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A MAZDAZNAN MYSTIC

Life-sketch of the late Behramshah

Navroji Shroff, the 20th

Century Exponent

of

Zarthoshti Elm-e-Khshnoom

(i.e. Esotericism of Zoroastrianism)

BY

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PREFACE.

I have written this short account of the life of our Revered Ustad-Saheb Behramshah Nowroji Shroff with a deep feeling of respect for the sacred knowledge of "Khshnoom", which he brought from the Saheb-e-Dils of Iran. My attempt principally has been to give an idea, so far as I could find it, of the pious sahebs of the "Firdos", their ways of life and their methods of teaching. It is apparent that it was almost impossible for me to do full justice to this great subject but if I have succeeded in giving some idea of how a pious community of the true followers of the ancient religion of Zarathushtra, even to-day in their strict seclusion guard over their fold and help to maintain their religious Faith, then I shall bow in sincere gratitude to Ahura-Mazda. I request my reader's attention to the chapter on the mysteries and the marvels of Khshnoom, pages (35-61).

2nd March 1944.

Nanabhoy F. Mama.

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A Mazdaznan Mystic.

By Mr. Nanabhoy Framji Mama,

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BIRTH AND BOYHOOD.

Behram bin Nowrooz bin Peshotan lakhe Shroff was born in Bombay of well-to-do and respectable Mazdaznan parents on the 3rd day of August 1857, and died at Surat after an eventful and a long life of seventy years less twenty-seven days on the 7th day of July 1927. From his mother's side he belongs to the family of the "Tarachands" and from his father's side to the family of the "Surtis". He was an "Athraivan" (priest, Brahmin) by caste and his ancestors had actually practised that profession in the Fire-Temples of Bombay and Surat. But the last of these in the person of his father having taken up the business of a "Shroff" (moneylender) he had come to be known by that surname. He was thoroughly chaste in his private life, stalwart in build like an Iranian soldier, and by inheritance he was ever enthusiastic and high-spirited in matters religious and spiritual. He had preached Truth and practised it too, and possessed a memory which was marvellously retentive (Hafezā). His long life divides itself into three periods of a rather uneven and contrasted career. The first of these was his boyhood till he was about sixteen to eighteen years of age, the second the most vitally important period of his life was the period of about three years and a half, which he had spent in the company of the great Mazdaznan (Dilpat or Sāheb-del) Masters in the precincts of the "Firdos" in the Iran-e-Bāten (unseen); and finally the third and the last, which deals with the period after his return to worldly life, and which again subdivides itself into two parts, the first of silence and seclusion which was thirty years, and the next of public activities which was twenty years.

His childhood and primary education takes one brief sentence to describe, viz. that in his studies he had not gone much farther than a mere span after the last letter of the

Gujrati alphabet, and even this insignificant little he could stutter and stammer with difficulty. To have reached the age of eighteen years with only so much of reading and writing and no more, does not display any unusual abilities or any precocious intelligence in the boy; but he was all the same destined to record his services as a landmark of considerable importance in the history of Avestan research. Inscrutable are the ways of Nature which work ever for the good of man, and it is the only mysterious agent that exhibits the rare power of bringing forth good even out of evil. A dispute between a mother and her son is the most lamentable feature of a man's life on earth but the one which befell Behram, though lamentable, was yet destined for the accomplishment of a specific purpose the most important and thoroughly blessed. Young Behram disagreed with his mother, and left his hearth and his home in a temper, be it a spirit of adventure, or be it a feeling of disappointment or disgust, but he rambled and rambled away till the rustic limits of his native village sunk beneath the horizon behind him. If there is any tangible and touchable and feelable indication of the Divine presence among material surroundings, then it is to be felt and experienced in the mother's love and the love for the mother. At the same time, if there is any proof or indication of an unseen hostility floating about in the air, causing a temporary aberration of his intellect, then the best proof of that sinister presence is in that same sad phenomenon made manifest in the moment of a man's disagreement and discord with his dear mother. Under every and all circumstances, the mother-and-the-child sentiment is a double demonstration on Earth, which when correctly appreciated suffices, first, to baffle all atheistic speculations, and secondly to stabilize in reasoned faith many an agnostic swinging between ignorance and knowledge. Angro Mainyus is as essential for the preservation and continuance of that constant motion pervading the Universe as Spento Mainyus is: And the balance between the two is maintained by the life-giving conviction noted above, that Nature ever works for the good of man. There is to be a "Shukri-Khuda" (Thanks

be to God) for all that happens. Man is made of "clay", says the holy Koran; but from the same venerable source, also comes the gladdening news that within that same clay made form is the breath of God. If the clay therefore in the boy Behram temporarily made him insensible to a mother's affection, and hurried him away from her, the breath of God revived in him that noble sentiment later on and pulled him back to her as we shall presently see.

The Ramblings of Behram and his Meeting with Rasheed :—

The boy was going northwards. Ahmedabad, Kathiawad, Punjab, and finally to the frontier provinces of Peshawar he came. Here, he met his uncle (his mother's brother) and halted. Peshawar is a city of Pathans, a ferocious and a warlike tribe, and young Behram had been warned to be very careful in his association with them. As the predestination of past "Karma" would have it, however, the boy in his loitering one day accidentally came up to a place where a caravan of foreigners had encamped. He had just answered the call of Nature and in strict conformity with the Mazdaznan religious rites and ceremonies of his forebears, he had washed his hands and face and other open parts of his body: had unwound his "Kusti" and was mumbling his prayers for the re-winding of it. This was enough,—the Mazdaznan had been recognised by his kin of the caravan. Two stalwarts from the camp soon approached him with an invitation from their chief. The uncle's warning was the element that created a doubt and hindered its acceptance. There was a feeling of fear in him, the boy was afraid. Nature however ever works for the good of man. Human physiognomy has both an attracting and a repelling force, and works in a manner, natural and forceful. "Features—the great soul's apparent seat." (Bryant)—It discloses the kind and the wicked, the simple and the shrewd, and ever is it that instinct more than expert skill is able sharply to discriminate. The saintly serenity of the new comers had already won the boy's heart, and the little awkwardness and hesitation, that

still lurked behind, weakening the attraction, was soon dispelled when the good strangers pulling aside the folds of their outer garments showed the "Sudreh and the Kusti" they were themselves wearing. The traces of doubt and hesitation in the boy's mind, therefore, were thus swept clean out, and he followed the strangers to their chief in the camp with the joyful willingness of "The Mary's lamb". The name of the chief was "*Rasheedji Saheb*." The very look of the man was a mute command to-bow. He was a "Saheb-Dil". The great Swami Vivekanand has somewhere said that the foreheads of the "Rishis" and the "Mahatmas" display a sparkle which carries a voiceless command to the onlooker, to say... "Bow!" Here was a perfect "Mazdaznan Mahatma" and the halo round his head voiced the same order to the astonished boy. The details of what happened at this meeting are not on record. But it seems the sadness that haunted the boy for the recently caused absence of a mother's love, was nearly compensated for by the fatherly treatment given him by this great Athravan and his associates. He became attached to his host and was even unwilling to return to his uncle Behram for the first time in his life felt his heart throb to the rhythm of an indescribable feeling of surprise blended with joy. But the "glad tidings" of the meeting had to be related to the uncle, (the Gujarati word for a mother's brother is, Mama) The old man naturally grew quite nervous over the incident, and when the young man straight off told him that the strangers were desirous of taking him to Iran along with them, he left no device untried, honest or otherwise, to dissuade him from that rashness. The old man reading the determination on the boy's face resorted to the extreme of inventing a lie, which of course could well be excused him. He told the boy Behram, he had received an urgent telegram from Bombay intimating that his mother was on her death-bed and that he should therefore return to her. The love of and duty towards a mother is an unexplainable problem for all mankind and so was it for the hero of our story. The effects of the sad news had really been intensified by the long distance between his mother and himself and also by her long absence.

"Just that one word, Mother,
 Compare it with no other;
 The first word of the infant
 And the last word of the brave—
 So gentle and forgiving,
 Oh, prize her while she's living.
 No truer friend than Mother
 From the cradle to the grave."

(American Mazdaznan Magazine, November 1937,
 page 37.)

For the boy, Rasheedji had already become a solace in his sorrow, and a companion of his joy. He was the oracle which Behram could never afford to neglect. He therefore ran up to this man of wisdom and related the whole story of the telegram. The master just closed his eyes for one brief moment and simply and serenely said, "My Son! the story of the telegram is not true. As I can see, today is the anniversary of your mother's birth-day and she is sitting with her neighbours, chatting and gossiping with them and enjoying the dainties peculiar to that day," Swift as a flash the boy remembered the "roz" (day) and the "mah" (month) of his mother's birth and was convinced of the truth of Rasheedji's words. Here was a genuine instance of what "Mazdaznan Truth" is really like; *it is ever the strictest Truth; it is ever the whole Truth; and it is ever nothing but the Truth.* The effects and the influences of such a "Mazdaznan Truth" have a courage about them that will defy a world's opposition. And the baseness of a lie shall make a coward of the most valiant soldier. Here was Behram, every little muscle of his boyish frame emanated the sparks of an invincible resolve. A resolve it was not to meet or to go to his Mama anymore. Untruth even must and ever does defeat itself: And in reverential love and undoubting confidence lies ever the triumph of Truth. Behram went boldly to his uncle and told him Rasheedjee's explanation. The old man steeped in astonishment was compelled to accept the truth of the statement of the Great "Dilpat." It was still some days before the caravan would start on its return journey and these few days helped

to crystalise the boy's resolve to the rigidity of an unbending rock. The day of departure soon arrived: It was the last day when Behram's uncle had waited in vain for the boy's return. He had left. The caravan was due to return, and it had already started on its homeward journey, Behram "on board."

Nature knows no accidents :

Sow and reap is its one rigid law :

Avestan religion is the Study of Nature's Laws; the laws that explain all phenomena described as accident by the limited intelligence of Man. It has much of a mystery which must astonish the uninitiated generality of the human species, nay, it may even appear as something absurd and ludicrous. There is no inexorable destiny, but the deeds (in Khashoom terminology Keshâsh; Sanskrit Karma) of men make it so. Let the doubting mind think but for one moment, whether the whole story of the boy Behram, commencing with his disagreement with his mother, his leaving her in a temper, his ramblings over hill and dale, his arrival at Peshawar, his stay at his uncle's house, his aimless loiterings in the street, his feeling for a Nature's call, his performance of the "Khusti-Padiab" ceremony on the open road, and the coincidence of the caravan being then just in the position to observe it, and all that followed, could possibly have been but mere accidents? The hardest doubter too must pause for a reply. The law of "Keshash" had been hard at work : the drama that had long commenced was coming to its denouement. The rare fortune of a visit to the "Baten Iran" that had fallen to the lot of the boy Behram was only the hardest of all that he had sown perhaps centuries ago. "Asha" the Order that pervades every atom of the Universe and which is the unmistakable exhibition of divine Justice, proves the convictions of the Theist and establishes the truth of the Gathic law :—

"Akem Akâe Vanghuheem Asheem Vanghavo"

(Ha. XLIII, V. 5)

Good shall beget good, and evil evil. Let not the reader prejudge and be prejudiced against a phenomenon rare enough to be ordinarily observed, but let him consider same with reverence and faith and there shall surely be much for him that is new and worth knowing.

