. These names, derived from the same root *mad* 'to be exhilarated, to get drunk', seem to refer to a single and a very powerful section of the Aryans (Indo-Iranians) whose history goes back to times before 2000 B.C. (from the evidence of Mesopotamian Assyrios-Babylonian inscriptions) and whose ramifications spread from Western Iran to Northern Panjab, right down to Achaemenian times. The Persians and the Medes, *Pārśa* and *Mada*, the *Mada-Pārśva* tribes, then, were the two largest and most important Iranian tribes, who virtually became one, after they were united by the first Achaemenian princes and emperors; and they were found in Vedic India also (1200–800 B.C.). Similarly, a very likely *Pr̥thu* tribe of India (the name became translated into the region of mythology in India as the name of a king) is to be connected with Parthians of Iran (*Pr̥thu-Pārthava*, later in both Iran and India *Pahlava*, also in India *Pallava*); and the Aryan *Śaka* ('Powerful') tribe came to both North-western India and North-western as well as North-eastern Iran.

Perhaps more than any other Indo-Iranian tribe, the *Madas* (or *Medians*) and *Mandas* of Western Iran and Mesopotamia and their Indian counterpart or branch the *Madras* of North Panjab, and the *Kurus* (with

whom were connected the Krvis) retained close connexions with each other. The *Madras* and *Kurus* of India knew of their kinsmen beyond the mountains of Afghanistan, the *Uttara-Madras* and the *Uttara-Kurus*, or the Madras and the Kurus of the North. The Uttara-Madras were in all likelihood the Madas or Medes; and were the Uttara-Kurus the Persians? Kuru was evidently a popular personal name with the Persians in Iran: there was a Kuruš, Kurush (Kuros or Cyrus I), and there was the great Kuruš II (Cyrus II, or Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Achaemenian empire). There was another Kuruš, the ill-fated brother of Artaxerxes, who was the hero of Xenophon's *Anabasis*. Kurush II or Cyrus the Great united in his person both the Persian and the Median blood and heritage, his father Kambujiya (Cambyses I) having been a Persian prince and his mother Mandanē, a daughter of Astyages, the last Median king. The union of the Medic sub-tribes into one single powerful Iranian people was achieved by Dayakku, or Dayaukku, as named in the Assyrian documents towards the end of the eighth century B.C. In Greek Dayakku has been called Deiokēs, and his original Iranian name, as suggested by Prof. J. C. Coyajee, was *Dahāka*, later transformed by mythology as in the *Shāh-nāmah* as *Azi-Dahāka*, the evil King in the service of Satan or Ahriman who had kissed Dahāka's shoulders and out of this two serpents grew on his shoulders which had to be regularly fed with human brains. The final welding together of the Medes and the Persians, and undoubtedly of all other Iranian tribes (excepting the Sakas), was accomplished by Cyrus the Great about the Middle of the sixth century B.C. It seems quite likely that the fame of Deiokēs or Dayakku lived on as the first great king of the Iranian people, who started the nucleus of their national unity and future imperial glory by unifying the Medic tribes. But his name was mixed up with myth and legend of a terrible sort, derived largely from the dragon-myths of the Mesopotamians, the Elamites as well as the Aryans, to give the figure of *Azi-Dahāka* or *Dahāka* (or *Zuhhāk* in the *Shāh-nāmah*), to survive in the Iranian romantic consciousness as a dragon-king with the two serpent-heads on his shoulders (see later, § 5).

4. *The Development of an 'Iranianism': the Indian and Iranian Aryans —their Early Connexions: Indo-Iranian Love of Truth in their Spiritual Ideology, and the place of the Horse in their Socio-economic Life*

In a suggestive paper by Harit Krishna Deb ('Mede and Madra', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, New Series, Vol. XXI, 1925-27, Article 18, pp. 205-16), it has been proposed to link up the Indian Madras with the Iranian Madas or Medes. The Madras became one of the most powerful and respected among the Indian Aryan tribes. They and a number of other very closely allied Panjab tribes were described in ancient times as fair and tall and handsome, and they were the people among whom the sacrificial rites of the ancient Aryans (Vedic rituals, and possibly also pre-Vedic) were best maintained, so that (according to the Upanishad tradition) Brahmans from Gangetic India would go to their country in the Northern Panjab to complete their knowledge of the rituals by learning under Madra priests and scholars, and also to learn the correct form of the Aryan speech. Right down to the beginning of the Achaemenian period, Aryan India and Iran unquestionably formed one linguistic and cultural unit, even if there had started divergences of thought and ideas and of the way of life, with new religious and philosophical ideologies and attitudes and cults and practices and with new economic and political

developments, as well with diverse types of miscegenation with non-Aryan peoples in either land.

A specific Indian *Weltanschauung*—the latter Vedic and Upanishadic or Brahmanical Way of Thought and Way of Life—started to develop in India from after the end of the Vedic period, i.e. from the end of the tenth century B.C. The Aryan language began to change very fast in India from the close of the Vedic age—in its sounds, in its morphology and syntax, in its vocabulary and roots, and began to be transformed into the Middle Indo-Aryan or Prakrit dialects. Besides, there were strong and an ever-growing non-Aryan influence in this matter in India. Similarly, ancient Iran went on its own way. The Mazdayasnian cult, a monotheism of a simple primitive and unsophisticated type, which was inculcated by the wise men of the Medes and the Persians, the *Magas* (*M goi* in Greek, in Latin *Magi*), and the popular religion of the Iranian masses which included the cult and ritual of the Fire with animal sacrifices (as in Indo-Aryan Vedic religion) and with the worship of some specific gods and goddesses (such as we find in the *Yashts* of the Avesta—divinities which were largely of Aryan origin and which were also in a few instances of local non-Aryan—Sumero-Semitic and Asiatic—origin), both became crystallized into the post-Achaemenian Iranian religion, to which a high and quite an individual spiritual content was given by the philosophy of Zarathushtra as in the *Gathas* of the Avesta (Zarathushtra flourished probably in the seventh–sixth centuries B.C.). The Iranian language in both its Median and Persian forms was also changing, and the dialects of Iran were being channelled towards the early Pahlavi or Middle Persian of Parthian times after the end of the Achaemenian period. The Iranians were also most profoundly modified in their outward civilized life by the civilization and culture of the Assyrio-Babylonians, the Elamites and other neighbours of theirs in the West.

But with the foundation of the Iranian *ethos*, which helped to bring out the latent qualities of the Iranian people and made the Achaemenian empire a world power (on the whole, as history has shown it, for the good of a large number of nations), there came to be established a positive Iranian *Weltanschauung*—an Iranian view of the world, or attitude to the world, seen or unseen: and this may be called *Iranianism*. This,—like the *Hellenism* of Greece, or the Greek way of thought and way of life, and the *Brahmanism* (or, in a better and more comprehensive way, the *Indianism*) of India,—consisted of a number of ideas and viewpoints and attitudes and practices which formed the corner-stone of the character of the Iranian people in their higher thought, acts and achievements, almost all through their history.

The formulation of this Iranianism began, one might say, during the period when the Indo-Iranian or Aryan people stood at the parting of ways, when they began slowly to split up into two groups in India and in Iran. It began in round numbers by 900 B.C., by which time the culture of the Vedic world in India almost took its definite shape, although the Vedas were not yet a closed book and a finished tradition, until some centuries later. It was about that time that the Aryans of Iran started to have their separate and independent existence, freeing themselves from a position of vassals and clients to the more powerful and better organized civilized peoples who surrounded them and held hegemony over them—the Elamites, the Babylonians, the Assyrians and the Urartians. The Aryans of Iran also had to reckon with the masses of the pre-Aryan peoples among whom they had settled (like what happened to the Aryans in India also). These pre-Aryan peoples—the *Dahyus* and *Dahas*—were apparently the same

people as the *Dasyus* and *Dāsas* in India, who were very likely of Proto-Dravidian stock, language and culture, originating from the Eastern Mediterraneans of pre-Hellenic Greece and Asia Minor, the Aegean people. But with racial inheritances from their Indo-European ancestors, the Aryans of Iran developed certain values in life and conduct which gave them their hallmark as a nation or people, quite conspicuous among others.

After the Median and Persian branches of the Iranians had merged into one people, the Greek observer Herodotos first noted what to him was the mark of what may be called in his Greek language *Medism* or *Persism*, or in modern parlance, *Iranianism*. Herodotos has given a brief account of the Iranian religious notions and practices—the aniconic character of the Aryan religion of the Medes and Persians, the worship of the forces of nature conceived as God, and the animal sacrifices in the open, with chanting of hymns by priests. What seems to have impressed him very much was the Iranian system of training for their boys and young men. This training extended for 15 years, from the age of five to that of 20. They were taught chiefly three things, namely ‘riding the horse, shooting from the bow and telling the truth’ (*hippeuein, kai tokseuein, kai alethizesthai*).

This may be looked upon as the earliest formulation of *Iranianism*, and before it was modified by other ideologies and habits, it continued to be the simplest and truest expression of Iranianism, up to the beginning of the Muslim period in Iran’s history. The Indian Aryans also had common elements in their spiritual and socio-economic concepts with their Iranian brothers. Regard for truth is looked upon as the highest virtue, in the Indian sense of values (cf. the Sanskrit adage *nāsti satyāt parō dharmah* ‘there is no Religion higher than Truth’, and the Upanishadic expression which has been adopted as Free India’s national motto—*satyam ēva jayatē* ‘Truth alone triumphs’). And during the first centuries of Aryan settlement in India, when the Indian Aryans (at least some of their tribes) continued to be as much a horse-loving people as the Aryans of Iran, the Indians also appreciated riding or dealing with horses, shooting with darts or arrows, and truth-telling to be among the most desirable virtues; and these virtues were also cultivated by Indian Aryan tribes of the Panjab like the Madras, who, as suggested above, were originally, in all possibility, a branch of a great Mada-Manda Madra tribe of Indo-Iranians settled in India.

