

Zend' might be recommended as the more proper title. 'Avesta' means 'text,' and Zend means 'comment.' 'Avesta u Zend,' or 'Text and Comment,' is the proper title, which is then contracted into 'Avesta-Zend.' . . . Subjected for the last fifty years to the searching analysis of first-rate orientalists—Burnouf, Westergaard, Brockhaus, Spiegel, Haug, Windischmann, Hübschmann,—this work has been found to belong in its various parts to very different dates, and to admit of being so dissected as to reveal to us, not only what are the tenets of the modern Parsees, but what was the earliest form of that religion whereof theirs is the remote and degenerate descendant. Signs of a great antiquity are found to attach to the language of certain rhythmical compositions called Gāthās or hymns; and the religious ideas contained in these are found to be at once harmonious, and also of a simpler and more primitive character than those contained in the rest of the volume. From the Gāthās chiefly, but also to some extent from other, apparently very ancient, portions of the Zendavesta, the characteristics of the early Iranian religion have been drawn out by various scholars, particularly by Dr. Martin Haug. . . . The most striking feature of the religion, and that which is generally allowed to be its leading characteristic, is the assertion of Dualism. By Dualism we mean the belief in two original uncreated principles, a principle of good and a principle of evil. . . . Both principles were real persons, possessed of will, intelligence, power, consciousness, and other personal qualities. To the one they gave the name of Ahura-Mazda, to the other that of Angro-Mainyus. . . . The names themselves sufficiently indicated to those who first used them the nature of the two beings. Ahura-Mazda was the 'all-bountiful, all-wise, living being' or 'spirit,' who stood at the head of all that was good and lovely, beautiful and delightful. Angro-Mainyus was the 'dark and gloomy intelligence' that had from the first been Ahura-Mazda's enemy, and was bent on thwarting and vexing him. And with these fundamental notions agreed all that the sacred books taught concerning either being. . . . The two great beings who thus divided between them the empire of the universe were neither of them content to be solitary. Each had called into existence a number of inferior spirits, who acknowledged their sovereignty, fought on their side, and sought to execute their behests. At the head of the good spirits subject to Ahura-Mazda stood a band of six dignified with the title of Amesha-Spentas, or 'Immortal Holy Ones.' . . . In direct antithesis to these stood the band, likewise one of six, which formed the council and chief support of Angro-Mainyus. . . . Besides these leading spirits there was marshalled on either side an innumerable host of lesser and subordinate ones, called respectively 'ahuras' and 'devas,' who constituted the armies or attendants of the two great powers, and were employed by them to work out their purposes. The leader of the angelic hosts, or 'ahuras' was a glorious being, called Sraosha or Serosh—'the good, tall, fair Serosh,' who stood in the Zoroastrian system where Michael the Archangel, stands in the Christian. . . . Neither Ahura-Mazda nor the Amesha-Spentas were represented by the early Iranians under any material forms. The Zoroastrian sys-

tem was markedly anti-idolatrous: and the utmost that was allowed the worshipper was an emblematic representation of the Supreme Being by means of a winged circle, with which was occasionally combined an incomplete human figure, robed and wearing a tiara. . . . The position of man in the cosmic scheme was determined by the fact that he was among the creations of Ahura-Mazda. Formed and placed on earth by the Good Being, he was bound to render him implicit obedience, and to oppose to the utmost Angro-Mainyus and his creatures. His duties might be summed up under the four heads of piety, purity, industry, and veracity. Piety was to be shown by an acknowledgment of Ahura-Mazda as the One True God, by a reverential regard for the Amesha-Spentas and the Izeds, or lower angels, by the frequent offering of prayers, praises, and thanksgivings, the recitation of hymns, the occasional sacrifice of animals, and the performance from time to time of a curious ceremony known as that of the Haoma or Homa [see SOMA.—HAOMA]. . . . The purity required of the Iranians was inward as well as outward. . . . The duty of veracity was inculcated perhaps more strenuously than any other. . . . If it be asked what opinions were entertained by the Zoroastrians concerning man's ultimate destiny, the answer would seem to be, that they were devout and earnest believers in the immortality of the soul, and a conscious future existence. . . . The religion of the early Iranians became corrupted after a time by an admixture of foreign superstitions. The followers of Zoroaster, as they spread themselves from their original seat upon the Oxus over the regions lying south and south-west of the Caspian Sea, were brought into contact with a form of faith considerably different from that to which they had previously been attached, yet well adapted for blending with it. This was Magism, or the worship of the elements [see MAGIANS]. The early inhabitants of Armenia, Cappadocia, and the Zagros mountain-range, had, under circumstances that are unknown to us, developed this form of religion, and had associated with its tenets a priest-caste. . . . The four elements, fire, air, earth, and water, were recognised as the only proper objects of human reverence. . . . When the Zoroastrians came into contact with Magism, it impressed them favourably. . . . The result was that, without giving up any part of their previous creed, the Iranians adopted and added on to it all the principal points of the Magian belief, and all the more remarkable of the Magian religious usages. This religious fusion seems first to have taken place in Media. The Magi became a Median tribe, and were adopted as the priest-caste of the Median nation." This "produced an amalgam that has shown a surprising vitality, having lasted above 2,000 years—from the time of Xerxes, the son of Darius Hystaspis (B. C. 485-465) to the present day."—G. Rawlinson, *Religions of the Ancient World*, ch. 3.—"As the doctrines of Zoroaster bear in several points such a striking resemblance to those of Christianity, it is a question of grave importance to ascertain the age in which he lived. . . . Since there can be no doubt that . . . we must assign to Zarathustra Spitama a date prior to the Median conquest of Babylon by a Zoroastrian priest king, the only question remaining to be solved