The Story:—

Ustad-Saheb one day in a merry mood explained that many many years ago, there lived in the country of Iran a great "Abed" (a learned and a pious priest) and a great general of the Iranian army. If it is not unusual in the society of men, to find sin and ignominy discarded and hated, it is also not rare that piety and learning too sometimes comes across a similar fate. There will be many that hate vice, yet there are not less that find fault with virtue as well. So it was and strange as it may seem that even the piety of this pious priest had somehow displeased some ignorant fanatic of his times. No doubt the hardest enemy to contend with is the ignorance of man: and just as knowledge of the right kind leads to enlightenment, opens up brighter visions to view, and enables one to hear the voice that floats down to him from the heavens, so does the darkening ignorance not only limit the vision but positively makes one blind to light and deaf to all healthy admonition. The outburst of ferocity against virtue has a stronger urge than the one against vice, and the enemy of the Abed-Saheb had therefore planned and schemed his vengeance to do its worst. The opportunity soon came, and he was there, the unsheathed weapon in his hand and ready to strike the fatal blow. The proposals of man however are not always fulfilled. The valiant Iranian general, as if shot out from the mother earth, appeared on the scene. Ever prepared as he was to do his duty, brave and forgetful of self, saw the sinister motive of the assailant, flew at him with all the fierceness and speed of a lion's leap, and lo! the assaulter lay disabled in his limbs and frustrated in his motives. The Abed was safe. The Iranian general had saved his life. It was an obligation not easy to repay. There must have been thankgivings and rejoicings galore.

Years and generations and perhaps centuries must have passed by and the time had become ripe for that obligation to be repaid by a fitting reward. The pious priest of yore had now been reborn as the "Shroshavarez-saheb-Marzbanji" the Reverend Grand chief of the colony of the "Saheb-Dils" of the Kuhe-Demavand; and the valiant general too had been reborn in the stalwart person of our young hero Behram. The former had by his clairvoyance seen and located the existence of the boy, and eager to repay his debts of those days of many centuries ago, had contrived the drama of Rasheedji's caravan to trace him in Peshawar and to fetch him to Iran. He was to be instructed in the science of "Khshnoom" which means Esoteric knowledge which leads to beatitude and salvation. There could not have been a better repayment of the obligation conferred. It had been a body-saving obligation and it was now sought to be repaid by a life-saving reward.

Such was the explanation of the revered Ustad-Saheb himself. We who cherish his memory, respect and believe it. For such as hesitate no harm shall come: but let none lose himself so as to ridicule and treat it as a lie. A pious doubt is a virtue of great merits, but an impious one is a cardinal sin.

The Homeward March of the Caravan:—

To resume the thread of our narrative, the caravan started on its return journey. The route was long and beset with dangers, dangers of highwaymen, and dangers of attack from religious fanatics. The travellers were all Zarathushtrians of the highest order: but they dared not to disclose their identity. They had to be cautious and careful. It was a caravan of holy men, and many a time must it have happened that it had come to close quarters with the roughest of men, and the wildest of robbers: merciless marauders, and heartless men of ferocious animal propensities. But Rasheedji the leader was a man of piety and when he and his comrades could command retrospective vision over centuries gone by, and could as easily fortell events prearranged by

Nature's laws, it does not become difficult to believe what Ustad-Saheb related, that on occasions of such imminent and grave danger, Rasheedji could make himself and his company invisible to hostile eyes, and they would pass by such gangs quite within touching distance and yet remain unseen by them. All marvels and every mystery are as much in accordance with the laws of Nature as was the apple that fell on Newton's head: but ignorance it is that makes the miracle. The simple villager, when he first saw a flood of the most brilliant light shoot out of a ball of glass not much bigger than a marble at the townsman's mere touch of a button somewhere, believed the latter to be a devil-inspired magician and became quite nervous over it. The performance of a miracle is nothing more than an exhibition of the knowledge of laws unknown to the generality of men.

The city of Peshawar and even the frontiers of India were soon lost view of. The first halt was at Kafirstan, from there to Afganistan's upper border, and thence towards the northern part of the famous country of Khorasan, which is a province of Iran and which in its days of prosperity had for long shielded the Irani fugitives from the persecution and tyranny of their Arab conquerors. From Khorasan the caravan proceeded in a north westerly direction till they all reached the city of Azarbaizon, the true birth-place of Zarathūshtra the first prophet on Earth. The caravan was now in the north-western provinces of Iran. Thence they started afresh for the final stage of the blessed journey and soon came in sight of the longed-for destination and goal, the "Kuh-e-Demavand" in the Albruz range of the mountains of Iran. The trunk roads and side roads that lead up to the plains in the valley of the Demavand mountains are open and known to all; but the paths that lead thence to the city of Firdos are what may be spoken of as the mystery march of the travellers. These paths are guarded by talismans and are invisible to uninitiated eyes. In this beautiful plain on the open side of the Demavand, the Caravan, quite unaccountably, divided itself into two parts, one of which left for a destination no one knows anything about, perhaps

for "Chaichasta". The other, which had Behram with it, proceeded in a particular direction towards the hills. The narrative is studded with events and occurrences which distinguish themselves as unusual, and one more of such was that Behram's friends when they had gone but a few paces, quite suddenly and unexplainably and unexpectedly found a venerable Dastoor very comfortably reclining on a rock in the uninhabitable wilds of that place. It seemed as if he had been informed of the approach of the caravan by a telepatic telegram, and that he had therefore come out to receive them. This mystery, whatever its solution may be, most certainly connotes a perfect organisation and a perfect system of communication, which, though assuredly wireless, yet had its transmitters in the human minds, and its receivers in the human hearts. The Dastur led the way for Behram's friends. They soon came to a place where the loose boulders had become heaped into a hillock. The Dastur removed a few of them to discover a deep dark tunnel; and entering therein, once more led the way. It was utter darkness, but there was trust, and faith and confidence. The flock was fear-free. They are wrong who say darkness inspires fear. No: it is distrust that does it. And true it is what St. John has said:—*"Perfect love casteth out fear"*. It was not long before a hopeful ray of Khorshed peeped through the gloom once more, and joy stirred afresh the hearts of all. The blessed light grew brighter. They were in the abode of Love and Liberty: The Firdos, the monastery of Mazdaznan monks the "Saheb-e-Dils" the masters of self and the servants of God.

This place of mystery, which has upto now defied all archaeological and geological research and excavation, is located somewhere on an unseen peak of Demavand, and its physical boundaries, are that the town of Tabriz is on its west; the capital city of Teheran on its south-west; and the country of Khorasan to its east. These places of mystery are like the storage-batteries of the forces of the All-Good and have therefore to be scrupulously guarded against

unfriendly or curious intrusion. On the strategic points of its utmost limits, they say, there keep guard by turns during the day the highest advanced souls, the real "Ashavans" who, so to say, watch from their towers. Whenever a suspicious approach is sighted, they use the highly developed powers of their soul, to so influence the approaching troops as to unconsciously lead them away from the direction of the Firdos. Whether it is believed or disbelieved, for them that have faith, it is a fact, and for them that have not, it is a legend. Faith to a large extent is the result of knowledge, and the absence of it may otherwise be described as ignorance. We have said Nature knows no accident; and it may be added that Nature knows no miracles either. Every phenomenon, of whatever character it be, happens in obedience to a law of Nature, and there is nothing beyond that.

THE FIRDOS : NOT A MYTH :—

That coming events cast their shadows beforehand is a very significant saying: but they are only a chosen few who can see them approach. It is a portent to be prepared. The country of Iran is an ancient land of numberless saints and sages. And they are the evolved progeny of ancestors trained by centuries of the strictest of spiritual discipline. They can claim the capabilities to verify the poet's words and display the power to "see and tell of things invisible to mortal eyes" (Milton). The more advanced of these had seen the shadows looming large over the horizon and had correctly interpreted their significance to augur the coming catastrophe, a full hundred years before its time. They knew their duty it was to warn, and they knew as well, their warnings would be disregarded. They had but one decision to make for the preservation of their "Din" religion till "the clouds roll by" and that was to isolate themselves from the helter skelter of the existing disorder, into a place of safety whence they could by their forceful meditation do the better service to Iran and its religion and also to humanity at large. The clouds and the shadows were the vanguards of that violent disaster which soon overtook Iran and destroyed all that was

dear to it. Enlightened Iran, the mother of the then world academies, was to be run over and strangled by a horde of mere barbarians. A righteous sigh must arise, but let not the justice of the dispensations of the Lord be, for all that, looked upon with distrust. One such flock of "Abeda" had thus left Iran for an unknown place a hundred years before the invasion by the Arabs, and a second one had similarly left some fifty years later for the same noble purpose. There were others which had similarly departed as time and circumstance had favoured them. These are the unknown and unseen guardians of the Mazdaznan religion and the Mazdaznan people: but to their broad and humanitarian view the Mazdaznan religion is not a sectarian cult, but an all-embracing Science of the Laws of Nature, whence none are excluded: And to them the humanity at large is the Mazdaznan flock. It recognises no distinctions of caste, colour, or creed; the one thing it knows is the grades leading to perfection of the good, the better and the best. Ustad-sahib used to say, many such congregations of holy men exist to-day, the one that left Iran the first is located at a place known in the Avesta as "*Ohaichasta*", the other was at the *Kuh-e-Demavand* in Iran itself, a third one settled somewhere on the borders of European Russia, and so were these groups of holy men scattered over wide areas, whence they maintain an organised and scientific system of communication and help to protect the peace of the world. The former has been identified with what is known in modern geography as the Caspian Sea. Some facts about the "*Ohaichasta*":—The latest and the most authoritative geographical Publication (Atlas of the World: Times of India, Bombay) says under Gazeteer Index that the Caspian Sea is "the largest inland sea in the world. 760 miles long, 115 to 280 miles wide, 26 to 500 fathoms deep, 84 feet below the level of the Black Sea." The latter has communication with the Mediterranean Sea through the Sea of Marmora, and therefore its level can be taken as the same as the ordinary sea level. Ordinarily therefore there is no scientific explanation for the curious fact of the waters of the Caspian sea being 84 feet below the

sea level of the outside world. Mazdaznan mysteries however have an explanation to give, and as the revered Ustad-Saheb would explain, the lower level is accounted for by the proximity of the subterranean colony of "Magavs" numbering a million souls, who by some devise of their own draw the waters of the sea for their use, agricultural, architectural, domestic, and industrial. This explanation not only accounts for the difference of the level, but also helps to prove the existence of the "Firdos" at Chaichasta. The Magavs of this colony are spiritually of a higher grade, than those of Kuh-a-Demavand: but they both are in constant intercommunication by telepathetic methods of concentrated contemplation which they call "Shizda." These Magavs have their own Fire-Temples and Towers of Silence, and have preserved themselves in a state of great spiritual perfection. Those scholars who have studied and known of the "Var" constructed by Shah Jamshed and described in the Vendidad, (a place very often identified with Noah's Arc), will readily understand, these places are also a "Var", (which word means, a naturally protected place), which unfriendly eyes can never see, and unfriendly hands can never harm. The entrances to these secluded places are mysteriously guarded and the one for the "Chaichasta" colony is described as "Abi", which means "watery or through the waters"; whereas the word used for the entrances of the colony at Demavand, and perhaps also the other cognate societies is "Khāki", which means "made of earth, or through a cave". Besides our Ustad-Saheb, there is only one more instance of an outsider having entered the "Var" on record. This instance is of one by name "Rustom Nazoomi" who had after a period of instructions at the Firdos, returned to the outside world and had distinguished himself in Iran as a "Nazoomi" or astrologer. The second one was our revered Ustad-Sahib himself. He preached and propagated the esoterics of Mazdaznan in India and has immortalized his name there. Our revered Ustad-Saheb was a disciple of Magavs of Demavand: Rustom Nazoomi perhaps was also from the same place. But a third instance which reaches us from

beyond the Aryan lands of India and Iran, is of the late Reverend Doctor Otoman Zaradusht Hanish, who, as I am informed by Dr. Framroz Chiniwalla, the present Exponent of Khshnoom, had been the disciple of other Iranian sages who had their "Firdos" on the borders of European Russia. He emerged therefrom a Mazdaznan of a Prophet's dignity; spread the knowledge of Mazdaznan precepts and principles in the continents of America and Europe, and there left an undying name for himself. Of him can be said, he went about "doing good".