In the *Mahābhārata* epic of ancient India (Karna-Parvan, Section 32) there is an interesting passage which is quite *à propos* in this context, and may be described as a paraphrase of what Herodotos said in three words. (This *Mahābhārata* passage in the Karna-Parvan as an echo of Herodotos has already been noted by Harit Krishna Deb in his paper on ‘Mede and Madra’ in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* for 1925 mentioned above.) In the 18-day Battle of Kurukshetra, the central theme of the *Mahābhārata*, after Bhishma and Drōṇa, the first and second leaders of the Kuru forces, were both out of the picture by Bhishma being mortally wounded and Drōṇa killed, Duryōdhana, the Kuru King, made Karna the leader of his forces. Duryōdhana was eager to have one of his allies, Śalya, the King of the Madra clan, act as Karna’s charioteer. For various reasons Śalya at first refused, partly because Karna was an Easterner and of a very humble origin. But Duryōdhana’s earnest appeal finally won over Śalya, and he consented to serve the interests of the Kuru King by agreeing to act as Karna’s charioteer. It is noteworthy that Duryōdhana in his appeal to Śalya finally and successfully brought in three points to win Śalya’s consent. The Madra King’s truthfulness, as

inherited from his ancestors, was first mentioned. Then it was urged upon him that in his prowess in war he was like a mortal dart for his foes—like an arrow or a javelin, and that is why he had the epithet of *Śalya* or 'the Dart'. The Madra king, Duryōdhana said, would never do anything that is false; for his forebears all spoke *truth* (here Duryōdhana uses the very old Sanskrit word *ṛtam* = Old Persian *artam*, Avestan *ašəm*, which is the most common Old Iranian word for *Truth*). That is why the Madra king had the name of *Ārtāyani*, as a scion of the clan which spoke *ṛta* or *truth* (*na hi Madrēśvaro rājā kuryād yad an-ṛtam bhavēt/ṛtamēva hi pūrvās tē vadanti puruṣōttamāḥ/tasmād Ārtāyaniḥ prōktō bhavān, iti matir mama*). Then, Duryōdhana continued: 'Since you have become like the arrow for your foemen in the fight, O you who honour others, it is for that you have been given the name *Śalya* in this world.' (*Śalya-bhūtas ca śatrūṇām yasmāt tvam yudhi mānada/tasmāc Chalyēti tē nāma kathyatē pṛthivī-talē*). Finally, this is Duryōdhana's last appeal: 'We choose you as the controller of the best horses in battle, O Bull among men! Karṇa is better in arms than the son of Pṛthā (i.e., Arjuna), so you are greater than Kṛishṇa (Arjuna's charioteer) in both knowledge of horses and in strength. As the high-minded son of Vasudēva (= Kṛishṇa) knows the heart of horses, O king of the Madras, there is no doubt that you know that two times more.' (*vṛṇīmas tvam hayāgryāṇām yantāram iti samyugē . . ./Karṇō hy abhyadhikāḥ Pārthād astrāir ēva nararṣabha/bhavān apy adhikāḥ Kṛṣṇād aśva-jñānē tathā balē/yathāśva-hṛdayam vēda Vāsudēvō mahāmanāḥ/dvi-guṇam tvam tathā vētsi, Madra-rāja! na samśayaḥ*).

On the spiritual plane, this passionate regard for Truth formed the corner-stone so to say of the ancient Aryan or Iranian character. As much as in the Sanskrit literature of India, in the remains of Old Iranian literature as in the Avesta (and also in later works) and in the Old Persian (Achaemenian) inscriptions, there are numerous passages which are full of an atmosphere of a love of Truth (*Arta, Asha*—Skt. *Rta*) and hatred of 'the Lie' (*Druj*, that is a 'Deceit' and 'Falsehood' of any sort). We need not give examples from Iranian documents. The Greeks as a highly advanced people, in science as well as in thought, appreciated this aspect of the Iranian character, and they have paid glowing tributes to it. Thus Pythagoras wrote: 'Man can resemble God only through Truth: that is why the Persian Magi see in their God the soul of Truth.' This old Aryan ideal was never lost sight of in either Iran or India. Mahatma Gandhi in India declared that Truth was his God, and his God was nothing but the Truth. As we shall see later, in post-Muslim Sufism in Iran, which was largely based on a resurgence of the ancient Iranian spirit under the impact of Islam, Truth (now indicated by the Arabic word *Haqq*) has a unique place. Similarly, Xenophon, who was a great admirer of Persia and whose ideal king was Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Achaemenian empire, also said: 'The Persians take great care to eschew falsehood, and they are, most of them, the veritable image of goodness.' Other classical writers have testified to their admiration for the Old Iranian regard for Truth, and to the Iranian people's great sense of honour in scrupulously adhering to a promise they would swear. This continued throughout all the periods of Iran's political and cultural greatness—Achaemenian, Parthian and Sassanian.

An interesting side-light as to the Old Persian way in this matter can be reconstructed from an obscure passage in the Greek comedy, the *Acharnians* of Aristophanes. There is a scene in this drama in which a person, Pseudartabas or 'the False Artabas', is brought in as the Persian

Ambassador or representative of the Great King, 'the King of Kings' of the Achaemenian empire, to speak to some Greek people. (This Persian name, *Artabas*, itself seems to mean 'Protecting the Truth'—from Old Persian *Arta* 'Truth' and root *bas* 'to protect'.) He begins his talk with a sentence apparently in a non-Greek language (line 100 of the *Achaemenian*), which sounds unmeaning gibberish to his Greek hearers. One or two commentators had suggested that the line might be some sentence in Old Persian, which was the language of the Achaemenian officers. Long ago—it was before 1922—a German Orientalist had sought to give an interpretation of this line in a learned journal, in which he appears to have succeeded in resolving the enigma of this line. (I regret very much that the reference to this German scholar and to the journal, from which I had taken down his explanation of the matter has long been mislaid or lost, and I cannot trace it.) It was suggested, and perfectly correctly as it would appear, that the sentence, uttered by one who was made to speak as the Ambassador of the Persian Emperor, formed the opening words of a *firman* (Old Persian *framāna*, Sanskrit *pramāna*) or order or ukase from the Emperor. The passage, in spite of one mistake which has evidently crept into the text in Greek letters, forms a good echo of the Old Persian. The text as in the Greek drama reads.

Iartaman eksarksanapissonai satra.

Following some variant readings, and emending the expression *apissonai* to *apiaonai*, changing *ss* to *a* (i.e., *cc* in Greek cursive writing to *a*), the line can be read in the Greek text of the drama as follows:

ia artaman eksarksa(n) apiaonai satra—
which would be in Old Persian
hya artava(n) Xšayarša api Yaunāya Xšaθra,
meaning in English—
'the truthful Xerxes, to the lands of Ionia'.

The opening formula of an ancient Persian imperial pronouncement, if this reconstruction of the passage from the Greek drama is permissible, would clearly demonstrate the Old Iranian respect and anxiety for Truth, even in the formal title of the Emperor. This is no wonder, if we look at the number of Old Persian personal names recorded by the Greeks showing the word *arta* or 'truth' as a component element (as many as 59 names have been listed by Alwin H. M. Stonecipher in his *Greco-Persian Names*, 1918 (in the Vanderfelt Oriental Series, American Book Company, New York, Cincinnati, Chicago), like *Artabazos*, *Artabanes*, *Artabatos*, *Artabides*, *Artasuras*, *Artakhamas*, *Artaksias*, etc., etc.).

The most popular sacred slogan of Zoroastrianism is the Avestan passage: *ašəm vohu vahištəm asti* 'Truth is the highest good, or the richest wealth' (in Old Persian—*artam vahu vahištam asti*, in Sanskrit—*rtam vasu vasiṣṭham asti*). *Arta*, *Asha*, or *Rta* = *Truth*, or *Haqq*, is the great moral and spiritual ideal of Iranianism, just as in Indianism we have *Dharma* or Cosmic Order of Righteousness as its great ideal (and this *Dharma* was also identified with *Satya* or *Truth* (cf. the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* both—*nāsāu Dharmō yatra na Satyam asti* 'that indeed cannot be *Dharma* or Righteousness where there is no Truth').

Emperor Asoka in the third century B.C. promulgated his ideal of *Dharma* in his admonitions to his people carved on rocks and pillars all over his empire. The Achaemenian Emperor Darius similarly, 250 years

before Asoka, announced his conception of *Arta* or Truth and its concomitant Justice and Right Government in his inscriptions. Thus he said (Bahistun Inscription):

'Says Darius the King: This that I did in course of the same year, I did by the will of Ahuramazda. Ahuramazda to me bore aid, and the other Gods that are.

Says Darius the King: For this reason Ahuramazda to me bore aid, and the other Gods that are, namely, I was not an enemy nor was a deceiver, nor was an oppressor, neither I nor my family. According to rectitude I ruled, neither . . . I did oppression. The man who served in my house, him well-rewarded I rewarded: who destroyed, him well-punished I punished.

O men! what is Ahuramazda's commandment, may it not be repugnant to you. Do not leave the straight (or true) path. Do not revolt.'

(Translation by Sukumar Sen in his *Old Persian Inscriptions of the Achaemenian Emperors*, Calcutta University, 1941)

Further (in the Naksh-i-Rustam Inscription):

'Says Darius the King: By the will of Ahuramazda such like I am, that to the right a friend I am, (and) to the wrong never a friend I am. Never to me (is) the desire that the poor for the sake of the rich should be done wrong to. Never to me (is) the desire that the rich for the sake of the poor should be done wrong to . . . What is right, that to me (is) the desire. To a deceiving man never a friend I am. Never I am revengeful. What to me . . . belong, firmly I hold. Of the mind (that is) wayward, (I am) firmly controlling. The man who co-operates, him, according to the help I support him. Who harms, according to the harm, thus I punish . . .'

(Translation by Sukumar Sen)

This affirmation of an ideal for a just and equitable government sounds like an edict from the Emperor, and certainly, as a corollary of the respect for Truth, Justice formed one of the bases of Achaemenian polity, as it was first firmly announced by Kurush or Cyrus the Great in 539 B.C. This matter has been further elaborated by some of the early Greek writers. Tolerance of other people's religious opinions was at first equally cultivated by the ancient Iranians—the builders of the Achaemenian empire like Cyrus the Great, and Cambyses II. There was evidently a deviation from this policy in later times, when the religious beliefs of the Iranians became crystallized into an organized Zoroastrianism, and this became identified with a militant Iranian imperialism of the time, so that both the Manichean faith of some Iranians and the Christianity of the Armenians became objects of persecution. But there were just political reasons behind this persecution.

5. 'Iranianism'—its Character: *The National Epic of Iran—the Shāh-nāmāh*

The salient characteristics of an *Iranianism* would appear to have been ideas like the following:

1. A fervent Sense of a Divine Presence—as Supreme God of *Power and Wisdom (Ahura-mazdah)* who was a personal God; and there was not much of philosophical speculation

about this Godhead. This Godhead, or *summum bonum* in life, was also *Truth*, both absolute and pragmatic.

2. The Concept of Dualism—a belief in two polarities constantly in opposition and strife with each other, both in the universe and in man's life, viz, Good and Evil, Light and Darkness, Virtue and Vice, Truth and Lie, *Asha* (or *Arta*) and *Druj*. This was particularly the teaching of the great saint and reformer of Iran, Zarathushtra. The fact of evil being present in the world and actively working for the harm of man and other creatures is admitted; and it was considered the duty of man to be a willing soldier of God, fighting against the evil for the establishment of the good. The Dualism of Iran was taken over by Judaism, and passed on to Christianity and to Islam. Arab Islam, through Judaism, obtained an intensive faith in the need for fighting evil, which for the Muslim Arab was particularly *kufr* or infidelity against the acknowledgement of the one single divinity, and the Arab Muslim became a militant champion of a monotheistic creed which was strongly oriented against this error. Kakuzo Okakura, the Japanese thinker and writer, called Islam 'Confucianism on horse-back, sword in hand' (in his *Ideals of the East*, London, 1903, p. 4). In this connexion he brought in some common 'pastoral element' in 'the hoary communism of the Yellow Valley', which was 'established and self-realized' in Islam. But looking at its historical connexions, and at the outstanding ideas in Islam of fight on the side of a monotheistic God against falsehood and error—the communistic and socio-economic bases of Islam derived from primitive Arab society were not so prominent in Islam. We might say, perhaps with greater correctness, that Islam was truly 'Zoroastrianism on horse-back, sword in hand'. And this basic agreement was undoubtedly one of the causes of the spectacular sweeping of Iran by Islam within a few generations.
3. The moral life of 'Good Thought, Good Speech and Good Deed', of *Humata, Hūxta, Hvaršta*—as translated into Modern Iranian as *Nēk-pandār, Nēk-guštār, Nēk-kardār*—was a preparation for attaining the Highest Bliss that is Heaven (*Vahishta, Bihisht*). Here we have the moral aspect of the Iranian ideal, also certainly an Indo-European inheritance. Man, if he is to be a fighter against evil, a soldier for truth against the lie, must live a moral and a well-ordered life. This seems to echo the Eightfold Aryan Path, the *Ariyō Aṭṭhaṅgikō Maggō*, which Buddha preached as the path to the knowledge of liberation. This path, of moral life and endeavour, consisted according to Buddha, of (1) Right Views (*Sammā-ditṭhi*), (2) Right Aspiration (*Sammā-saṃkappō*), (3) Right Speech (*Sammā-vācā*), (4) Right Actions (*Sammā-kammantō*), (5) Right Living (*Sammā-jīvō*), (6) Right Exertion (*Sammā-vāyāmō*), (7) Right Recollection (*Sammā-sati*) and (8) Right Meditation (*Sammā-samādhi*). It is to be noted that, to qualify this Eightfold Path for the moral life of men, Buddha has used the term *ariya* = *ārya*, i.e., Aryan, which had gradually lost its racial

or ethnic sense in India and acquired a wider and a moral sense of 'noble, good, or excellent'. But the idea was the need to lead the good life, which was emphasized by both Buddha and Zarathushtra: only while the Indian teacher was more circumspect and more philosophical and detailed, the Iranian sage was simpler and more direct, bringing in the entire gamut of a good and moral life within three expressions.