It is not unnatural that many will cast very grave doubts on the existence of such mysterious colonies: but besides the several proofs cited above there are others equally worth considering. A Khshnoom devotee of considerable reputation, Mr. Dinshah Shapurjee Masani, B. A., tells me personally of a friend of his Mr. Naserwanji Dorabji Post-master having read in an English newspaper printed in Bombay an account published therein by a European Major, who had gone to Iran in a survey expedition and of having there met with a wonderful and a strange society of men. The Major had also mentioned that the encounter was sudden, and that once he was out of their limits, all his attempts again to identify the place and find an entrance proved vain. The name and the date of this newspaper are unfortunately missing. There is yet one more proof of the existence of these holy men and their holy colonies which is to be found in the world famous poems of the Iranian poet "*Hafez*". He has so feelingly sung of the "*Saheb-Dils*" and of the "*Pir-e-Mogan*", from whose esoteric teachings he had learned so much. These experiences are a record of the fourteenth century, experiences of truth, truthfully narrated. The high inspiration of *Hafez*, which the divine arrangement of his words displays, goes to prove his association with the Abeds of Iran. There is yet one more and that is the advent into India in the sixteenth century of the great Dastoor Azar Kaivan. The record is that he was actually one from among the members of that Society of Iranian magavs. He had come to India under certain circumstances, and by his learning and piety had

distinguished himself to such an extent as to have had a large following for himself, the descendants whereof continue to this day. He had written many mysterious books in Persian, which are all available to-day. Let so much suffice for the man of faith and reverence, to confirm his beliefs that the isolated societies of the holy men of Iran are not a legend but a fact.

The Firdos at Demavand:—

The country of Firdos is essentially an agricultural one, with a vast territory of land, justly and equitably partitioned for the use of man and beast. It is an unending vista of fields undulating with Nature's sparkling green: where the lambs grazing and the cattle lowing proclaim a feeling of unique confidence and security, greater and stronger to be sure, than what our children can ever hope for in the engine-infested streets of our modern city. Agriculture has been the first of Mazdaznan virtues, and the whole of Fargard III. of the Book of Vendidad has been devoted to its activities. It is there said, the earth feels most happy, "where one of the faithful sows most corn, grass and fruit,—where there is most increase of flocks and herds" (S. B. E. Vol. IV. page 23-24). The high esteem for agriculture as a profession, and the high dignity of an agriculturist is further testified to in the same Fargard, where it is said:—"O Maker of the material world, thou Holy One! What is the food that fills the Religion of Mazda?"

Ahura Mazda answered: It is sowing corn again and again, O Spitama Zarathushtra:

He who sows corn sows righteousness (S. B. E. Vol. IV. page 30).

No stronger recommendation of an agricultural life can be imagined: and naturally, where such a simple and noble life is followed by all, nothing can be farther from their God-guided mentality, than the un-Godly and inhuman idea of animal slaughter. The beast knows full well, that there never shall be a carnage: and the men do pride themselves on their knowledge of the legitimate use of the mother earth, and her quadruped offsprings. The ox and the cow, the goat and the

lamb and the horse, with their human masters, form but one family. This great exhibition of Mazdaznan Love, reminds me of that famous painting called "One of the family". In that picture its high-souled painter has depicted the scene of the humble interior of a farmer's hut: the rosy children are seated round a home-made table, where the simple fare of bread and milk is spread out for breakfast: and through one small window close by, the farm horse has put in his head for his share of the repast. He is the beloved, "one of the family". Take the picture as typical of a daily scene in the Firdos. They are all happy and contented in one another's company. From the cow there is milk, from the lamb there is wool, indispensable for sacred thread-girdle Kūsti, and the horse is for manly sport. We all know that in the vegetable kingdom, there are plants which serve as food, and there are plants that act as poison; there are plants that have heating effects and there are others that have cooling effects. In short, and in general it may be said that there are some plants which are health-giving and others which are of a contrary effect. These plants, the Avesta science has divided into two parts: the beneficial ones, it has classified as having the "Gava" qualities, and the rest as having the "Vohūna" qualities. Among the "Gospands" (cattle) of the earth, a particular type of the lamb has a highly discriminating sense of smell, and it uses it to perfection in the selection of its food. It chooses the leaves and the roots of such plants only which have the largest proportion of 'Gava' qualities, yielding wool for the Kūstis of Sāheb-dils. The word "Gava" may take long to explain, but it is thoroughly workable to say it denotes the qualities of 'self-sacrifice'; whereas the word "Vohūna" carries the sense of having the qualities of selfishness. The former rejoices in the good of others, and is willing even to sacrifice its own happiness for it: whereas the latter rejoices in the misfortunes of others, if it brings him a wee bit more of material comfort. The philosophy of the Mazdaznan rule:—"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he; as a man eateth, so he thinks," is thus made clear and well-explained in the two Avesta words, "Gava" and "Vohuna".

The lamb therefore is the wisest eater, and the lamb therefore is the most suited to produce the best material for the use of men. There are many species of lambs, and there are grades in those species, which depend upon the refined quality of the food they consume; and it is just therefore that the Mazdaznan Kusti, has to be woven out of a lamb's wool only. The kindness towards cattle is a duty imposed by the Mazdaznan religion, and it can very confidently be asserted that that duty is nowhere so scrupulously carried out as in the colony of the Firdos. "*Gavoi veresytām tām ne kharethāi fshōyo.*" (Gatha H. A. XLVIII. verse 5) "Yea, for the kine (O Armaiti:) let (thy) toil be given, and may'st thou cause her to prosper for our life." (Rev. L. H. Mill's translation.) The horse too is for the Iranian an animal of great importance and usefulness, and just the same as the Iranian breed of a lamb is the finest in the world, it may be that the horses bred and trained in Mazdaznan discipline in the Firdos, must also be of a very high quality. Iran from times immemorial has loved the horse, and the training of every Iranian child was based on the threefold discipline of Truth, Horsemanship and Archery. This noble rule, though not continued with enthusiasm in the country of Iran at the present day, yet, within the boundaries of the Firdos, this threefold discipline is enforced with all the rigour, as it used to be in the days of Iran's world-wide Empire. The Hom-Yasht has a very significant passage about the horse, which clearly shows the magnificent sportsmen the Iranians have been at a time when the rest of the world knew very little about it. The trainer of a horse is one among many, who receives the blessings of Haoma:—

"Haomo asibeesh yoi urvanto bit takhshenti erenaum zavare aojasoscha bakhshaiti,"

(*Hom Yasht para 22*)

"Haoma grants (strength and courage) to those who would run bridled horses on race course a course which spans both speed and bottom (in their horses)" (Rev. L. H. Mills translation S. B. E. Vol. XXXI. p. 237.)

Further in the same Yasht, (Yasna XI, para 1), the cow,

the horse, and the Haoma are described as being the "three clean creatures (full of blessings)" (Ibid p. 244). Such is the family relationship of men and cattle in the country of Firdos. It should be noted that the aforesaid citations from the Hom Yasht bear mystical significance.

It is however unfortunate that there is no cotton growing on and no iron ore found in the fields of the Firdos. The land is deficient in its mineral products, and to such an extent that metal currency of coins is entirely unknown. It is all barter, both within and without the colony. There is no killing there, neither for food, nor for sport, and much less therefore for war. Milk and wool are of the best quality, because of the pure vegetable food which the cattle get, and are also climatically essential for the maintenance of human life. And the horse being equally essential for the physical culture of the inhabitants, and it being their unshakable belief that all kinds of bodily training and exercise, that of horsemanship and archery, are the best means for the promotion of man's spiritual advance as well, there has come to be developed a condition of mutual dependance between man and beast; this has evolved into mutual love, and all therefore is peace and prosperity and contentment. The streets of Firdos are a row of rock-hewn caves (rooms), where they dwell in peace unknown in our engineered cities tormented with noise and smoke. Every street has a rivulet of nectar-like waters flowing past, and the whole country is also studded with wells and other streams of life-giving waters in blessed profusion.

The word "*Firdos*" is the Iranian equivalent of the Biblical word "*Paradise*". But the latter for its being Biblical is no less Iranian than the former. In fact the idea of Heaven is a Zarathustrian discovery, whence it permeated into Judaism, and thence into Christianity and Islam. The two words have but one common root, the Avesta word "*Pairidaez*" where "*daz*" signifies a citadel or an enclosure, and "*Pairi*" indicates a conduct of life in accordance with and in obedience to the laws of Nature. Even the latest and the most authoritative of English dictionaries derives the

word "Paradise" from the old Persian "Pairidaez" meaning enclosure. (The New Standard Dictionary, Vol. III, page 1789). A Paradise or a Firdos is therefore a fortified or a guarded enclosure or a city where God's will is being honoured and obeyed and fulfilled: where men have faith in God and honour his laws. Not therefore is it that Paradise always is a post-mortem experience only; it is also an experience connected with man's life on earth whenever it is in full sympathy with Nature's order. Oh! Airyana-Vaeja, the mother-land of the Aryans, thy hallowed ruins have never ceased to bless: and for him whose "Hvarshta" has earned for himself the privilege of a touch of thy sacred soil, let him but once with a measured step and a measured breath go round the Kuh-e-Demavand, the mountain abode of the Mazdaznan Mahatmas, the guardians of the spirit of Mazdaznan, whose sinless and sanctified lives breathe blessings on the world at large; and the serenity of that holy void shall press all his sins out of him and shall permeate his person with the virtues of an Avestan Ashavan. Just the same that a flowering garden inspires songs of love and feelings of happiness, so shall the sanctity of this vast emptiness awaken in the sincere wanderer an inquiring thought of his whence, wherefore, and whither, and shall lead him to find the solution of it all in the music of that "*still small voice*" which he then shall hear. Let the tour be accomplished, with the mind centered on Sahab-dil saints who are there somewhere about, and who though unseen, see, and who though unknown, know and bless.