4. In the Iranian consciousness there is a frank acceptance of life, and a love of life, the desire to enjoy the good things which life has to offer, without an undue or morbid pessimism. The *joie de vivre* appears to have been an essential character of the Iranian people. They took delight in light and colour and pattern in the universe, and in good food and raiment, and in the happy and joyful surroundings of life. The beauty of nature, with its green herbage and foliage, its trees and plants, its hills and streams, and above all, its multicoloured flowers, was something which the Iranians passionately loved. This formed a very potent incentive to the development of a life of advanced civilization, with amenities which the arts and crafts bring for good and pleasant living which was never divorced from higher thought as well as the mystic approach. The appreciation of beauty in Nature and in the life of man brought in a new type of aestheticism (as well as humanism), which was different from that arrived at by classical Greece—it was the appreciation of beauty in design that was based on symmetry of line and of colour. With the sophistication of an elaborate civilization and culture, when the appurtenances of dress and *décor* acquired a very high value, the frank and rather elemental delight in the human body in its unadorned beauty, which we notice so much in the art-consciousness of ancient Egypt, classical Greece and ancient and medieval India, became a rare and not publicly shared joy in the art of Iran, as much as in that of China and Japan.

One of the greatest exponents of Iranianism, received it as a tradition from pre-Islamic times: he was Firdausi, the compiler and author of the *Shāh-nāmah*, the national epic of Iran (c. A.D. 1000). His great work, forming undoubtedly one of the ten great literary complexes of the world which still move humanity,* gives through delineation of epic deeds of valour and honour the high seriousness of Iranianism, in its faith in one God and its love of, and adherence to, truth, and its constant struggle against the forces of evil, and in its aspect of beauty in love and romance and pomp and pageantry. It is no wonder that Firdausi's memory is held in

* These ten great literary works or complexes are, according to my estimation, the following: (1) The *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata*, in Sanskrit, national epics of India, with portions of the Vedas and the Upanishads, and the *Works of Kalidāsa*, forming one single literary complex; (2) the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the Homeric Hymns and Homeric, the *Works of Hesiod*, and the extant tragedies of the three great tragic poets of ancient Greece, in Greek; (3) the *Hebrew Bible*; (4) the *Shāh-nāmah* of Iran; (5) the *Alf Layla wa Layla*, 'the Thousand Nights and One Night' or 'the Arabian Nights', in Arabic; (6) the *Corpus of Arthurian Romances* in Old Welsh, in medieval Latin, in Early French and in Early English and in Early German; (7) the *Works of William Shakspeare*; (8) the *Works of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*, in German; (9) the *Works of Lyev Tolstoy*, in Russian; and (10) the *Works of Rabindranath Tagore*, in Bengali and English.

profound veneration not only by the Muslim Iranians but also by the Zoroastrian Iranians (including the Parsees of India), who respect the *Fravashi* or the departed soul of Firdausi as that of a great religious leader and teacher. For he has (his formal affiliation to the Moslem religion notwithstanding) helped through the centuries to preserve among his people the great rational heritage of Iranianism, forever green and productive.

The great epic of Firdausi, however, with its 60,000 lines, like all similar literature or literary compositions of a national character, is a composite, being made up of many stories and episodes which come from various sources. These stories have either a historical basis, or have sources which are mythological and legendary; and there is also in many cases romance and the romantic approach, the product of imagination, as their mainspring. Although professing to be the ancient history of the Kings of Iran, it is in the earlier parts as much history as the *Purānas* of India. All the different strands have been skilfully woven into the rich and multicoloured texture of the great epic; but a good deal of the materials presented are from the mythical and legendary as well as the historical world of Iran from the pre-Achaemenian Age, through the Achaemenian and Parthian periods right down to the final completion of the basic or native Iranian culture under the Sasanians. Firdausi belonged to the North-eastern area of Iran, and he has preserved in his work not only Western and North-western Iranian legends and traditions, but also those of the Eastern Iranians—the Parthians and the Śakas of Eastern Iran, particularly in their stand against the nomadic Śakas—their own kin—and their Turanian (Tatar or Mongoloid) allies from Central Asia, who pressed upon Iran during the centuries round about Christ. A good deal of Chinese legends and notions also appear to have come into the Eastern Iranian heroic and other traditions as current among the Śakas and Parthians of Iran. The adventures of Rustam and his son Suhrāb, at once heroic and romantic as well as tragic, which really date from the time of the Parthian King Gotarzes (Gudharz of the *Shāh-nāmah*) and belong to the East to start with, became national legends of the entire land of Iran, thanks to Firdausi. Rustam became the National Hero of Iran; and although his name and that of his son Suhrāb can be restored to Old Iranian of Achaemenian and pre-Achaemenian times (*Rustam* = **Raudastama* 'the strongest bulwark', and *Suhrāb* = **Suxrāspa* 'he of the red horse', in Sanskrit **Rōdhas-tama*, **Śukrāśva*), the stories of their adventures go back only to the Parthian times. With regard to the first kings of the *Shāh-nāmah* epos, the stories and traditions go back to Western Iran, the area where Medo-Persian unity was achieved by Deiokēs or Dayakku, about 715 B.C. As it has been shown in the legends like those of Ḍaḥḥāk or Zuhhāk (in the Arabicized forms of the name = *Aži Dahāka* in the Avesta), we have an inextricable mix-up of history and legends and religious mythology of the Babylonian and Assyrian as well as Elamite neighbours of the ancient Aryans in Western Iran. Thus *Aži Dahāka*, or *Dahāka*, reputed in the *Shāh-nāmah* to be the first real king of Iran, after the mythological Gayōmarth, Jamshīd, and others, was no other than Deiokēs (Dayakku or Dayaukku), the first king of the unified Medic tribes (c. 715), Dayakku being transformed into an evil dragon-king with two serpent-heads issuing from his two shoulders which had to be fed daily with human brains. In the words of Sir J. C. Coyajee: 'The first historical king of Media came to be the centre of a terrible halo of the most sombre legends, which were drawn not only from Aryan but from Babylonian and other sources.' (See the very suggestive researches of the late Sir J. C. Coyajee embodied in his *Cults and Legends of Ancient Iran*

and China, Bombay, 1936, especially the papers 'The *Shāh-nāmah* and the *Feng-Sheng-Yen-I*', pp. 99–134; 'The House of Gotarzes, a Chapter of Parthian History in the *Shāh-nāmah*', pp. 203–208; 'Rustam in Legend and History', pp. 218–236; and 'Azi Dahāka in History', pp. 237–276. See also T. Noeldeke's *Das Iranische Nationalepos*, English translation by L. Bogdanov, Bombay, 1930, specially §§ 1–15.) Nevertheless, through this great work, with its well-ordered structure, we find the atmosphere of Iranianism, suffusing it and giving it the glory of a great literary creation for the pleasure and edification of mankind.

6. Iranianism and Islam

Islam came to Iran, and its rapid victory was more political and economic (with its onslaught directed against the aristocracy and an exclusive clergy not sympathetic towards the masses), rather than purely religious or spiritual. Islam really had nothing new or great to offer to Iran, and the intensity of Semitic Arab conviction of and faith in the One Supreme Divinity added nothing in kind but only in degree to the Zoroastrian experience of spiritual realization or aspiration. Many of the ideas of Islam were derived from Iranian sources: e.g., the concepts of *Din* or religion and faith (the word itself is an Iranian loan—Pahlavi *dēn*, Avestan *daēnā* = Sanskrit *dhēnā*), and this Iranian word is ultimately related to the Baltic *daina* as in Lithuanian and Latvian, meaning 'a song or poem which represents inner thought of man'; and certain mythological-eschatological beliefs (the bridge *al-Sirāt* = Iranian *Cinvat-parātu*; *Hārūt* and *Mārūt*, two angels in Islamic myth, who had a fall from heaven = Avestan *Haurvatāt* and *Amərətāt*; and the elaborate world of the *Angels*—*Malak* or *Firistah*), based on both Judaism and Zoroastrianism. The mythical animal *Burāq*, a mule with a human face, the vehicle used by Muhammad the Prophet in going to heaven to have a vision of Allāh, suggests the Iranian bulls with human faces borrowed from the Assyrio-Babylonians.

Possibly the only thing which enriched Iranianism in post-Muslim times, and that too after a few centuries of Islam, was the mysticism and the poetry of Sufism. And it must be noted that the Iranian contribution in the evolution and formulation of Sufism was of an outstanding order. This conception of man as the great wooer of the divinity that is both immanent and transcendent in life, as the ardent lover anxious to have union with his beloved who is the Eternal Feminine, would appear to be something new in Iranianism. Here again there were two strains in this conception of God as the Beloved of Man the Lover. The Beloved is conceived both as a male—as the *ma'shūq*, a handsome young ephebe, and also as a female, a *ma'shūqah*—a young woman whose beauty and whose personality as that of the Eternal Feminine always draws man heavenwards. The former idea is an attempted sublimation of the homosexuality or paederasty which had such a vogue in the Eastern Mediterranean countries from classical Greek times, and the latter of course is the exaltation of the natural love between a man and a woman. The germs of the latter are present in the mystic religion of all countries. In ancient Iran we find it at least in an outline or sketchy form, when we are told that a good man's conscience or faith (*daēnā*) meets him in the next world as a lovely young maiden who charms and captivates his heart, and acts like Beatrice in the *Paradiso* of Dante as a sort of heavenly guide leading him on to the bliss of God (as the *Vishtāsp Yasht*, the last section of the *Yashts* in the *Avesta*). In the absence of any other evidence, this Avestan text

deserves to be looked into from the point of view of the Sufi conception of God as the beloved Sweetheart of man.

But this idea was not confined to the Sufism of Iran alone. One of the earliest Sufi poets of Arabdom was Muhyi al-Din Ibn al-'Arabī (1165–1240), some of whose lines in Arabic are among the most beautiful and most poetical compositions inspired by man's urge to realize the divine as the Eternal Feminine. But Sufism in Islam has been very largely the special gift of Iran to the world; and in this Iranian Sufism, we have the greatest deviation from the narrow path of orthodox Semitic or Qurānic Islam. Further, it was an Iranian Philosopher al-Ghazālī who successfully harmonized Sufi mysticism with the narrow creed of Arab Islam as in the Qurān, and so helped to bring certain great human and universal qualities to Islam as a sum-total, and in this way enabled it to be more acceptable to humanity at large without its formally becoming Muslim, i.e., without entirely accepting Muhammad; and this was a great gift of the Iranian spirit.

7. 'Farrah-i-Irān-manish', the Glory of Iranianism

Iranianism began its career in an atmosphere of Truth and Light, and this character never left it through the centuries. This was to some extent strengthened by Islam, no doubt, in which the Godhead was also associated with Light (*Nūr*) as much as with Truth (*Ḥaqq*). As in the Avesta itself, there is (in the *Ormazd-Yasht*) an enumeration of the various names or epithets of the Supreme God, *Ahura-Mazda* (*Ormazd Yasht*, Sections 7 and 12), some 70 of them; so in Islam also we have 'the ninety-nine beautiful names of Allāh' (the *Navvad-O-Nav Asmā-i-Husnā*, which religious people repeat on the Muslim *tasbiḥ* or rosary). These names have been classified into two groups—one group expressing God's beauty and benignness (*jamālī*) and the other His majesty and glory and might (*jalālī*). It is remarkable that one name, belonging to the second category, *al-Ḥaqq*, or 'the Truth', became in Islamic Persia perhaps the most popular epithet of God. 'God'—*Allāh*, or *Khudā* or *Izad*—became almost synonymous with *Ḥaqq* 'the Truth'. This is like *Arta* or *Asha*, i.e., Truth, being conceived as the Greatest Power in existence. When Mansūr al-Hallāj, the Sufi martyr of Iraq who was put to death in a most cruel manner in A.D. 921 because he declared that he was the same as God who was described as 'the Truth'—Mansūr al-Hallāj had said, in Arabic *anā-l-Ḥaqq* 'I am the Truth', he spoke in the Old Iranian way. Iran formed the intermediate pathway mainly through which during the early centuries (after the Arab conquest of Sindh and the short-lived Arab rule there) Islam passed into India. The Arabic religious terms used in Islam went to India with the religion itself through Iran, no doubt. But frequently it was the Iranian equivalents or translations of these Arabian terms which came to India and became more popular and acceptable among the Iranian people when they took over Islam (e.g., *Khudā* or *Izad* for *Allāh*, *Paigham-bar* for *Rasūl* or *Nabī*, *namāz* for *sālat*, *rōzah* for *saum*, etc.). So *Ḥaqq* or 'Truth' or *Ḥaqq-nām* or 'True Name' passed on to India from Persia as one of the most common names of God. In distant Bengal, which formed the easternmost outpost of Islam in India, Bengali Muslims writing letters and documents in Bengali, their mother-tongue, would use (until very recently) as benediction at the head of a letter or document the expression *Śrī Śrī Hak-nām*, i.e., 'the twice-blessed Name of Truth'—something like the Arabic formula *bi-smi-llāh* 'in the name of Allāh or God'.

It would be an interesting exercise, in the study of national cultures and attitudes, to enquire, on the proper basis of history, into what has been called *Iranianism*. Attempts have been made to characterize *Indianism* also (cf. *Indianism and its Synthesis* by S. K. Chatterji, Calcutta University, 1963), as well as *Africanism* or the Way of the Black African (*Africanism or the African Personality* by S. K. Chatterji, Calcutta, 1960). There are numbers of books by capable scholars and writers on *Hellenism*. A great work like Edward G. Browne's *Literary History of Persia* in its three volumes embodies an exposition of Iranianism as it has expressed itself through the great literature of Iran. Comprehensive works on Iranian art similarly show Iranianism as it is enshrined in architecture and the plastic arts and crafts. Iranianism has been actively influencing the civilizations of contiguous and connected peoples from most ancient times, and the impact of the Iranian mind and the Iranian action on the Greeks, the Indians, and other ancient peoples, and on the Arabs, the Turks and other peoples from early medieval times, would give a picture of Iranianism at work among non-Iranians. Certain aspects of this fascinating, though complicated, question are being taken up below.

If there is something which can be characterized or labelled as *Iranianism*, it may be asked—has it been given a name in Iran itself? There is the Old Iranian name for the religion of the Iranians of historical times—the *Mazdayasnian Religion*, meaning 'the worship of *Ahura-Mazda* (*Mazda-Yasna*), the Deity of Power and Intelligence or Wisdom'. This introspective characterization and naming of a nation's mentality and culture by a newfangled term like *Iranianism* can only be something modern, and it cannot be all-inclusive, and will remain rather vague at that. The Arabic language has an expression *Ta'arrub* (from = 'r-b = 'Arab') meaning 'Arabism, or Arabianism', a word of the 'measure' of *ta-fa'ul*, like *Tasharruq*—'Eastern ways, Orientalism' (from *sh-r-q* 'East'), *Ta'ajjum* 'Foreign or non-Arab Ways' (from '-j-m), *Tamaddun* 'City Ways, Civilization' (cf. *Madīnah* 'city'), etc. So we can have Arabic words like *Tafarrus* 'Persian Ways, Persianism, Iranianism' (from *F-r-s* Persia), and *Tahannud* 'Indian Ways, Indianism' (from *H-n-d* India). But a newly-coined Arabic expression would hardly be acceptable in Iran at the present day. In India for Indian languages, *Indianism* has been rendered as *Bhāratīyatā*; and it has been suggested that we should have two words, *Bhārata-dharma* or 'the Indian Way of Thought, Esoteric Indianism', and *Bhārata-yāna* or 'the Indian Way of Life, Exoteric Indianism', embodying something which transcends as well as encompasses Brahmanism, Buddhism, Jainism, Vira-Saivism, Sikhism, Brahmoism and all forms of Indian thinking and practice. On the model of the expressions *Sufiyānah*, *Hindūānah*, *Turkānah*, a word like *Irānīyānah* would be quite acceptable in the Persian language and the Persian vocabulary as they are current in India. But a word *Iranīyānah*, I am told, will not be in accordance with modern usage and idiom in Iran itself, *Ravān-O-Ravish-i-Irān* 'the Spirit and Way of Iran' would be a phrasal expression: but a single word, even a compound, is preferable to a long phrase or sentence-word in a matter like this. *Irān-garī* 'Manner or Method of the Work or Action of Iran' would refer to the outward aspect of Iranianism, the way of Iranian life. It would appear that on the model of the expression *Sūfī-manish* an expression like *Irān-manish* 'the Mentality or Spirit of Iran' would perhaps meet the case, as suggested by some Persian scholars from Iran. This modern Persian expression stands on a Pahlavi or Middle Persian

Ērānmanišm which is from Old Iranian *Ariyānām* or *Airyānām-Manišnu* 'the Mentality of the Aryans, Aryanism, or Iranianism'.

Similar neologisms are quite in order in most languages. We may note the new epithet or name now in use for His Imperial Majesty the Shahanshah of Iran, viz., *Ārya-mehr* = Avestan *Ariya-miθra*, Sanskrit *Ārya-mitra*, 'the Friend of the Aryans' or 'the Sun of the Aryan People'.

The above glottological excursus need not be taken too seriously, but it has been brought in to help in establishing the character of the mind and culture of Iran as a great factor, both in itself and in its impact upon other cultures.

Iranian literature through the centuries, beginning with the Avesta on the one hand and the Achaemenian (Old Persian) inscriptions on the other, through literature in the Middle Iranian speeches like Pahlavi or Middle Persian, Śaka or Old Khotanese, and Sogdian, down to Modern Persian and Kurdish, Pashtu and Balochi and Ossetish and other Modern Iranian languages, also gives an expression to the Iranian mind. Particularly valuable in this context in the Persian tradition, in its three phases of *Old Persian* (with Avestan as a most important side-show), *Middle Persian* (or Pahlavi) and *New or Modern Persian* (or Farsi). The romantic as well as the mystic side of *Īrān-manish* is most beautifully and effectively reflected in the great heroic-romantic and historical traditions of Iran, as in works like the Pahlavi *Kār-nāmak-i-Artakshūr-i-Pāpakān* and *Wis-O-Ramīn*, and the great tales of heroic and romantic Iran as in the national epic of the *Shāh-nāmāh* of Firdausi and the romances of Nizami, as well as in the corpus of Sufi poetry beginning with Farīduddīn 'Attār. It is to be noted that even when Iran accepted Islam, she kept her individuality separate from that of the Arab and the Turk and general Indian Muslimdom by adopting her Shi'a concept of a theocratic state tied up with the mysticism of Sufism, which gave a new and a more specialized content to the orthodox Arab Islam of the Qurān. What a vast world of beauty and poetry, of romance and mystic experience has been opened up for the intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual exaltation of mankind, when we can have access into the rose-garden of Persian poetry—of both the narrative and the introspective sorts, both *razm* and *bazm*! The Iranian sense of beauty has filled all this poetical corpus with a throbbing life and a glowing spirituality—and it has become for ever an inexhaustible treasury for men in all lands and climes: even as it has been said of Shirin's transcendent beauty—Shirin the Queen of Khusrau Parwez (Chosroes II, c. A.D. 600), a worthy peer of Helen of Troy in Iranian imagination and sensibility:

*Huzhīrah, ba-gaihān anōshah bi-zī—
jahān-rā za-dīdār(ə) tōshah barī:*

'Ah, Beauteous One, upon this earth happy for ages do live,
Since to the world by thy mere glance such joyance thou dost
give!'

The grace and lightness of the Iranian way in its great tradition of poetic beauty would make a person with his soul attuned to the spirit of true poetry exclaim—

*Chi 'arūsiyast dar jān, kī jahān, za 'aqas-i-rūyash,
Chu du dast-i-nau-'arūsan tar u pur-nigār bādā !*

'What a bride has come to the soul! it were as if the world, from
the reflexion of her face,
Like the two hands of the newly-wed have become fresh and full
of colour!'