The Magav of the Demavand and his ways of life :—

The "Magav" is a pastor, a spiritual agriculturist. He understands the spirit of that one Avesta sentence of the Vendidad, which says, "He who sows corn sows righteousness." (Vendidad Fargard III, Chapter III, para 31. S. B. E. Vol. IV, page 30.) The "Magav" sows righteousness. He thinks of his Mazda, and by his "Humata" (good thoughts) sanctifies the atmosphere all around: the Magav preaches words of

truth, guidance and admonition, and by his "Hukhta" (good words) the listeners are charmed and blessed: and the Magav sows corn and by his "Hvarshta" (good deeds) incites imitation thereof by all. The sanctifying of the atmosphere, the blessing for the listeners, and the inciting imitation are each an act of sowing righteousness: and thus it is that the Magav is a spiritual agriculturist. The colony at Demavand is but two thousand strong, men, women and children: and this entire population of the "Var" divides itself into three classes, the good, the better, and the best in spiritual advancement, as we have already observed. They are all, however, the "Saheb-e-Dils" where the word "Saheb" is fraught with the sublimest of conceptions. First, it is commonly used to mean, (1) Almighty God Himself, as in expression, "Saheb-ni-marji" (His will be done.) Secondly, it is of every day and every hour use, as a reminder of God's blessings that rain constantly, in the oriental word of greeting "Sahebji." The orientals use this word, where the Europeans use their "good mornings and good evenings." Thirdly, it is used for the one who is above the others in any particular place, a private institution or a Government office, as when we speak the "Office-no-Saheb" the head of the Office, and fourthly, as used in the phrase, "Saheb-e-Dil", where "Saheb" means master; 'e' means of; and "Dil" means heart or mind. He who is the master of his own mind, he who has gained, and tries to gain, complete control over the passions of his flesh, he is the "Saheb-e-Dil" or a "Dil-pat" where "pat" stands for the Avesta word "*paiti*" meaning master. He who has conquered self and serves God, is the Saheb-dil.

Of the class of the best, is the Magav proper, and includes both men and fewer women. They are the celibates, of perfected births: and present to the world grand specimens of the evolved and angel-like forms, which the whole humanity is destined to reach in due time. They are the "*Khaeth-vadathas*" of the Avesta, perfected, asexual souls, thoroughly prepared and only waiting for the "Great Morning" to appear. They have reassembled and merged within themselves the sparks of their own soul, that lay scattered in the

mineral, the vegetable, the animal creations of the world : and even assimilated into themselves the masculine and the feminine ingredients of humanity itself so as to emerge a perfected and a completed being, the "Khaethvadath" of the Avesta literature. This fact explains their celibacy and proves them congenitally sinless and passionless. Jesus was a "Mazdaznan Saheb-Dil", and Zarathushtra led them all. Their principal occupation is deep contemplation and introvision of the Truths in Nature (Sezda) and ceaseless prayers, which help the spiritual progress of the world according to the Will of the Lord (Ahuna Vairya.) Let it not surprise the reader to know, these Magav Saheb-Dils never sleep. The Avesta has it:—

"Him thou shalt call an Athravan, O Holy Zarathushtra : who throughout the night sits up and demands of the Holy wisdom (i. e. studies the Law, and learns from those who know it) which makes man free from anxiety, and wide of heart, and easy of conscience, at the head of the Chinvat Bridge, and which makes him reach that world, that holy world, that excellent world of Paradise." (Vendidad. Fargard XVIII. Chapter I. Verse 6. S.B.E. Volume IV. page 194.)

Their diet is a very well regulated affair, so that all may get just the ingredients that their bodily frame most is in need of. Those in the class of the best, subsist only upon the quantity of milk drawn from specially bred cows of noble breed: such as we in a modern sense would call 'pedigree cows.' It can be said that these subsist mainly or only on the milk of cows bred by them. For each of them the food is prescribed both for its quality and quantity by the higher mystics who manage and organise the dietetics of the entire colony. Just the same that milk is obtained from specially bred cows, so also the vegetables are grown on plots of land specially prepared by prayers recited over them. The idea is to raise both animals and plants on the principles of "gav" and "vohun", so that there may be as large a quantity of the former and as little of the latter as possible. The diet of the second and the middle class of the inhabitants of

Firdos, is a mixed one of milk and vegetables, but yet more of milk than vegetables, and the diet of the third and the last class is also a mixed one of milk and vegetables, but there the proportion of vegetables is larger than that of milk. The ancients not only believed in cooking their own food themselves but also used their best abilities in the very production of it. The former usage still exists among many a higher caste Hindus, who will only eat the food cooked by themselves, for them even a touch of a stranger makes the food "taboo" for them. The latter usage has been forgotten because of the changed conditions: but in the secluded and ideal country of Firdos, both have been preserved and are being acted up to even to-day.

The Activities of the Magavs :—

Their outlook and their anxiety and eagerness is for the good of undistinguished humanity. The whole human species is their "ward" and they are its "guardians". The "Magav Sahebs" are therefore ideally tolerant. In fact, the way they explain the blossoming forth of the different prophets on earth in different ages, makes it practically impossible for them to be otherwise. The guiding principle is the law of "*Jiram*" ॐ which as ordinarily understood implies that the religions of the world are differentiated from one another in no other way than are the graded classes of a University College. They all ultimately lead to the Doctor's degree: and the same that the principal of a college regards the students of all classes as his so many sons, so do the Sahebs regard, the Hindu, the Moslim, the Jew, the Christian and all others as an undistinguished flock of their own children, varying "inter se" in age, development and inherent wisdom. That every religion or every kind of worship ultimately leads to union with the same Highest One, is beautifully expressed in a Sanskrit couplet, which says:—

"Akashat Patitam toyam yatha gacchati sagaram
Sarvin devo namaskaram Keshavam pratigachhati".

It says, Behold the rains that come down to the earth in floods and torrents, every drop thereof ultimately reaches the

sea; so shall the prayers and the worshippings of man to whomsoever addressed,—Allah, Mazda or Jehovah, shall and will ultimately reach the "Keshava" who is the All-Highest. On a worldly and a practical comparison, we see that man reaches the highest he aims at, not always through the same channel: The routes that led Napoleon to the emperorship of France, and practically of the world, were so different from the routes that led Abraham Lincoln to the Presidentship of the United States of America. The habits, the temperaments, the likes and the dislikes may be different for every individual, and because of this fundamental difference, their routes and their ways take different directions, but lead ultimately to one and the same goal: so are the different religions of the world, come into existence to suit the needs of the varying circumstances of the times and the changed temperaments and differently constituted souls of men, and to provide them with the routes and ways that are most conducive to their quicker progress to the goal. These routes and ways are what the Avesta science calls "*Jirama*". The word is akin to the English word "germ", perhaps the latter is a derivative of the former: They both express the same root thought:—"The substance that is to develop a new individual. Figuratively, the primary source of any thing, that from which a thing may be developed as from a seed". (The New Standard Dictionary Volume II, page 1026). Who then will doubt that these microscopic beginnings and their subsequent mighty influences all come from the eternal Heavens, where the angelic co-workers manage and organise and arrange in obedience to definite laws. The study is not easy, it involves the consideration of facts which many will be unwilling to admit. Some faith, some sobriety and some patience shall and will ultimately win and all shall be understood. In Avestan spiritual science these primary influences which start the Universe in its progressive motion are called "*Bagam Staram*". The result is the blessed appearance in space of the countless solar systems that decorate the cloudless summer sky and admonish man to remember and respect his Creator. These primary influences permeate through the Universe and

when they reach our system, their influence is felt in the differentiation of the ideas of men according to the grades of their purity and intelligence and thus give rise to what the Avestan spiritual science has called "Jirams". Thus it was that the influence of the planet Mercury brought about the "Tāradi Jiram" of the Hindus and the Buddhists; the influence of Venus gave birth to "Nābeedi Jiram" of Judaism and the Jews; the influence of Mars gave rise to the "Hāshami Jiram" of Muhamedanism and the Muhamedans; the influence of Jupiter originated the "Barjisi Jiram" of Zarathushtra and Mazdaznan, and the influence of Saturn created the "Kaivāni Jiram" of Jesus and Christianity. Thus have they all come from the same celestial source, emanated according to definite laws and were spread and promulgated according to the needs of the times. It is always an Atheism that Theosophy germinates, and it is always in the dispensation of Nature that when the condition of men sinks down to a regrettable depth, that a forerunner, a warner, a prophet is born. Of such were 1. *Rustom Nazoomi** for the land of Iran. 2. Otoman Zar Adusht Hanish for America and Europe, and 3. Beramshah Navroji Shroff for the ancient land of India. But unfortunate and lamentable has it been that competition has been conceived where cooperation and coordination should have been. The differentiation which was intended by the Angels of Heaven to balance the deficiencies of the times and to remedy the defects of understanding, was interpreted to mean a race to get on to the front ranks, and a race to use all one's strength to impose one's views of things on all others: forgetting for the moment, how and why these differentiations had originated, and that it was for the purpose of preserving the harmony of man's dealings with one another: and also forgetting at the same time that to impose one man's likes and dislikes on another by force or even by persuasion was to create a most damaging disharmony in the society of man. But it was the call of self: it was the love of that vain-

* Never worked for public. He was only given access to Firdaus.

glorious,—“I did it.” This process is the one we call “proselytizing.” It has created strife where previously peace had prevailed; it has brought discord, where originally unity had reigned, and it has caused bloodshed, where a cordial embrace would otherwise have been. Well and truly has Dr. Framroz Chiniwalla, our present prominent Exponent of the Ilm-e-Khshnoom said that “Vatlâvvun-e-Kere-sâni-nô-prabhâvche” i. e., Proselytizing is of the inspiration of the Devil. Masters of the ‘Jirams’ have from time to time appeared on earth, not to disturb but to pacify, and not to compete but to co-ordinate. If world-peace is the aim and object, let not the peace Palace at Hague delay the advent of it by discussing rules and laws and holding conferences, but let it hurry up to recognise the genuine inter-national importance and merit of the mazdaznan law of “Jiram” and preach and propagate its truth to the world. This shall destroy all envy and all animosity and race superiority, and the Prince of Peace shall prevail against the Demon of Discord.

In the colony of the Firdos there are 72 such Magav Athravans of the highest class, towering above all other Athravans or Priestly Order of Yaozathregars headed by Dasturs. This number of 72 is preserved without an increase or a decrease, therein. Each individual is a stalwart seven feet high, handsome beyond comparison, with pointed noses, complexions hallowed and fair, with looks of love and learning, wisdom and piety. The whole colony of Saheb-Dils is under their leadership and guidance for every matter concerning births, marriages, and deaths, and even for arbitration in cases of all differences, which are never of a grave character. The result is that there is ideal peace followed by ideal plenty. Nature is luxuriant in its sparkling green, and so is society most happy and joyful in its profusion of prosperity. Men and women are all on equal footing and there does not exist a task which is “infra dig” for any man or too complex for any woman. The men all wear long hair that flow down to their necks and maintain venerable beards. Just the same that there are men-magavs, there are women-magavs as well but only few. High souls they all are, who have reached

the perfection of the "*Khaethvadatha*". They are the guardians and the guides of all the women folk in the "Sahebdi" colony. In a true Mazdaznan fashion, the day and the night, the full period of the earth's one complete rotation on its axis, 24 hours is divided into five "gahs". The "Aivisruthrem Gah" (sunset to midnight) is the time for sermons, when every individual must attend. The "Ushain-Gah" (midnight to sunrise) is the time for the personal prayers of the Magav Athravans: and the Meher-e-Hâvana and early Hâvana is the time for their rest. The "Ujiran-Gah" (afternoon 3 P.M. to sunset) is the time when they examine and control the organization of society, issue orders, and maintain discipline. Everyone of the magav-Athravans is a tested individual. He is a "Rubân-Bishâz." The head of the monastery has an extra title of "Shroshâvareh" who guides the destinies of all entrusted to his care, and beneficially influences the outer world as well. Every child born in the colony is brought before him, and he examines the signs from a spiritual point of view, and decides whether the child will turn out to be a magav or not. If the signs augur that the child shall be a magav of the future, then its education is at once transferred to specially appointed persons, and is carried out in a determined manner: every other child is returned to its parents. All this discipline and rigour and piety used to be the daily routine of the Iranian people before their fall: and it was also the source of all their vitality which had carried them to the climax of power. But with the laxity of that discipline, came the downward journey, and Iran lost its all, its royalty, its treasures, its religion, its philosophy and its learning. But Iran is an ancient land: its atmosphere is charged with the scent of the mighty deeds of valour and mightier acts of selflessness, and these in its times of trouble yet breathe into the souls of its sons a hopeful courage; and the voice of the Unseen reverberates to fortify them in their fallen condition—'*Lament Not.*' This was the high voice from the Heavens that enlivened and encouraged the valiant sons of Iran and helped the disconsolate ones to bear it all up with a calmness unprecedented in the history of humanity.