8. *Iran and India : Cultural Exchange*

As it has been said before, at the time of the advent of the Aryans in India, some time after 1500 B.C., it would appear that there was not much difference between the Aryans in India and the Aryans in Iran. The original Indo-European religion on the whole was still continued, with a number of new elements—ideas and cults—taken over from the peoples of Asia Minor and Mesopotamia. The Babylonian *Marduk* gave some elements in the development of Indian *Indra* and the Iranian *Vərəthraghna*, and the Babylonian (Sumerian and Akkadian) *Inanna-Ishtar* was behind the Iranian Goddess *Arđvi-sūra Anāhita* and the Indo-Aryan *Aditi*. The Hittite and Asianic *Teshup* and *Hetep* (or *Cybelē* and *Atthis*, as the Greeks called them) we find in *Śiva* and *Umā* in India, at least in certain aspects of these cosmic concepts of the Divinity. The split of the Aryans—whose gods were called both *Daivas* (*Dēva*, *Daēva*) and *Ahuras*—the *Ahura* group gradually came to be merged into a single great God, in *Ahura-Mazda*, among the Iranian Aryans, who did not develop an extensive pantheon as among the Indian Aryans (which went on getting bigger and bigger in India)—had in all likelihood already started. But as evidence from the Indian side would show, long after the heroic period of the *Mahābhārata* (tenth century B.C., in its historical core) the purer Aryans in India were wistfully harking back to Iran beyond the Afghan mountains—to the vague and not properly identified lands of *Uttara-Madra* and *Uttara-Kuru*, which were somewhere in Eastern Iran, as the lands of their ancestors from where they came. The days of a life-and-death struggle of the Indo-Iranians with the Assyrians were vaguely remembered as the fights between gods (who stood for the Aryan ancestors) and the demons (who were called *Asuras* in India, or *Daēvas* in Iran, and had a habitation on earth). The Sanskrit term *Asura* ‘demon, giant, superhuman but evil being’ undoubtedly is a reflex of the name of the powerful and cruel and highly advanced enemies of the Indo-Iranians in the course of their wanderings—the *Ashshur* or Assyrians. The gods in the Indian tradition (standing, it may be presumed, for Indo-Iranian or Aryan ruling classes, whenever they were hard pressed by the *Asuras* (or Assyrians), often asked for help from the kings of the earth, i.e., of Aryan kings of India; and this help was frequently rendered, and the king of the gods would honour and reward mundane (i.e., Indian) rulers who helped the gods (i.e., the Iranian kinsmen of the Indian Aryans) to quell their demon foes. Was this a reminiscence of the Indian Aryans, going occasionally to help their kinsmen the Iranian Aryans in their struggles with their Semitic and Asianic enemies? There was a dim memory, as mentioned before, among the Indian Aryans (among some of the tribes at least) that the original land of the Aryans was beyond the mountains—the Himalayas and the mountains of Afghanistan. There is one incident narrated by the Greek writer Xenophon in his *Cyropaedia*, giving an idealized picture of the life and personality and great deeds of Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Achaemenian empire, which has some significance in the above context. Xenophon says that when a war broke out between the Medians and the Assyrians, Cyrus with a force of 40,000 Persians went to the help of the Medes, who were own brethren of the Persians. When the war was going on, it is said, ambassadors came to the scene from the king of India ‘to learn the particulars of the quarrel between Media and Assyria’, and Cyrus sagaciously conciliated them by proposing that the king of India should be made arbitrator in the question (*Cyropaedia*, II, iv, 1–9; also cf. III, ii, 25–30). The history behind this story is not known, but Indians being interested in the affairs of

their Aryan kinsmen in Iran cannot be entirely ruled out. Besides, that the Asuras were a nation or people of the earth, when we divest the story of its mythological trappings, is borne out in other passages in Indian literature. The Asuras were often connected with some country or other. They are mentioned also as belonging to Eastern India and to the forests of Eastern Deccan (Dandakāraṇya). *Deva vs. Asura* could in this way be a memory of *Aryan vs. Assyrian*, in which the earliest Indo-Aryans also were naturally interested. The *Marya* people, known also as the *Mitanni*, had an Aryan name (*Marya* = Sanskrit *marya* 'men, people'). They worshipped the Aryan gods *Mitra*, *Varuna* and the two *Nāsatyas* ('the Healers, or Saviours'), who were also called the two young horse-men, the *Ásvins*. The single Aryan speech of 1500 B.C., could have changed to Vedic and to Old Iranian only by the tenth century B.C., and specimens of this Proto-Aryan we find in the words and forms which have been preserved in Mesopotamian records. As it has been mentioned above, Yaska (c. 600 B.C.) had noted that the Kambojas, who were a frontier tribe of the Aryans, used the verb-root *śav* meaning 'to go'—this was only the Iranian modification of Aryan root *cyav* which is preserved in Sanskrit.

The general sense of unity perhaps continued down to the seventh century B.C. when Mada-Pārsa or Median and Persian unity took place in Iran. Zarathushtra had come to the field with his philosophical and political doctrines (particularly the concept of Dualism of Ahura-Mazda and Angra-mainyu), and Iran fell in line more and more with the Western Elamite, Assyrio-Babylonian and Asiatic worlds. Indian Aryandom developed its new and more profound philosophical ideas, partly at least through Dravidian and Austric (Kol) contact and miscegenation, so that in this way a real divergence came to be established, fully marking off Indian Aryandom from that of Iran by the time that the Achaemenian empire was established.

About 1000 or even 800 B.C., an Iranian Aryan would not be looked upon as a foreigner in India: about 500 B.C. an Iranian, as a person who did not know the Veda, was a man of a different religio-philosophical orbit. Just at the time of the later sages of the Upanishads and of Buddha and Mahavira in India, Iran gave to the world the sage and religious reformer Zarathushtra. The question of the greatness of the One God *Ahura-Mazda* as the result of an inner conviction was the most outstanding message of Zarathushtra, besides, of course, his Dualism, and his stressing upon the need for a moral regeneration of man by unflinching adherence to Truth and abhorrence of the Lie. But there was not much of an attempt in Iran to solve the fundamental problems of existence which characterized the thinkers of India in their mixed Aryan and non-Aryan environment. The greatest event in the Iranian world in the sixth century B.C. was, however, political—the foundation of the Achaemenian empire by Cyrus the Great. And through this mundane empire, Iran's message reached the civilized world for over 200 years; and the force of this message did not die out, but it continued down the centuries, to the middle of the seventh century A.D. when Islam conquered Iran. Later on, the influence of this material phenomenon of an empire dwindled and passed away. In India, on the other hand, the greatest event during the same sixth century B.C. was the spiritual empire of Buddha, and of the Brahmanical sages of the later Upanishads, and this empire was something which went on spreading its message and augmenting its power over the minds of men throughout the greater part of Asia, bringing peoples, great and small, within a fellowship of spirit with India.

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About 800 B.C., the Aryan settlers of the Panjab and the North-western Frontier, who were of the same blood and almost the same speech and cultural and religious *milieu* with the Iranians, were recognized in Aryan India as among the bluest-blooded of Aryans—the Madras, the Śālvas, the Śibis, the Aśvakas, the Gandhāras and the rest, who were the exalted tribes of the *Udīcyā* or the *Northern* Aryandom of India. To them the other Aryans from Gangetic India would go to learn the best form of the Aryan speech, and pick up from them the Aryan religious rites and ceremonies and philosophical speculations. But after the divergence which became pronounced from after 500 B.C., Iranians who came to India, in spite of their conforming to the old Aryan physical ideal of fair colour and tall stature, were looked upon as something of barbarians, boorish and outlandish, and not conforming to the subtleties of an elaborate civilized life in a corporate society which was being established under the aegis of Brahmanism as a composite religion and culture. This culture was formed with elements taken freely from Aryandom as well as from the worlds of the Dravidians and Austrics, and to some extent also of the Tibeto-Burmans. It seems very likely that, after the initial Aryan irruption into India in the fifteenth-tenth centuries B.C., the stream of migration continued, though in dribblets, down to the eighth or seventh century. Then, after the Achaemenian empire began, there started the second period of Aryan (now purely Iranian) expansion into India, with Zoroastrian Iranians not knowing or caring for Indian Vedic and Brahmanical cults and culture. This was of course not a race movement, but a settlement of foreigners in small groups—foreigners who were connected by blood and culture, but foreigners now nevertheless.

The epoch changed, and the third period of Aryan infiltration in India (now definitely Iranian and fully differentiated from Indian) commenced from the Parthian period, when the Bāhlikas, Vāhikas, Pārthavas or Pahlavas, Śulikās (Sogdians), Śakas and other Iranian were coming in fairly large numbers and were settling mostly in the Panjab and Sindh and even deeper towards the heart of India. The period of Śaka rule in North-western and Northern India naturally helped these Śaka and other Iranian immigrations. The Śaka pressure on Eastern Iran was also partly responsible for some Iranian tribal movements into India. With the coming of large groups of Iranian settlers, who, however, were not overwhelming in their numbers but were nevertheless sufficiently numerous, the face of the country was changed. The land of North Panjab, which was the *fons et origo* of Vedic and Brahmana culture during the tenth–sixth centuries B.C., became, during the centuries immediately before and after Christ (when the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata* was taking its present shape), a land of uncultured semi-barbarians who, nevertheless, were considered as being within the sphere of Indian (Hindu) religion and culture. It was due to two things: first, it was because of their religion, which had a place for the Old Aryan fire-cult, and also for the iconic adoration of some Old Aryan nature-divinities who were also found in India, like the Sun (Mithra, Mihira-Mitra), the Moon (Mao, Mās), the Wind (Vāta), besides some specific Brahmanical deities whom they adopted in Eastern Iran from India (like Śiva and Umā, Kumāra, Viṣṇu); and secondly, it was because of their Aryan language, which still could be detected as being related to both Sanskrit and Prakrit. For these reasons, they were looked upon as belonging to the Indian fold. The uncomplimentary and damaging observations (found in the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata*—Karna-Parvan, and other works) about the people of North Panjab, the land of the Madras and Vāhikas and others, made by Karna to Śalya at the field of Kurukshetra, would seem

really to refer to a changed situation in the country during the centuries immediately before and after Christ; and in the *Mahābhārata*, it was but an uncritical transposition of a population situation in the third or second century B.C. or first or second century A.D. back to the actual period of the *Mahābhārata* Battle in the tenth century B.C. This has led to an apparent conflict in the statements in Brahmana and Upanishad literature (ninth-seventh centuries B.C.) with those in the *Mahābhārata*, which professes to refer to conditions in the tenth century B.C. But the accounts in the *Karṇa-Parvan* actually bring in conditions which prevailed when the *Mahābhārata* was being finally redacted by later editors (round about the time of Christ).