True valour manifests itself in the conduct of a soldier when he fearlessly faces the guns; but true valour also manifests itself in that passive yet courageous stand against tyranny when that condition of dominance and rule is no more, and a changed condition of dependence and misery takes its place. The latter stage gives greater opportunities for the exhibition of that ancestral nobility of behaviour. The sons of Iran were tested with both these and were found as valorous in war and victory, as they were noble in dependence and defeat. With the fall of the empire, came in untold and unthinkable atrocities showered on the conquered sons of the soil. But for such of them as had dared to remain faithful to the traditions of their forebears there was abundance of propitious signs, demonstrating but one message—*Lament Not*. The Iranian knows and can read the will of the Lord in every phenomenon of the earth, and he has therefore also learnt to be patient and sedate in the strong conviction that all is being justly done. The royalty of Iran is, they say, preserved in their descendants who reside in the safe vaults of the Firdos to-day: They think of peace, and peace prevails: They pray to Mazda and their prayers are heard. The treasures of Iran too are talismanically stored in the wonderful museums of the Firdos, the exhibits defying human comprehension by their complexity, and enchanting all by their beauty. The philosophy and learning of ancient Iran too is stored in these God-guarded places. The libraries of the Firdos are the places where the ancient and even the modern literature that relates to Mazdaznans is to be seen intact, untouched by hostile hands, and uninterpolated and unabridged by interested mischief-mongers. As an instance of this, Ustad Saheb used to speak of the original and the true copy of the "Shah-Nameh" even as Firdausi wrote it out himself, which he had seen in the library of the "Firdos." These blessed people await the coming of the "Shoshiant", Varjavand (Behram i.e. Invincible) and then will they all emerge from their fastnesses, enrich the world with their treasures, and bless the world by their presence and piety. That will be the "Great Morning" of the planet earth.

(b) The second class—viz., The Yozdâthregars—Priestly class engaged in performing ceremonies headed by Dasturs under the direction of the Magavs. Mazda has intended that the priest shall be the pillar of the society, and wherever the priest maintains himself with piety and learning, there follows prosperity of the highest kind: but where the priest has fallen short of the standard of moral and spiritual efficiency expected of him, the society round about too must degenerate and scatter away. Within the enclosures of the Firdos, the priesthood is of the ideal standard of perfection and the society round about him therefore is also regulated and maintained in an equally ideal efficiency. Is not this proved beyond doubt by the manner in which the Firdos has not only conducted its own administration for centuries past, but has also succeeded in maintaining its aloofness from the world undetected by the most inquisitive. They had witnessed that the fall of Iran's Empire had started with the sad change that had come over its priesthood, and they therefore well knew that the integrity of their small colony and the safety of its inhabitants all depended directly on their personal behaviour of truth and sincerity. The Yozdâthregars of Firdos are a noble class of priests, who understand their duties towards their God and their responsibilities towards man. They are the pillars of the society of the Firdos.

(c) The third class is the main portion of the population and these are the shepherds, agriculturists, warriors and artisans. It is unfortunate that there is not much metal in the land of the Firdos, and consequently there is also no metallic currency to trade with: it is all barter. The colony also lacks cotton and iron: but the Firdos can boast of its wool, the like of which the outside world will ever strive in vain to produce. When therefore, at appointed periods the caravan comes out, they bring out their exquisite wool, and exchange it for such commodities as they have need of. They rear sheep and cattle: the former for their wool, and the latter for the supply of milk and its attendant products for their food. It is the very kind and truly sympathetic treatment which the lambs receive and the pure vegetables which they

always eat that becomes the cause of the very superior quality of their wool. The lambs instinctively know their masters, even as children know their parents. Their fearless freedom is their health, and their health determines the quality of their wool. Out of such pure wool only, the Kusti is made for all: very often is it that they make the "Kusti" from the wool of a particular pet lamb, and only change it when the animal is dead; The kusti made of 72 single filaments of wool has an esoteric meaning of its own apart from its efficacy in prayers. There are 72 chapters of the Yasma: 72 magav Athravans in the Firdos: there are 72 steps or grades of Ashoi which lead to the Abode of Light, the Garodemana; and there are 72 attributes of God in the Hormazd Yasht. The science of numbers (Ilm-e-Aidad) is but a chapter in the Book of "Khshnoom". If the digits carry any mystical significance, then says the Ilm-e-Aidad, the digit "9" represents perfection: and the number 72 is $7+2=9$. The wonders of this digit if collected would fill a volume. One at least will today suffice, for the curious to seek more for himself. The digit "9" has a magic touch. Just the same that the touch of sugar makes everything sweet, so does the touch of "9" makes any and every number in the world, also "9". As an instance, take any random number, say 89157. Give this number a touch of "9":

$$89157 \times 9 = 802413$$

Total up the digits of the multiple $8+0+2+4+1+3=18$

Total up again $1+8=9$.

Ustad-Saheb brought the news that the Sahebs of Firdos knew the Ilm-e-Aidad and that the digit "9" with them was symbolic of perfection. This experiment is but one grain from the measureless heaps that constitute the "Ilm" and then this Ilm-e-Aidad itself is but a grain in the Sahara Sands of the "Ilm-e-Khshnoom".

To return to our subject, the whole colony is mainly agricultural and self-supporting in the matter of food; growing their own corn, vegetables and fruits, and breeding their own cattle, all with a spiritual outlook and strict cleanliness,

physical, moral and spiritual. The ground to be cultivated is primarily divided into portions, which the sages of the colony call a "*Kash*", which means a talismanic ring drawn to the tune of ritualistic incantations and in definite proportions. The idea being to make the land fruitful and free from harmful parasites, which not only destroy the vegetation but also cause epidemics among men. Thus helped and assisted in their development and growth, and protected from outside damaging influences by these talismatic rings drawn to the accompaniment of tuneful prayers, the vegetables grow up strong and healthy with virtue-accelerating and lust-killing qualities of the "*gava*" fully developed within them. The food of man makes his character: let him therefore grow wise by experience and first choose and then make his own food as the saints of the *Firdos* do. "If thou wilt be gentle like a lamb and non-resistant and docile, so that thou may'st obtain great knowledge, feed thou upon herbs, and fruits and cereals and thy blood shall be pure and cool, and charged with food for thy spirit in peace and love". (Oahspe: Book of Inspiration Chapter XII. verses 10, 11, page 800). They know the science of dietetics to perfection. They know and are aware of vegetable values (Calories), not only for food and medicine, but also for their use in Zoroastrian ceremonies which help spiritual advancement. They understand the heating and the cooling influences of the various herbs on man's lower passions, distinguish them as the "*Vohun*" plants, and restrict, forbid or regulate their use by proper instructions. In Avestan science of dietetics, the word "*Nabâtât*" represents the whole of the vegetable kingdom; and the words "*Vohuna*" and "*Gava*" represent respectively the injurious and the beneficial effects, from the spiritual point of view of the various plants when used as food for man. They know the science of vegetarianism and recommend it to the world at large as an absolutely essential auxiliary to the utmost veracity of the tongue (Truthfulness) as man's universal religion, and as the basic first step for the advancement of the spiritual aspirants of all religions. The inadvisability of animal food is decided by more than one

scientific and moral considerations. "It is the contamination of the blood of man, by carnivorous food, whereon thou shalt ponder". (Oahspe : Book of Inspiration Chapter XII. verse 19, page 800). The first of these is, cruelty; the second says, it excites the passions of the flesh; and the third is that it involves the destruction of an important help-mate to human labour. All these are true and are accepted. But the Sahebs have one more to give which has as much scientific accuracy in it as any others. The Sahebs say that when an animal is about to be slaughtered, and blood red eyes and the fearful distortions of the physiognomy of the brutish operator and the other grim surroundings cause a fear in its heart, this fear becomes the cause of a "Bad-Mithra" or a "Bad-Duâ" which the helpless victim then breathes out. The word "Bad" means "bad"; "Mithra" means thought; and "Duâ" means a prayer or a wish. "Oh! ungrateful men" sighs the frightened beast, "for all the food that ye received from me, is this the reward?" The sigh, though it does not save, yet spreads itself on the waves of ether, gathers together to form a cloud of hideous hue, and when ripe, rains its showers of dire visitations. "Because thou canst not feed on fish nor flesh but through destruction unto death, even so, destruction unto death shall come upon thy soul", (Oahspe : Book of Inspiration chapter XII. verse 14, page 800). Thus it is that ignorant man in his hurry for the gratification of his barbaric pleasures inadvertently sows the sinister seeds, whence in due time shall spring forth, war and famine and pestilence and plague and earthquakes and fires. It is sometimes counter-argued that vegetable food also involves a species of life-killing. The answer to this as, Ustad-Saheb brought it from the Firdos is, Yes, the fact is admitted: but there is a noteworthy difference between the two. The former i.e. animal food may be described as man's attitude of being "cruel to be selfish"; whereas the latter, i.e. vegetable food may be described as man's attitude of being "cruel to be kind". The former is comparable to a sigh, the latter to a smile. The operations of a butcher's knife and a farmer's scythe have opposite effects. The former causes pain, the

latter causes pleasure. The killing arrests the propagation of the species: the reaping helps to forward it. Have we not experienced the contrary effects of a sigh and a smile? Each has its own radius of influence. The sigh of suffering spreads sorrow and strikes down all progress: but the smile and the laughter of exultant joy can even bring the dead to life. Such exactly is the antithesis of animal and vegetable food. Let every one think for himself.

The colony of Firdos is self-supporting because of the fewness of its needs and the chastity of its pleasures. The men grow their own corn, weave their own clothes, even drag their own ploughs, cook their own food, never envy or covet their neighbour's fortunes or goods, nor even imagine a scandal for any one. Women wear veils and keep their heads covered. It is a covering specially contrived to keep the head closed. Herodotus and the other Grecian historians have made mention of this headgear in their works. This real ancient dress is preserved perhaps in the Firdos only. The men too keep their heads covered with a white cap. The dignity of the gentlemen and the beauty of the ladies have an inspiring charm of their own. The secret of the whole lies in the fact of their mastery over self, their preserved and sanctified physical strength, their pure vegetarian diet, (pure because it is grown under the holy influences of the talismanic rings, called the "*Kash*" as explained above,) their constant practice of good thoughts, and their ever active anxiety for the good of the world at large. In short their ways of life are strictly in accordance with the Mazdaznan law called "*Rathavia chakra*," which is a sort of a sanctified curriculum of prescribed rules of conduct, drawn and dictated by the great "*Ratu*," leader, called "*Zarathushtrotemo*" the man next to the Lord Zarathushtra.