During the third great period of Iranian contact with India on the Indian soil, when the Parthians were ruling and were succeeded by the Sasanians, particularly in the first few centuries after Christ, very far-reaching cultural influences came from an Iran (which had already arrived at an independent maturity) to an India (which had also almost fully crystallized her composite culture). The Pallavas of India, who became such an important ruling element in the Deccan and South India in the sixth-eighth centuries A.D., were in all likelihood of Iranian Parthian origin (*Pārthava* || *Pahlava* = *Pallava*). Then from the third or fourth century A.D. onwards there were settlements of bands of Iranian priests and learned men, Zoroastrian scholars with special knowledge of astronomy, who introduced the Iranian cult of the Sun-God into India. This perhaps almost immediately merged into the Indian way of Sun-worship, and orthodox Brahmans had no difficulty in accepting some new iconographic features in the Iranian conception of the Sun-God. The Indian (Vedic) *Sūrya* is a handsome young deity, riding a four-horse chariot, with two goddesses, his consorts *Ushas* and *Śaranyu*, on either side, holding an umbrella over his head and waving a *chowrie*, and the Sun-God himself is driving his chariot. The two divine horsemen, the *Aśvins*, are riding alongside the Sun-God's chariot, and the demons of darkness are being trampled upon. This is the representation of the Sun-God in a bas-relief of the pre-Christian period at the Buddhist cave of *Bhaja* in Western India. But the Sun-God in Iran had a different iconography. Sanskrit *Mitra* = Avestan *Miθra* became in Parthian times *Mihr*, which is found in Pahlavi and Modern Persian. This Middle Iranian form *Mihr* was brought to India by the Iranian *Magas* (Magi) or priests, and the name was immediately Indianized, and adopted into Sanskrit as *Mihira*. The Iranian Sun-God *Mihr* was an Iranian, and he was pictured as a Persian horseman, with top-boots. The Iranian *Mihr* came to India accompanied by his son *Raēvant* (who was adopted in Hindu mythology as *Rēvanta*, the God of the Chase). Gods and goddesses in Indian (Hindu, Buddhist and Jain) iconography are depicted bare-footed, but *Sūrya* or the Sun-God, in a composite Indo-Iranian iconography from after the advent of *Mihira* or *Mihr* as the equivalent of the Indian *Sūrya*, was dressed as an Indian prince of the times, with short waist-cloth and jewels on his person, but he wore top-boots, particularly in North Indian images. The Iranian priests, because they brought the Chaldaeo-Greek astronomy from the Hellenistic world with them and taught it to the Indians (who had by A.D. 420 abandoned their primitive Vedic astronomy and took up the more advanced Greek system), and because they came as devoted worshippers of the Sun-God, acquired the status of Brahmans (although considered inferior to the original Brahmans of Vedic affiliation). The Iranian priests when they settled in India came to be known as *Maga-Brāhmanas*, or *Śakadvīpiya Brāhmanas*, i.e., Brahmans who were also *Magas* (*Magoi*, *Magi* in Greek and Latin) or Iranian priests, or Brahmans from *Śakadvīpa*, the 'Island of

the Śakas', i.e., Sīstān (Śakastāna), as they passed into India through Eastern Iran of which Sīstān was a part. They have now become absorbed in Hindu society, and have even become an important and respected class of Brahmans—a thing which could not happen to some still later waves of Iranian settlers, like the Zoroastrian Parsis, who began to seek refuge in India from after A.D. 642, and particularly in the twelfth–thirteenth centuries.

By the sixth century A.D. Indian (Hindu) civilization was at its full maturity, after the Gupta empire had ushered in a period of highest advance in Indian thought and culture, in art and literature and in the crafts. Similarly, under the contemporary Sasanian emperors, Iran had also come to the zenith of her civilization. There was close interchange of the material as well as intellectual and spiritual wealth of each country with that of the other. The frescos of Ajanta gave very correct and realistic pictures of Persian scenes. Persian men and women in small panels, and scenes of Persian couples drinking in intimacy, and besides that great scene of the Sasanian ambassadors visiting the court of a Deccan king in India. Indian Music and the Arts (e.g., ivory-carving, which went to Iran in the early centuries after Christ, and Indian silk and other textiles), Indian Science (mathematics and medicine), Indian literature (the animal fables and romances), Indian Philosophy (the study of *tarka* or logic, for instance) were accepted with open arms in cosmopolitan Iran. The elephants in Sasanian art, from the style of the bas-reliefs depicting hunting scenes, were faithful copies of Indian figures of elephants. On the other hand, many kinds of Persian textiles also came to India, and the art of metal-work, in which Iran had acquired a pre-eminence from the period of the Luristan bronzes, long before the foundation of the Achaemenian empire, and which rose to such a high excellence in Sasanian metal-craft (ornaments, utensils, particularly engraved plates, and repoussé work, etc.) in gold, silver and bronze, came to India and influenced the metal-craft of India to a remarkable degree; and from medieval Iran of the Sasanian times, we got two common Modern Indian words for metal-workers—the word *sēkrā* in Bengali and *ṭhaṭheērā* in Hindi. Some kinds of textile stuffs also came to India from Iran, e.g., the kind of cloth known as *stābaraka* in the Harsha-Carita of Bāṇabhatta. All this gives not the least of direct cultural contacts and mutual influences between Iran and India.

Even after the bulk of the people in Iran accepted the Muslim religion, the coming of the Iranians into India was not stopped. There were, however, no mass movements, and mostly the Muslim Iranians came in small groups, as soldiers of fortune, as merchant adventurers, as scholars and religious men in Islam, and as artists and craftsmen. They certainly helped in enriching the medieval culture of India, and they were mostly patronized by the Indian Muslim rulers, and occasionally by Hindu rulers as well. They brought in a more urban and a more cosmopolitan cultural atmosphere, which were much more complex and more sophisticated than the simpler and more primitive culture-world of Hindu India. The Muslim Iranians were easily assimilated among the upper strata of Indian Muslims—the change from the Shi'a to the Sunni doctrine often taking place as a matter of course.

After Iran was conquered by the Arabs, and the religion of the conquerors was taken over by the bulk of the Iranian people, those who remained faithful to the religion of their forefathers found many disabilities in their native land, and several waves of exodus of Zoroastrian Iranians started. These Zoroastrians were welcomed in India, and they found an

asylum in the country, mainly in the area of Gujarat. They took up some special trades (liquor trade, e.g.) and a few specialized industries, and distinguished themselves as merchants and shopkeepers and latterly as industrialists also. But they lost their language, and took up Gujarati which was the language of the area where they mostly settled. Nevertheless, they passionately clung to their ancestral faith, and maintained the study of Avestan and Pahlavi when these were abandoned by the Islamized Iranians in the homeland. With their special religion and their segregation to preserve their identity, they could not be fully integrated with the local people in India, who themselves also had developed an extreme parochialism and spirit of exclusiveness and segregation *vis-à-vis* all foreigners settled among them. But they nevertheless found for themselves a niche in Indian society, which was indeed quite a place of honour for them, helping the intellectual and economic development of India with the talent and industry and capacity for constructive work they brought from Iran.

Indo-Iranian connexions and cultural interchanges certainly form a most vital chapter in the history of both India and Iran, and there have been attempts to resuscitate this history, though not in a systematic or comprehensive way. India's debt to Iran through the centuries in the domain of organized political and social life, in the various arts and crafts, in the thousand and one things of civilized and urbane living, has been enormous. In the oldest period, the coming of more and more Aryans from Iran into India meant the strengthening and frequent toning up of the Aryan element in the Indian population, with the Aryan virtues like adherence to truth and justice and respect for womanhood being vigorously maintained in the Indian scene. Iran was more internationally-minded than India, being in the hub of things and in intimate connexions with all the advanced peoples who were making history in the Middle East and Asia Minor, in North Africa and in South-eastern Europe. Iran's material civilization and way of life were fuller and more varied than that of India. Iranian contact meant the importing of a good number of new ideas and new objects in India, and a greater expansion of India's mental horizon and cultural experience.

9. *Impact of Iranian (Old Persian or Achaemenian) Imperialism on India*

After the crystallizing of Brahmanism (with Buddhism and Jainism) in India and of Zoroastrianism in Iran, and after the Achaemenian period when Iranians formed the *Herrenvolk* in North-western India, Iranian influences in the political and cultural spheres became irresistible and tremendous. In his suggestive paper, 'India and the Persian Empire' (*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, New Series, Vol. XXIX, 1932, Article No. 29, pp. 333-65), Harit Krishna Deb sought (and it would appear quite successfully, too) to establish that it was the far-reaching influence of the first centralized empire in the world, that of Cyrus the Great and Darius I, that the entire civilized world of the day in India (as a part of Asia), in Africa and in Europe, came under the influence of Iranian ideologies regarding the State. The Achaemenian centralized empire inspired some Indian potentates of the sixth-fifth centuries B.C. to essay at similar creation of large kingdoms or empires by conquering or assimilating small states, particularly autonomous states centring round some city. Thus Pradyōta (or Chaṇḍa Mahāsēna), King of Avanti, Udayana, King of Vatsa (Kōsala), as well as Darśaka, son of Ajātaśatru Kuṇika of Magadha, all tried to start big empires (second half of the

sixth century B.C.). It was about the same time that the Achaemenians made piecemeal conquest of the whole of the Near East, and brought all the Greek city-states in Western Asia Minor under their sway, supporting the Greek 'tyrants' as against democratic governments. With the co-operation of the Carthaginians, Darius I, the Persian Emperor, attempted to crush the Greeks in the West (in Sicily and Italy), just as he made a futile attempt himself to conquer the Greeks on the mainland of Greece, because their democratic ideal was against the imperial ideal of the Achaemenians. In this effort for expansion, Persian imperialism failed before the resistance of the democratic forces among the Greeks. The Sicilian Greeks defeated the Carthaginians as allies of the imperial forces of Persia, and the combination of Athenians, Spartans and other Greeks at Marathon and Salamis saved democracy and democratic ideals for humanity. The big states in India founded by Darśaka, Pradyōta and Udayana had alliances among themselves—Pradyōta's daughter Vāsava-dattā and Darśaka's sister Pādmāvati became the two queens of Udayana; but these states did not endure. Pradyōta's son Pālaka was assassinated at a rising of the people, and Darśaka was deposed; and after Udayana, the Vatsa-Kosala state did not endure. These big states, however, formed the prelude to the first great empire in India in historic times—the empire of Magadha founded by Mahāpadma Nanda (c. 412 B.C.), and this centralized empire was later inherited and strengthened and expanded by Chandragupta Maurya, his son Bindusāra and his grandson, the great Aśoka. The organization of the Indian empire under the Mauryas was based on that of the Achaemenian empire. Kauṭilya or Chāṇakya's great work, the *Artha-śāstra*, is a treatise on the running of a great empire on bureaucratic lines. The small free and democratic states run by the Aryan clans (in the way that the Medes had these little states under tribal chiefs before they were all united by Deiokes Dayakku or Dahāka), during the first half of the seventh century B.C., in the Panjab and elsewhere, finally came under the control of the Maurya empire. But before that, so long as they were active and vigorous, they gave the stiffest resistance to Alexander the Great and his Greeks during the last quarter of the fourth century B.C.

In many matters of organization and outward *décor*, the Iranian model was fully copied in India. The Mauryan Administrative Boards, State Departments and Officers were echoes of Achaemenian Iran. The simple and direct narrative style of Darius's inscriptions in Old Persian appears to have been copied by Aśoka—the Indian preamble echoes the Iranian:

θa(ha)ti Dārayava(h)uš xšāyathiya, and devānam piya Piyadasī rājā āha. The styles run parallel to each other.

In the arts and crafts, Iran, too, gave the models in architecture and building for India to copy. Previously, Indian architecture was of houses of wood—palaces, huge walls and ramparts used all to be made of timber, as in the case of the Primitive Indo-Europeans in their original homeland in Southern and Western Russia. There were, however, instances of Cyclopic construction in huge roughly dressed stones in several parts of India, particularly at Rajagriha in Magadha in Eastern India, which may be pre-Aryan. But the art of building in stone on a large scale in classical times came to India from Iran, from the fifth to fourth centuries B.C. Even then, the stone structures copied the style of buildings in timber, and stone fences or railings imitated wooden railings of pre-Aryan timber structures. The great Maurya palace at Pataliputra was a copy of the Iranian palace of Persipolis. Columns with bull and lion capitals, and some decorative designs also came from Iran. The system of government with

satraps or governors in the various provinces, who were scions of the ruling house, was a feature common to the Mauryas and the Achaemenians. In scores of little matters, India sought to profit by Iran's example. This kind of taking to Persian ways even in deeper matters of statecraft and administration continued all through. Even the land-revenue system inaugurated by the great Sasanian emperor of Iran, Khusrau I Noshervan (c. A.D. 531) was taken over a thousand years later by Emperor Akbar. The Muslim rulers of India affiliated themselves entirely to Persian ways and ideas, and took whatever came from Persia as a matter of course.

The extent of mutual borrowings in material and mental and spiritual culture between India and Iran can be understood from a study of Iranian loans in Indian languages, and *vice versa*, beginning from Achaemenian times. Here the balance of borrowing will be found to be heavier for India. We can note words like the following, in Old Persian times: *karsha*, as in *kārshāpana* 'a coin, a measure of metal,' (Old Persian *Karsha*); *Kshatrapa* 'a Governor, a Satrap' (Old Persian *Khshatrapavan*); *dipi*, *lipi* 'writings, inscription' (Old Persian *dipi*); *nipista* 'written' (Old Persian); *āyatana* 'temple' (*āyadana* = *āyazana*, from root *yaz* = Sanskrit *yaj*); *asavāri* 'horseman, trooper' (Old Persian *asabāri*—Sanskrit *aśva-bhāra*); *mudrā* (*mudra* = *muzrā*: 'Egypt, Egyptian seal, seal, coin'); *pramāṇa* (in the sense of 'authority' Old Persian *frāmana*); etc. During the subsequent Parthian and Sasanian periods, the number of words as adopted in the Prakrit dialects of India (and frequently taken over into Sanskrit) is on the increase. Thus we have words like *pusta* 'book, record' (Middle Iranian *post* 'skin to write on, parchment'); *sekyakāra* 'die-cutter, engraver in metal' (Middle Iranian *sikkat*, a loan-word from Aramaic + *kāra* = 'engraver, die-maker, gold- or silversmith' = New Indo-Āryan Bengali *sèkrā*); *pirōjaka* 'turquoise'; *mōcaka* 'top-boot, boot, socks' (*mocak*, New Persian *mozah*); *stabaraka* (a special kind of cloth, found in Sanskrit); *ṭhaṭṭ(h)a* 'a metal plate' (*tasht*); etc. A work like B. Laufer's *Sino-Iranica* gives lists of names of objects relating to the flora and fauna and the mineral kingdom which came from Iran to India and China by way of trade.

It is not necessary to speak further about matters of material culture—from Achaemenian times, beginning with architecture, as has been mentioned above, and the newest and most convenient things came to India mostly from Iran.

10. *India's Spiritual Experience—the Vēdānta and Its Influence on Iranian Taṣawwuf: Dialogues and Mutual Borrowings*

In one matter, however, the basic character of India's socio-political organization stood firm—her village communities, her caste-guilds as caste began to be loosely organized (it was, however, in a fluid state almost all through, and its present hardening or crystallizing is an affair of recent centuries, in matters of both commensality and connubiality), and the Brahmanical control of society through moral forces—that India always remained India, and Iranian and other foreign influences could not penetrate deep enough, so that it might lead to the entire transformation of Indian society and polity. India also stood firm in her basic philosophy of life—in her acceptance of all reasonable assumptions and experiences about the Unseen, in her tolerance, in her humaneness, in her spirit of 'live and let live', in her sense of Unity of all being, and in her spirit of introspection and going deep into things through application of intelligence.

After developing the common Indo-European and Indo-Iranian heritage of the Aryan religion and way of thinking and living in her own way, India did not receive anything worth mentioning in the domain of philosophy and thought from Iran, although, as said before, in matters connected with the organization and directing of man's corporate life in the world there was a heavy debt to Iran all through. In the domain of the spiritual, particularly in connexion with perception and experience of an Unseen Ultimate Reality through the mystic approach, there was a most remarkable give-and-take between India and Iran (and through Iran, with the rest of Islamdom also) by the path of *Taşawwuf* or *Sufism*. The sense of a fundamental Unity of All Being which we have in the Indian Vedanta (transcending the not very profound and rather primitive conception of a personal God running this world and directing the affairs of men), was taken over (or, what is equally possible, arrived at independently) by Islamic Sufism, and this enriched and expanded as well and deepened the spiritual experience of Sufism. Mansūr al-Hallāj's proclamation *anā-l-Haqq* 'I am the Supreme Spirit' and the Sufistic *fanā fi-llāh* 'merging into God' are also in the Vedantic ideal of the human soul ultimately finding its abode in the Great Unity that is God. Sufism thus helped, through the study of Persian Sufi literature by non-Muslim Indians, and through the close friendly contact between Sufi saints and preachers and Hindu *sādhus* and teachers of the Vedanta, to bring about a unique and rare understanding between Mystic and Higher Islam and Philosophical Hinduism as in the Vedanta. An exponent of this spiritual integration we find in Prince Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Emperor Shah-Jahan and the great-grandson of Emperor Akbar, who embodied in his person this harmony and syncretism. He wrote in Persian a book, *Majma'u-l-Bahrain*, or 'Union of the Two Oceans', which addressed itself to Persian-knowing Muslims in India, and outside India; and he further had a translation of this work made into Sanskrit, the *Samudra-saṅgama*, for the Brahmans and other intellectuals in India. This *Sūfiyānah Tariqah*, or 'the Sufistic Way', was a great gift of the deeper spiritual side of the Iranian mind under the impact of Islam for the benefit of the mind of India—and this was accepted with great respect by India. There are Sufi influences in the medieval religious life of India and in the organization of the monastic life of certain Indian Vaishnava sects (see my paper on *Islamic Mysticism: Iran and India*, in Vol. I, No. 3 of *Indo-Iranica*, the Journal of the Iran Society of Calcutta, October, 1946). Here we have the cosmopolitanism of the mind of Iran working in the field of spiritual perception and integration.

In the matter of food and drink, Iranian influences brought an elegance and a taste to India which was not known before among the Indians, both 'Aryan' and 'Dravidian.' Of course, various kinds of vegetable curries, and fish preparations (e.g., of East Bengal), as well as farinaceous pastry of wheat flour (*mithāis*) and rice-powder (*piṭhās*) have their own place in world cuisine. The Indian food was simple, without much variety, and its great contribution to the cuisine of the world has been the curry (both vegetarian and non-vegetarian), *chutney*, *dāl* or pulses and lentils of various sorts, with rice. The *Mahābhārata* and other works, some medieval, give us the range of ancient India's achievements in this line. The food offered to Jagannātha in his temple at Puri gives us the fullest vegetarian menu of early medieval Hindu India. Some basic sweets and other dishes were known to the Indians, but very great improvements upon these were the gifts of Iran. The simple Indian *pēdā* was transformed into the *barfi* and *qalāqand* from Iran; in place of the Indian

mōdaka, *pūpa* and *laḍḍūka*, and *khādyā* (*khājā*), Persian sweets like *jalēbī*, *mihīn-dāna*, *bālū-shāhī*, *nān-khatāi*, various kinds of *halwa* and other finer dishes came. Wheat largely took the place of rice-powder and barley-meal. Various kinds of *pulāō* and *biryānī* replaced simple *māmsōdana*, and in place of a simple roast-meat on spits (*śūlyā*), *kabābs* and *kawurmas* of various kinds enriched Indian cookery. New kinds of fruits and vegetables were introduced from Sasanian times, as the Iranians took from India some Indian fruits and vegetables also. In dress also, the three pieces of unsewn cloth which formed the common Indian dress (one as the *dhōtū*, one as the *aṅgavastra* or cover for the upper limbs, and one to be wound round the head as an *uṣṇīśa* or *muṇḍavēṣṭa-murṭēṭhā*, i.e., turban for men, and one unsewn piece for a *sāri* reaching down to the heels, with a scarf for the upper body and head, and underwear, for women), were supplemented by trousers and coats or tunics for men, and skirts and blouses for women, mostly in North India; and shoes and boots largely supplemented Indian sandals. Thus in the basic appurtenances of life, in the matter of food and dress, we see a very strong impact of Iran upon India.

The number of Indian loans in Iranian, compared with what we have in Indian languages as loan-words from Iran, is quite small (cf. Paul Horn, *Neupersische Schriftsprache in the Grundriss der iranischen Sprache und Altertumskunde*). In post-Islamic times, when the Modern Persian was brought to India and was established in the courts of the Muslim ruling houses as the language of the court and administration, and of the law-courts, and later of the revenue department (from the time of Emperor Akbar), the Persian language was studied by the intellectual *élite* in India (barring orthodox Sanskrit scholars of the old school), and it became practically an Indian language, as much as English in present-day India. An extensive literature of historical works, romances, philosophical and religious treatises (Islamic and Sufistic), poetry particularly in the Sufi vein, lyric as well as narrative poetry, and law and medicine and science and technical subjects, by Indian writers both Hindu and Muslim, developed in Persian in India. Any Persian word for which a suitable Indian equivalent was not immediately available could be taken up, particularly in North India, and used in the modern Indian languages. This adoption of Persian vocables was accepted as the only means for extending the vocabulary of at least three Indian languages, viz., Urdu, Sindhi and Kashmiri. The Urdu form of Hindustani came into being in the eighteenth century, and Sindhi and Kashmiri also started their career as Persianizing languages a little earlier. Thus we have an overwhelming number of Persian words (both native Persian and borrowed Arabic) in Urdu, Sindhi and Kashmiri. In a language the examination of its vocabulary is a sure test for its historical development and cultural *milieu*. The impact of Iran, during both pre-Muslim and post-Muslim times, has been a major factor in the cultural history of India, comparable (for the Muslim times particularly) to the impact of European mentality and culture through the English language and literature in Modern India. The mind of the Muslim *élite* classes in India has specially been 'nurtured, feasted and fed' for all these centuries through Persian, and the poetry and romance of Iran; and Hindus in India also had their share in this feast of culture.

11. *Iran and the World of Asia, Europe and Africa—in the lands of the Middle East and Europe*

The Middle Eastern lands formed the real *nidus* of human civilization—the riverain tracts of Mesopotamia and Egypt, and the hilly regions

of Asia Minor and Northern Mesopotamia. With corporate civilized life beginning from at least 4000 B.C., their influence has been great over all other regions of Asia, Africa and Europe. Sumerian, followed by Akkadian and other Semitic cultures, and Egyptian—these were the oldest civilizations which continued down to the beginning or the middle of the second millennium B.C., in their unabated vigour. After this, these old peoples had to meet the challenge of younger peoples who came to the scene—particularly the peoples of Indo-European origin. The Mongoloid Chinese people lived apart, and they developed their culture largely in isolation. So, too, the Mongoloid Amerindians of Mexico, Central America and the Andes Region, whose world was entirely different, and was free from any trace of Asiatic, European or African impact (apart from what the Mongoloid peoples of North-eastern Asia brought to the two Americas in prehistoric times, when they crossed over the Behring Strait in their migration from Asia to America). There was considerable mutual influencing between the complimentary worlds of Mesopotamia and Egypt through Syria; and the slightly younger Asianic and Aegean world of Asia Minor and Greece and the islands, and probably the proto-Dravidian world of India as well, entered this orbit.