The present head of the colony is the "*Srôshavarez Saheb Marzbanji*" assisted by a committee of 72 pious and selfless assistants, all Magavs, chief among them being the Naib (deputy) *Srôshavarez Rasheedji Saheb*, *Sheheryar Saheb*, *Aspandiar Saheb*, *Khûdadad Saheb*, and *Khûdamurad Saheb*, and also by *Banû Tannaz Saheba* as the head lady-Magav of

the colony. It is essential to analyse the word "Shrôshâ-veres" for the reader's better understanding. The word is derived from the root "Srá", which means to listen or to make others listen to the commandments of the Lord. It therefore practically means a "confessor" of sins, as also one who can make the sinner repent and reform and be able himself to listen to the guiding voice from the Unseen. In the word "Shrôsha" there again is the same root. Those therefore who live with "Shrôsha," behave according to the dictates of "Shrôsha" and who are at one with "Shrôsha" they alone can be called "Srôshâvarez-Sâheb; and to such high-souled priests alone can the layman confess his sins and receive his directions thereon. The practice of confession of sins now prevalent among our brother Christians of the Roman Catholic fold is a remnant of this ancient Mazdaznan custom. The Roman Catholic priest is very often a very learned man, and as often a man of piety also. May be therefore, the sinner's confessions often enough fall on worthy ears but a "Srôshâvarez Sahab" answering the Avestan requirements must remain a rarity now, as it was in ancient times. Thus it is that many a Mazdaznan custom now entirely forgotten in the fold itself, has kept itself alive by a manifestation in other religions. This proves that Mazdaznan is all pervading and all-permeating. Herein is the proof of those famous words of the famous orientalist Dr. Maxmuller when he said "*Mazdaznan is the religion back of all religions.*" In passing it may be noted that "Srôsha" is a "Yazata" which word must not be confounded with the English word "Angel." The latter being a lower grade, so that an angel may evolve and develop into a "Yazata". The Srôshâvarez Sâhebs are the "Zarathushtrôtemos" who guide the destinies of Mazdaznans in lieu of Zarathushtra himself.

The child of the Sahab Dils grows into youth, trained first in the habits of the strictest truth, secondly on the taste reared from infancy to excel in horsemanship both for the boy and the girl, and thirdly, on the longing to possess a steady hand and a sure eye for archery. The life of the inhabitants of the Firdos, therefore, commences with the

threefold primary education: and as horsemanship and archery are essential for the spiritual advancement of man, the progress of his life and the evolution of his soul are but the higher and the stronger developments of these three cardinal virtues. We have mentioned before the "Rathvia chakhra" or the curriculum of Mazdaznan education. It has five principal directions of educating the people which in its own technology it calls the "Kûvat" which means "strength." All the five "Kûvats" are complimentary to each other and the training is not complete until the pupil is efficient in all of them:—

1. Riding and archery forms but one item of the long course of education known as "Kûvate-Tani", where "Kûvat" means strength, and "Tani", from "Tan" body:—physical

2. Telling the Truth forms but one item in a lengthy course of that education called the "Kûvate-Ekhlâki" where "Ekhlâki" means peaceful social and ethical relations: rules of polite society.

3. Strictest faith in the "Daena" religion is one item in the science known as "Kûvate-Zamiri" where "Zamiri" from Zamir means, pertaining to true understanding and attainment of spiritual knowledge.

4. "Kuvate-Hamkheeshi" is one more branch of the science of men's social relationship: where "Ham" means one's own and "Kheesh" means relations. Man's conduct with his near relatives is a prior consideration for him, to his duties towards society at large: Family relations

5. The strictest observance of the laws, relating to the soul developement including such powers as telepathy, clairvoyance, clairsaudience, souls' flight in unseen leaving the body behind is known as "Kûvate-Rûhâni." Be good yourself, and there shall be goodness all around. Envy starts in the love of self: covetousness begins in greed; and it is in one's own sins that the scandal of others originates. Guard against these and the "Firdos" shall be at hand.

"Through the pure life of one man, a whole nation

receives amnesty." (Ainyahita Pearl XV. Chapter I. para 16, page 137)

The Mysteries and the Marvels of Khshnoom.

If it is the end and aim of life to reach that oneness, wherein all is Joy, Love and Peace and Knowing, and if there is a science to find it, then that science is "*Khshnoom*". Derivation: There are other words in the Avesta and Pahlavi, cognate to it,—such as,—"*Khshnaôthra*, *Khshnâdi*, *Khshnâman*, etc.,—which are all derived from a common root,—*Khshnoo* which carries the idea of doing something which would advance the aims of the Creator of the Universe and thus please Him.

To please Ahura Mazda the Creator, and to share His joy of perfecting the Universe, is the basic idea. There is no pleasure more pleasing, and no joy more enjoyable, than the one that follows the conviction that Mazda has been pleased by our co-operation in His work, and if thoughts, words and deeds here necessary to achieve that highest of aims have ever been codified, then it is the perfected science of *Khshnoom* which has accomplished it.

"Khshnoom" and drink it deep.

When in his search for the highest, the disciple with Faith, yearns to know the truth that reconciles the contradictions of life, and justifies their existence for a nobler end, but finds it all wrapped in a veil that defies his attempt to pierce it, his discomfort is the intensest known to man. The thickest fog is less opaque and less tantalizing than the mystery which unshrouds the unanswered longing of the heart. It is a species of torture: so that even we have seen the maddening anxieties of a man of the world, drive him to the verge of self-destruction and the disappointments of a man of hope make him a raving lunatic; yet both these shall fall short of the undesirable, unexplainable and unbearable torment that attends the cry of the heart uttered to the winds, without an answer or even an echo. The disciple has

set a riddle for himself and is out to solve it. This suspense in its ferocity, is like unto a storm; and in its effects of dejection and depression far out-measures those of the sharpest CATASTROPHES of the WORLD. It is the "Season of Darkness," when the "*Fidd-e-Haq*," (the devotee and searcher of Truth,—God)—experiences untold pangs of the body and mind, all enacted, in the dispensation of nature, to test his patience, his perseverance, and his sincerity. When the riddle therefore rises to this pitch of embarrassments, there germinates in it the first beginning of that joy, which gathers strength with every step and bursts forth with the loudest and the brightest eclat, when the solution thereof is gained. It is the joy that exceeds all worldly happiness. It is the joy that distinguishes itself from all the unreal and evanescent manifestations of worldly gladness firstly by its truth and then by its infinity. It connotes that condition of the mind, where all questionings have been solved, exist no more, when all righteous desires have been attained and the journey comes to a joyous peaceful end. This is the joy, the beatitude of the westerners, and the "Anandom" and the "Ushtâ" of the Aryans of the East. If you would have it, come to "*Khshnoom*" and feast it.

"*Khshnoom*" and its root meaning:—

In the whole range of Avesta literature, the word "*Khshnoom*" occurs but twice. First in Gâthâ Ushtawaiti-Hâ XLVIII verse 12, and next in Gâthâ Vahishtoista-Hâ LIII verse 5. It also occurs in another form in Zamyad Yasht, where the word *Pouru-Khshnootao* is used. The full text runs thus:—"Raokhshni-Khshnootem ishâonghaeta, athaûrûno ho râtanâm; Pouru-Khshnootem ishâonghaeta athaûrûno ho râtanâm"—implying "He acquires the Right Gifts of Athornans namely the Light of Khshnoom and the Proficiency of Khshnoom."

To every scholar of ancient literature, so far as Avesta is concerned, it is an established fact, that the Yasna portion is the most revered part of it; and of the Yasna,—the Gatha portion has a dignity of its own, which is higher still. As a

step further, it may safely be said that in this almost perfected portion of the most sacred text, the finest word to be found is "*Khshnoom*."

Philologists have found that the Avesta and the Sanskrit are sister languages having a common grammar and resemblance between them. Sanskrit root renders great help to explain many Avesta words; in fact it is Sanskrit that has evolved out of the primary pristine Avesta language, thereby revealing the stages of Aryan evolution. A striking instance of this rule is now before us. Just the same that the *Gāthā*,—a mere strip of the larger text of the seventy two chaptered Yasna, is the most revered of the whole literature: so too the "*Gīta*", a mere strip of the almost endless "*Mahabharata*," is the most revered in the Sanskrit language. Enjoyable therefore it really is that both the "*Gāthā*," and the "*Gīta*," have a common Sanskrit Avestan root in "*Ḡā*" which means "to sing divinely." They both are something more than mere songs. What a simple description of the most marvellous production of the human intellect! It is a lesson in true simplicity and unostentatiousness, preached many a thousand years ago. This self-effacing modesty is preserved in the word "*Bible*" and the "*Koran*". The former is derived from the Greek word—"Biblion" which means nothing more than a "*Book*", and the latter is derived from the Arabic "*Karaa*", to read; and very truly indeed, it only means that which is worth reading.

Returning to the principal word "*Khshnoom*" we find, it has its root in "*Khshnōo*" (Sanskrit "*Khshnā*") which means to know, to appreciate, to understand, or to be one in spirit with. (The modern Iranian word "*Shanākhtan*" is from the same source). The above is the interpretation of the late Erwad Saheb Kavasji Edulji Kanga. European savants translate it differently. Rev. Mills calls it,—"Contenting-propitiation"; Mr. Moulton,—"*Pleasure*"; Mr. Spiegel,—"*Wisdom*";—Mr. Gathrie,—"*Satisfaction*";—Mr. Harlez,—"*Knowledge*," and Mr. Darmestater,—"*Joy*." None of these is wrong; and yet, even all of them put together do not complete

the interpretation "*Khshnoom*" is an "*Ilm*",—a science *per se*. It is the science of salvation, a discourse which begins with the beginning and ends with the end of man. It extends from the stage when the "*Urvans*," souls were first armed with the offensive and defensive weapon of wisdom and discrimination, to prepare them for their descent through "*Hasti*" to the "*Nisti*",—(the nether world); to the moral and the ethical code, to regulate their behaviour on Earth, and finally the laws of spiritual knowledge to help them reassured to, and reach the blessed dominions of the "*Hasti*" once more. These three stages correspond with the "*Utpati-prakaran*," "*Sthiti-prakaran*", and the "*Laya-prakaran*", of the Sanskrit philosophy. The "*Khshnoom*" of the Avesta is therefore somewhat identical with the "*Tatva-jnana*" of the Sanskritists. It is this knowledge that makes a man realize, that he is an integral portion of the Infinite, nay, it is the knowledge which proves unto a man that he will one day merge in the Infinite himself. It tells a man, how he began; it guides a man as to his functions on Earth, and finally it unites a man to his Maker. This is "*Khshnoom*". It is the same as the "*Sat Chit Anand*", of the Indian Shastras: "*Sat*"=Truth is the Avestan "*Haithya*"; "*Chit*" knowledge is the Avestan "*Chisti*" and "*Ananda*"=Joy is the Avestan "*Ushti*",—(The correct interpretation of the Christian trinity as well, is not inconsistent with this). The "*Truth*" indicates the fact of a man's beginning and his source; the "*Knowledge*" regulates his behaviour on Earth; and the "*Joy*" is a man's reunion with his Maker. There is yet a deeper affinity between the two: The "*Veda*" and the "*Avesta*" are but one word from the common root "*Vid*"=to know;—knowledge, which is "*Khshnoom*." The Rev. Dr. Otoman Zar-Adusht Hanish the Great Mazdayznan Master has instinctively, translated the word "*Avesta*",—as the "*living word*" and in that most charming of interpretations, has only described "*Khshnoom*". Yes, it is the Word that lives and makes live. The very first thought of St. John, too, was the same. He said, "*In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*"

(St. John Ch. I Verse I)

There is "Khshnoom," in all religions. In it there is the reconciliation of the different absurdities of life; in it there is the consolation for every prick consequent on apparent inequities; in it is the praise of the Good, and even the justification of the existence of every evil as a means to a nobler end; and, in it is the culminating Joy" for all and under all circumstances. The essence of the whole is concentrated in the marvellous words of Mazdaznan scriptures, which say:—"An Anâi Khorshande Hom," (Patet)—a free translation whereof would be "I rejoice at the advent of misfortunes, for therein too is the germ of Joy". "Khshnoom" therefore is the "Ilm",—the science that first reveals by intuition, then proves by practice, and finally establishes by realization, the absolute unity of all Universe.

This is the legacy left behind by our revered Ustad Sahab Behramshah Nowroji Shroff of blessed memory. The legacy is specific, but there is no legatee specified. "To whomsoever has faith and sincerity, "Khshnoom" shall yield its secrets." "*Khshnoom*" is not a riddle, but it is the solution of it, reached by the education and elevation of the temperament by the piety and selflessness of the heart and by the mind made ready to appreciate the justice of every phenomenon, and to realize the balance of Nature's Elements.

"Khshnoom",—the Lost Chord.

The "Ilm"—science of "Khshnoom" does not consist in the mere remembrance and repetition of ancient texts, but in the understanding of the essence and the acting up to it in everyday life. From one point of view, "Khshnoom," in what the Westerners to-day know as "Hermenuties,"—(The science of interpreting ancient text). The rules of "Khshnoom" interpretation Ustad-Sahab would say, were contained in the Avesta,—"*Staot Yasna*," which is now regarded as lost. If the word "*Staot*" means vibrations, and if on principles of phonetics, the ancients could solve their life's puzzles and experience the joys of Heaven, then it is certain, the "*Staot Yasna*" was not lost before it had its most formidable twange and had also thereby caused a sympathetic stir in the human

heart, which has not yet completely died out. To many mind, the idea of solving life's puzzles by the sounding of serene note of music, may seem doubtful. To them I present the story of a most unique experience of an English lady, her own noble words:—

The Lost Chord:—

"Seated one day at the organ, I was weary, and ill at ease
And my fingers wandered idly over the noisy keys:
I know not what I was playing, or what I was dreaming
But I struck one chord of music, like the sound of
grand Amen, like the sound of a grand Amen
Flooded the crimson twilight, like the close of an Angel
And it lay on my fevered spirit with a touch of infinite
It quitted pain, and sorrow, like love overcoming strife
It seemed the harmonious echo, from our discordant life
It link'd all perplexed meaning, into one perfect peace,
And trembled away into silence, as if it were loath
I have sought, but I seek it vainly, the one lost chord
Which came from the soul of the Organ, and entered in
It may be that Death's bright Angel, will speak in the
It may be that only in Heaven, I shall hear that grand

(Adelaide A. Proctor)

"Khshnoom," as we have learnt to understand it: Is it "the Lost Chord," of Adelaide A. Proctor? Is it not what had done for the ancients, that Proctor experienced but for second? "Khshnoom" lies concealed in "Staot" of Avesta words. It has been sounded before, and it has since been lost. Once more it appeared in "The Grand Amen," and again it been lost. Is not the "Nâd" (Atmospheric undulation)

the Lord's Will, (the Ahuna Vairya), responsible for the appearance of the immeasurable Universe? and in fact, what is there that exists and does not owe the birth to the pronunciation of the "Word," Music. It has all been sweet or discordant, uplifting or demoralizing. The scream of an injured dog, and the bow-wow of the same dog, when he meets his master are the most common, and the most impressive instances of the effects of a "Staat", on the human disposition. The notes of an organ, and the screams of a dog are both music in their own way: and the noblest and the highest, the celestial form of it, is "Khshnoom" on the one hand, and the lost chord of "the Great Amen" on the other. Just the same that the high will of the Lord has been caught in the tune of the Ahuna Vairya, and just the same that the "Falaki" (Blue) undulations of the Heavens have been reduced to sound in the "Staats" of Ashem, and just the same that all these chords of union between man and his Maker have ever been sounded and lost: so was the ancient "Khshnoom," once more sounded in the "Staats" of the Great Amen and lost again. But it is a life-sustaining consolation to know that, that which is lost still exists: it is undying, and cannot die. A sound not heard, is not non-existent, nor is it ineffectual. There are so many entrances and so many exits in Man, wherein "Khshnoom" can pass through; and music is one of the mightiest, rarest, and best. Why was "the Lost Chord" of the "Great Amen," Khshnoom for Adelaid A. Proctor! The unconscious words dissolve the secret. The 'lost chord' had "flooded the crimson twilight," and had soothed "like the close of an Angel's Psalm."

The worries of the world had found an antidote, had found a cure, a forgetfulness; it had lain on the "fevered spirit with a touch of infinite calm." "It quieted pain and sorrow." It was "like love overcoming strife" and it indeed was "the harmonious echo from our discordant strife." Was not all this, what "Khshnoom" promises to do for the one who will find it? Has not that "Great Amen" functioned exactly and marvellously like the "Khshnoom", when it "linked all perplexed meaning into one perfect peace" and

then "it trembled away into silence, as if it were loath to cease." Does not the comparison develop into an identity? The words, "loath to cease," are very significant. Ignorant man has been pessimistic, and deplores the loss, some of the "Khshnoom", and Adelaid Cooper of the "Chord" she says, "I have sought, but I seek it vainly. That one 'lost chord' divine; which came from the soul of the Organ and entered into mine," No, nothing has been lost, neither the Khshnoom, nor the "chord divine;" these only have "trembled away into silence" but have not ceased to resound. To be despondent would be wrong for ourselves and ungrateful towards God. Remember the encouraging words of Jesus, "Search and ye shall find." The words of the song are an evidence that Khshnoom had come to life once more, proving thereby that it has never died or disappeared or lost. Each and everyone of these words is a masterful and marvellous description of "Khshnoom," and its attributes. The master organist plays on "impromptu." She sounds a chord and lo! it sets her heart a-throbbing in union with the rhythm of the spheres. She had experienced her oneness, with the only One Who is. Her pain and sorrow she found quieted: her strife was changed to peace: the discordance of life had come back to her transformed as its "harmonious echo. "And above all it had solved all her riddles of life; answered all the queries of ignorance; soothed all the rufflings of thought, and brought in peace, wherein lay the highest realization of life, the Oneness with Hormazd. How? The answer is in the song itself. It had "linked all perplexed meaning into one perfect peace."

Every thought and every sound is a force of limitless power. Every thought which is pious and selfless and every sound that has caught the cadence of Nature, becomes a "Chinwat" in itself, to carry the humble to the High and make them one. For every man, with his likes and dislikes there is a note reserved on the scale of an octave, the twanging whereof awakens the dormant condition of his soul to an activity of realization. That vibration of one's own individual wave-length, so rare to find, rarer still to strike when found, gives the taste of the Unknown and the Unknowable.

"Khshnoom" in Hamazor:—

What does the student of "Khshnoom" yearn for, long for, and ultimately attain to? He seeks the "Hamâzor" with Ahura Mazda. If this word were rightly understood and appreciated it would not be so frequently and so vainly uttered. If we have seen one form of "Khshnoom" as a divine note from an organ which was sounded and was lost, here we have a divine word, uttered in ignorance and waited on the winds. I interpret "Khshnoom", and I interpret "Hamâzor," as disclosed in the spirit of that great expression in the "Afreen-e-Ardâ-fravesh" which says:—

"Hamâzor bâd Dâdâr Hôrmazd, Rayômand Khôrehômand." I say, "Khshnoom" is this "Hamâzor", because they are both the apex wherein all is One. In the apex and culmination of man's progress and perfection, there is this 'Hamâzor', and the very same apex and culmination of man's progress and perfection is the ultimate end and aim of "Khshnoom" oneness.

Such is the scientific logical and rational identification of 'Hamâzor' and "Khshnoom." Mazdaznans do the "Hamâzor," but once on the New Year's Day (Navroz) They do it by a clasp of the hands, and with a feeling of mutual goodwill. It is therefore not unfortunate though a curiosity that Parsis, the smallest community in the world, have three New Year Days, all within but one period of the Earth's revolution round the sun. This ancient autosuggestion has come down to us in the westerner's custom of "Shake-hands" seen everywhere. It is the physical symbol of that spiritual or "Minô-Hamâzor," spoken of in the "Afreen and aimed at by the student of "Khshnoom." It is this "Shake-hands" with his Maker, losing and blending himself in the all—pervading oneness, that man yearns for, and strives his utmost to realize. The physical or earthly shake of the hands, is accomplished by the parties stretching out their hands towards each other, but if one attends to the psychology of a man, when he is fervently at prayers, it will be seen that he displays his soul's eagerness to find the hand touch divine of God, by instinctively raising both his hands towards the sky: He then waits in

that posture, and in rare cases only a radiance spreads on his face,—the sanctifying touch is experienced. It is an instinct developed into an intuition but it is the gift common to all mankind wherever and whatever he is, black or brown, yellow or white. We paint the devil black, or the African Negro paints his devil white, but whatever the dictates of man's mentality may be, both raise their heads, hands, and eyes high up towards the sky, when they are in a sober mood, and think of their Creator. Just the same, that a new-born duckling will run to the waters, much to the consternation of its hen mother, so will man, when in a prayerful mood, instinctively raise his hands to the sky and wait for a response. Ten thousand years ago, was this forcefully expressed in the very opening words of the *Abûnavad Gâthâ* :—

“*Abaiyâ Yâsâ Nemanghâ Ustâna-zastô Rafiedraiya*”
 These are the most ancient of Avesta words, and almost the very first Zarathushtra uttered, when he appeared before the public. This one word, “*Ustâna-zastô*,”—(hands raised high) proves once more the universality of Mazdaznan, as all-inclusive and all-pervading. If by a clasp of the hands, a Mazdaznan does the *Hâmazôr*, with his friends and relations; when he evolves further, he develops his instinct into an intuition, he feels the air for a touch of his Creator, the most faithful of his friends “*Urvathio*,” and the most affectionate of his relations, “*Hamkheesha*”. In the rising stage of the “*Hamâzôr*”, we see that the “*Hamâzôr*” with the “*Din*” (religion) precedes the “*Hamâzor*” with ‘*Hormazda*’. Here again is the “*Khshnoom*” its methods and its science so skillfully and so effectively illustrated. The Mazdaznan ‘*Din*’ is nothing other than the four stages of “*Khshnoom*”, by which the student of faith will advance towards the goal. The first one of *Tarikat* (laws of life-leading), the second one of “*Mârefat*” (laws of nature's agency), the third one of ‘*Shariat*’ (laws of righteous behaviour) and the fourth one of ‘*Hakikat*’ (laws of the one Reality), leading up to the “*Vehedâniat*,”—(the losing oneself in the effulgence of the One, Who created all)

The first one of "Tarikat," (study and attainment of the phenomenal and noumenal, or working of Nature in her pristine purity in which, Man, Animals, Vegetable, and Minerals show their general and special behaviour, in all their complex diversities,—in the midst of which Man has to lead life in a prescribed way, which will profitably conduct the above said Natural Workers with a good result, (KūlyAti Frashokereti, i. e. wholesale salvation of the Creation.)

The second one of Mārēfat of the study and attainment of the vehicle; the Natural Agencies of diverse kinds, which set in motion the above said Natural Phenomenal Working; which (i. e. the vehicle) is set forth in consonance with the Laws of Justice and Limits. The man who leads his life according to set rules of Tarikat, becomes the natural heir to propitious Natural Agencies, *both of whom* i. e. the man and the propitious Natural Agencies becoming of one mind, bring about the ultimate end of Common Salvation (Frashogard) sooner.