Then came the Indo-Europeans. The Hellenic and Italic peoples were established in the two peninsulas of Greece and Italy, and they took up elements from the Aegean and Asianic peoples, and were also (particularly in Greece) very deeply influenced by the Semitic world of Phoenicia and Syria, and Assyria and Babylon, and by the Hamitic world of Egypt. The Indo-Iranians or Aryans, by virtue of their proximity with the Assyrio-Babylonians and others, as they settled and moved in the Mesopotamian regions, were another branch of the Indo-Europeans who were perhaps much more profoundly impressed by these neighbours of theirs than were the Hellenes and the Italians. The Slavs, the Balts, the Celts and the Teutons as other branches of the Indo-Europeans, because of their remoteness from the Mediterranean and the Mesopotamian worlds, were outside the pale of an intense Southern influence, although some southern influences in culture drifted to the northern homeland of the Indo-Europeans in prehistoric times before their dispersion (as it has been already noted)—e.g., the domestication of the cow, the religious ritual of the burnt offering of barley bread and meat, and the introduction of some fruits and plants like the grape, the apple, the wheat and the pea.

After the Iranians found themselves, so to say, in their political and cultural set-up, and the Achaemenian empire was established, there started, as the direct result of a powerful and centralized imperialistic state (which in matters cultural and religious on the whole remained elastic and never aspired to be totalitarian), a wide-scale influencing of the peoples of classical antiquity, who came to the field from about the end of the first half of the first millennium B.C. This influence was in almost all sides of life—in their polity and their socio-cultural organization, and even to some extent in their religious ideologies and cults and ritual. Almost as much as the immediate brothers of the Iranians, the Indian Aryans, the Semitic neighbours of the Iranians, the Assyrio-Babylonian in their own turn (after having dominated the Iranian cultural scene for so many centuries), the Egyptians (although they were rather far away from the Iranians), the Arabs (who were living their isolated life in the deserts and hilly regions of Arabia and Syria), the Jews, the Urartians of the Caucasus (and their descendants and successors in the same area, the Georgians and other peoples, the Armenians who took up an Indo-European language probably by the middle of the first millennium B.C.), the various Asianic

peoples like the Lydians and Lycians, the Indo-European Phrygians and Asia Minor Thracians, and the Hellenes, who were all linked together within the Achaemenian empire, became all of them equally exposed to Iranian influence, in almost all the walks of life.

The political and administrative framework of the centralized *imperium* of Iran was the first to make its presence felt on all the peoples over whom the Iranian rule was established, mainly by force of arms but also supported in some cases by what would be called in modern parlance 'quislings' who in their self-interest helped to bring their own peoples within the Iranian pale, and in other cases by the inherent spirit of conflict between democracy and autocracy. Democracy at that time with its want of unity and its lack of resources could not generally prove a match for the power and resources and organization of the imperialistic autocracy of Persia. As in his paper on *The Persian Empire and India*, mentioned above, Harit Krishna Deb has suggested, in the two far-flung wings of the Achaemenian empire in the sixth-fifth centuries, we have Persian imperialism and centralization seeking to assimilate within itself the smaller states which sought to function as free democracies. In the Perso-Hellenic conflict (with free Hellenic states of Greece proper taking part), this struggle was brought to a head. And when the small armies of the Athenians and Spartans and other Greeks met the Medes and the Persians with their whole hosts of troops from a score of nations who were their vassals, clients and mercenaries, and the Hellenes won the victory, this gave a prestige and a vitality to democracy. Achaemenian polity in this matter has certainly been studied to purpose in considering the history of this struggle, to which Herodotos as a contemporary drew the attention of his own Greek people. The allies of the Achaemenians were the Carthaginians who, as a trading and expanding people, were the rivals of the Greeks throughout the whole of the Mediterranean area and even beyond, in North Europe and Africa, from first half of the first millennium B.C. But although Greek 'tyrants' and expansionists were there in Sicily and South Italy, the Greek people as a whole rallied round their Hellenic ideal of free states as against the Semitism of the Carthaginians, and were able to check the latter from being of effective help to the Achaemenian forces of imperialism.

But the Achaemenian system of administration had its great repercussion throughout the civilized world of the age. There were numerous details which were taken over in the outlying countries, particularly when they had formed parts of the empire at some time or other. The policy of justice and all-inclusiveness, moderation and invitation to co-operation with regard to the conquered peoples, which we find in the founder of the empire Kurush or Cyrus the Great, furnished an ideal and a model which the world needed at the time, after the cruelties and tyrannies of the Assyrians. Suppressed peoples like the Jews were sought to be rehabilitated. There were, however, expressions of intolerance in the atmosphere of priestly Zoroastrianism against *Daēva*-worshippers *vis-à-vis* the Mazdayasnians, and there were in Sasanian times cruel persecution of the followers of Mani, which were more for social and political reasons rather than religious; and moreover, although after an initial support of Christianity the Armenian Christians were engaged in religious wars against the Zoroastrian Iranians, on the whole the Iranian attitude in ideological matters was sane and civilized. The persecution of Iranian Zoroastrians after the bulk of people of Iran became Muslim in their religious affiliation was the effect of a much wider spirit of intolerance which had its basis on a theology which refused to understand anything else except its own premises, and also it was the result of an attempt at self-justification against a possible inner reproach

in the presence of those who remained true to the national faith, and this unconscious spirit of self-justification by persecution was not at all understood.

12. *Conclusion and Résumé : Iranianism and World-Civilization*

When all is said, it has to be admitted that the humanistic and civilized attitude of Kurush the Great, which he announced to the 40 nations conquered by Iran, during the middle of the sixth century B.C., some 2,500 years ago, was one of the greatest achievements of the Iranian Aryan people, an achievement and a glory to which other Indo-European peoples, as kinsmen, in blood, in speech and in basic mentality, to the Iranians, can also lay claim to. This has been lost sight of, in our study of world history; and it is something great and good, that humanity is now realizing the value to the world of this Iranian achievement.

The politics of power—of a struggle between absolute and uncurbed monarchy on the one hand, and democracy, true or false, on the other sometimes this democracy, speaking in the name of the people as a whole, was nothing but a camouflage: as it is too often at the present day, covering up closely-knit power-loving tyranny of a party of oligarchs with slogans of high-sounding idealism). This politics of power, with its conflicts and struggles and senseless cruelties has always been ephemeral, although it looms large in the lives of men when it has power. The more enduring things in the world of man relate to the intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual cultures of peoples. From the very first, the Iranian empire became a great highway for culture and intellectual as much as material commerce among the nations. People from the farthest corners of the earth as known at the time could congregate in the Achaemenian capitals, and in this way diverse nations were brought together to mingle with each other. In the army of Xerxes invading Greece, there were Indian soldiers dressed in cotton, with iron-tipped arrows who marched side by side with Syrians, Lydians, Egyptians and Ethiopians. The Persian empire under one strong régime which kept the peace enabled an Indian philosopher to travel as far as Athens and to meet Socrates and have a most interesting talk with him. Indian troops fought for Artaxerxes, the last Achaemenian emperor when he was defeated at the Battle of Arbela. Adventuring Indian soldiers with elephants found service with the Greek king Pyrrhus of Epirus when he attacked Italy, and with Hannibal the Carthaginian general when he led his troops against Rome. The path of communication between the East and the West once opened by Iran did not close for many centuries. Literature and art, philosophy and science had a free movement from nation to nation, and this met with the greatest co-operation from the Iranian state. Herodotos had already noted the receptivity of the Persian people to ideas and practices from foreign peoples. Out of the international contacts both national and international cultures take their rise. Successively the three periods of Iran's centralized rule, the Achaemenian, the Parthian and the Sasanian empires, ensured a sort of strong and efficient *Pax Persica*, or *Pax Iranica*, for the greater part of the Near East, which was no less effective than the *Pax Romana*, and possibly also the later *Pax Mongolica* under the descendants of Chingiz Khan for two centuries in helping to establish a loose type of integration of diverse nations in a most natural way. The dissemination of ideas in science and philosophy, in arts and crafts and technology, in architecture, in the military science, in travel and exploration extended from China and India to the Western World of Europe through the Iranian empire for over a millennium. This is how we see the beginnings of European romance and story-telling

coming from India through Iran. Fresh ideas and methods in architecture and the various arts and crafts, as much as in philosophy and religion, the mystic perception and ratiocination, literature and intellection, took their rise among the peoples of the East both in the pre-Christian and post-Christian centuries. They obtained the hallmark of excellence from the genius of Iran, and particularly from the Sasanian times. When the Greco-Roman tradition in art and culture exhausted itself after its millennium of a most glorious existence, these cultural elements from the East with the *imprimatur* of Iran began to have a vogue in the greater part of the civilized world, from Central Asia to Western Europe, and continued along its own line of development right down to the Early Renaissance and then the Full Renaissance of the fifteenth century, when the Greek spirit in art and culture came to be revived in Western Europe. Most remarkable things took place in the domain of the arts and culture under the impact of the spirit of Iran in recent centuries, as much as it happened in the period of classical antiquity. The romantic story-telling of India, made more romantic by the spirit of Persia, and broadened by the realism of the Muslim Arab world, gave to the world that great work of imagination, *the Arabian Nights*, which quickly was transformed into a world classic. The Sufi concept of the Supreme as the World's Sweetheart formed one of the main bases of that great Christian epic of the progress of the Soul towards God, as for example in the *Divina Commedia* of Dante Alighieri. Iranian and Arab Medicine and Mathematics, with some fundamental elements which came from India to Iran, had their place of honour in the evolution of these sciences in medieval and renaissance Europe. Some highly gifted peoples like the Armenians and the Georgians came within the orbit of Iranian culture, and their literature became largely of Pahlavi and Early Modern Persian inspiration. The Georgian 'national epic', as it is so regarded, the *Vepkhis Tqaosani*, or 'The Man in the Tiger's Skin', of Shotha Rustaveli (c. A.D. 1200), is in its form and style like one of the Early Modern Persian narrative poems, e.g., like those by Nizami, although there are native Georgian (Grusian) elements in it.

One important matter, however, must not be lost sight of. India like all other countries of the ancient and medieval world in Asia, Europe and Africa (in the north) has benefited from the material, intellectual, artistic and economico-political achievements of Iran. In the world of the deeper philosophical and spiritual understanding, ratiocination and realization, however, India appears to have been untouched by Iran. While in this matter, Iranian thought and imagination as in Zoroastrianism exerted a tremendous influence upon all the lands of the West as well as in Central Asia, through Judaism, Christianity and Islam and Manicheanism—some of the fundamental ideas, concepts and even practices of Judaism, Christianity and Islam being derived from the Zoroastrianism of Iran, India was free from Iranian influences in her Vedanta, her Buddhism (both Mahayana and Hinayana), her Jainism, her Bhakti schools and her different systems of philosophy. Herein India stood on an independent footing, and her Vedanta and her Buddhism (in its various schools) are now a force in the world in the understanding of the Ultimate. It must, however, be admitted that in Muslim times, particularly after the fourteenth century, Iranian Sufism brought some new literary and mystical atmosphere and ideology in some of the Vaishnava Bhakti schools of India, and these were assimilated within Indian religion (see in this context, S. K. Chatterji,

'Islamic Mysticism, Iran and India' in *Indo-Iranica*, journal of the Iran Society, Calcutta, Vol. I, No. II, October 1946, pp. 39, esp. pp. 27-34. (already noted).

In all these and other ways, the Spirit of Iran, *Irān-manish* or *Iranianism*, has been a factor of major importance in the development of civilization and progress among the nations, and in the cultural integration of humanity, comparable with *Hellenism* and with *Indianism*, each incomparably great in its own special lines of thought and action.

Irān-manish zinda bād!