The third, of Hakikat i. e. Study and realization of the one Reality in her diverse phases, arranged in diverse stations, forming the great White Brotherhood, greasing so to say the machine of Mārēfat.

The Man of Tarikat who becomes fortunate in attaining the Natural Working of Mārēfat, enters as a member in the great White Brotherhood of the one Reality of diverse phases

The fourth one "Mithre-barin," i. e. knowledge and experience of the attainment of the Common Salvation; (Frashokereti,) which in her onward march, is called "Vāhedāniat," i. e. losing Consciousness in the great ocean of Reality,—becoming merged in the Reality.

There is the philosophy of the Afreen, made manifest to mankind, that 'Hamāzor' with the Din' is the condition precedent to the 'Hamāzor with Hormazda'. It is the shortest route to Salvation. The "Patha" (road) of Asha-Ashoi-Righteousness-its geometric-graph being but one

straight line, defined as the shortest distance between any two points: (here between the man and his Maker).

The word "Hamâzor" is a bi-syllabic word, where "Ham" means "one in spirit or feeling, or in perfect union, and "Zor" comes from the root "Zû," which means "to be strengthened by." With this etymology the best English equivalent of the word seems to be "Union is strength," and the best interpretation of the word "Khshnoom" is to be found in the Pazend words of the Afreen: "Hamâzor bâi Dâdâr Hormazd Rayomand, Khorehomand"

There is also one more beautiful sentence in the Avesta which so graphically describes the perfection attained through "Khshnoom". They are words of prayer which say: - "Yâ Varêno Ahura-Mazdao tâ varenâchâ tkaeshâchâ" (Naisimi Daevo, or Yasna Hâ XII.)—"May I attain to the perfection of Ahuro-Mazda." From the Avesta this high idea has permeated the world. Plato has said somewhere; "Try to be like God." And the famous words of the Holy Bible say—"Be ye therefore perfect, even, as your Father, which is in the heaven, is perfect". (St. Matthew; Ch. V. verse 48.) The "Khshnoom" therefore is everywhere; and therein is its strength and its truth. The Zarathustrian and the Mazdaznan religions are not different from, or independent of, each other. They are but supplements which when put together form one whole, which again can be called by either of the names. It is the Avesta religion, the religion of the knowledge of Nature and Nature's God. From the "Hasti" to the "Nisti," is the "Din-ê Mazdaznan"; and from the "Nisti" back to the "Hasti" is the "Din-ê Zarthoshti"; any one of which singly, would be only half of the whole. This whole is "Khshnoom."

The Mazdayasni Zarthoshti Daen is one showing the two great paths in Nature;—one of Involution; i.e. the making of the Corporeal Body,—the other is Evolution—i. e. elevation of the Corporeal body to the level of all light.

It therefore includes the knowledge of how and why the "Urwan" of man was sent down to the Earth: a knowledge

of the weapon of defence and offence provided for it to combat the influence of Angra, who existed, and shall exist to the end of time: a knowledge of his wicked ways and his masterful machinations.

The second stage is the practice of this knowledge in the life on Earth to recognise the superiority of "Ashoi," over all other virtues of the world; to be confident of limitless potentialities, and to be brave and courageous, to act up to it under all and every circumstances; and therefore the final stage of a re-ascent to the "Hasti"; a foretaste of the "joy" that awaits the good, and the training that must fall to the lot of the not good: so that, in the Infinite Mercy of Mazda, they all may be prepared, sooner or later for the great "Sun-clothed Day,"—the "Frashokërëti," the day of Union, the day of Joy, when questions shall no longer be possible and all doubts shall have been radically destroyed, and when the words of the "Afreen";—

"Hamázor bād Dádär Hormazd, Rayomand, Khorshomand," shall be finally fulfilled: and all shall be One. From the start of the "Urwan's" downward journey to the "Nisti," its bold and confident stand against the varied influences when there, and its final triumphant return to its source, is one complete cycle, the knowledge whereof is "Khshnoom."

"Khshnoom" is a river of Blessedness:—"Khshnoom" is like unto a river that comes flowing down in floods, spreading happiness wherever it goes and yet remains unpolluted and undiminished, and even ever growing stronger, we all can flock to its banks and have our fill as we all may individually need.

"Rām-o-Nadi, éka Sāmān; Sub-kohikū-dét,
Hāth-kumbh jaisā jiskā,—Vahisāhi bhar-let,—
i. e.,—Rām and the River: of their gifts a free distribution make. But as is the hand jug, so each one doth take.

The gifts of Ram and River are akin to the gifts of "Khshnoom;" and the symbolic "Hātha-Kūmbh" the hand jug, carries the comparison to its completion in the "Bish-Fish" method of its administration.

"Bish" carries the idea of not teaching more than the disciple can digest, and "Pish" has the idea of not teaching prematurely or before the disciple is ready to receive.

Each one selects his Jug, in terms of his needs; no one should carry a jug bigger than his needs, or no one should go to the waters, unless he is thirsty; for, he must bear the weight of it and no one should carry a jug that is smaller than his needs; for, he then must thirst. From the Blessed River of "Khshnoom," is meted out a portion, not more than the disciple can assimilate, nor any, before he is prepared to receive it. Not too much, and not too early, is the essence of "Bish-Pish," or also, the philosophy of the Jug;—

"Khshnoom" and Charity.

"Khshnoom" is charity in the true sense of the term. The English word "Charity," does not always mean a monetary gift. As a matter of fact, a monetary gift is but the result of Charity; it is one of its legitimate consequences, it is one of the forms it takes, or it is but one of the ways in which Charity makes itself manifest to the World. "Charity" in its root, means "Dearness." A word or an act of kindness therefore is a more genuine exhibition of Charity than many an individual act of selfishly inspired monetary gifts. A word of guidance to the ignorant, a helping hand to a brother, disabled by the road-side, a caress to the sick and the ailing, are superb exhibitions of "Charity"—all these and many more are epitomized in the third line of the "Ahuna Vairya". It is the Will of God which says;—"Khshathremchâ-Ahûrâi"—â-Yim-Drégûbyô-Dadat-Vâstâ-rém"—I interpret it in my own way to men;—"He alone shall realize Hormazd, who unto the needy shall stretch out a helping hand." The realization of Hormazd is "Khshnoom" and it is therefore in the stretching out of a helping hand to a needy brother, and if this sympathy for the deserving is Charity, then certainly the practice of Charity is the precise knowledge of "Khshnoom".

Khshnoom is Joy.

Any essay on "Khshnoom" would, from its start to its

finish, practically be a dissertation devising a reply to the one question,—“What is ‘Khshnoom’”. As a gem, its faces are beyond count; as a book of Science, its chapters are unnumbered; as a treatise on Ethics, it exhausts all the virtues of the world; and finally as the portal to the abode of light, it is a delight that has lost all sense of sorrow and suffering, it is a delight that enjoys both a cut and a caress and takes it all as for the good of man. All this length and breadth and depth, are under high compression reduced to the scripture words:—

“Az Anâi Khorshend Hôrn ”

“Khshnoom” is a blessing, not a curse; it is wisdom, not ignorance; it is foresight, not narrowmindedness; it is not a riddle, but a solution of all riddles, where the depression and discomfort are all dissolved into Joy—“Khshnoom” is the Truth and the Joy of all Mazdaznan Scriptures.

There is nothing in the world, wholly good, or wholly bad;—and a condition of unmixed good or unmixed evil perhaps is also not to be wished for. It is all to be a progress towards the Good, the Greater Good; and the Highest Good;—with a corresponding retreat from the evil, even from the lesser evil, and thence to the absence of evil. The day of such a blessed clearance shall have to be postponed till the “Great Morning” shall appear to usher in the “Sun-Clothed” day. But “The Pilgrim’s Progress” to that goal shall be a hard journey indeed.

It shall be a journey over perilous heights, and along more perilous deeps, through violent blizzards and choking storms, but the end shall be worth more than all the risk, encountered. When therefore, the top is reached its perfect panorama solves all problems; its majestic height dwarfs all the surroundings into their legitimate insignificance, and its all piercing light leaves no dark corners unrevealed. The intrepid mountaineer of to-day, may be likened unto the student of “Khshnoom.” We hear of his feats of courage every day, he hangs over dizzy height, he balances himself on needle-point rocks, and considers nothing too valuable to

risk,—to reach the top of the crag. He neglects the dangers and the risks because he is aware of the Joy that awaits him on top. This comparison of a physical venture, stretched out to its spiritual counterpart, reveals the law, that the path of the pleasures of the Soul runs through dismal darkness, which helps to sanctify and to cleanse the mortal frame of its damaging and obstructing attachment, dispels ignorance and educates by experience. There is no teacher in the World that can excel *experience*. Shakespeare knew the value of experience and realized it, and the proof of it lies in his words;—

"Sweet are the uses of adversity which like the toad, ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious jewel in its head." "Khshnoom" is the Science and solution of the World Problems of good and evil, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow.

"Khshnoom" and the "Staot Yasna."

"Khshnoom" teaches that vibration is at the root of all nature and that consciousness precedes all thought or Plan of nature and that Plan reveals or expresses itself in Staota or Nature-language of colourful thought-vibrations generated by the pristine consciousness for building up the Cosmos.

"Staot" is the Avesta word for vibrations and "Khshnoom" claims to interpret Avestan scriptures on rules of phonetics. It is Avestan hermeneutics based on the Science of sound and colour. That sound even when it is inarticulate carries a meaning in our common experience. The bark of a house dog is clearly indicative of its pleasure or pain. Nay, the bleating of lamb conveys to man, its feeling of satisfaction or loneliness or fear. The voice of a Patti or a Melba has helped hundreds to experience the ecstasies of heaven. Sound therefore with its harmony, its melody, its rhythm, can accomplish all. The Avestan phraseology was all formed on principles of phonetics first to charm the soul by its measure and its melody, and then to translate itself into the practice of Humata, Hukhta, Hvarhshta. That the sound is also colour is a proved problem of Science. The Avestan knew this; it is come down to us that the colours or the 'Staot' of

"Ashem" are blue. The Iranian words for the three primary colours are,—Falki=Blue; Surkhi=Red; and Zardi=Yellow. The 'Staot' Yasna is a lost Nask though some scholars have tried to identify it with certain passages of the extant Avesta; and others have maintained that the three pre-Zarathushtrian prayers of the "Ashem," the "Yathâ-Ahû-Vairyo," and the "Yenghe Hâtâm" put together would make up the "Staot Yasna."

It used to be the key to the correct interpretation of the Avesta texts: but as a Science of hermeneutics it is lost. Ustad Sahib as a true Mazdaznan, and pledged to his masters at the Demavand, would not tell us clearly whether he knew it himself or not; but he proved its existence and its knowledge within the precincts of "The Firdos" by giving the interpretations of many Avesta words, which simply astounded the scholars and made them conscious how meaningless were the meanings they had hitherto relied upon. Ustad Saheb's interpretation had charms which almost hypnotized his hearers, with its newness. It was a marvel in itself, and the truth disclosed so different, that the old one looked like dead matter compared to the vitality with which the new one had come to life itself, and even re-vitalized all others who came in touch with it. Ustad Saheb's sermons and lectures gave Avesta literature a new significance, a new importance, a new meaning, which not only so radically set aside the dull, and insipid, and some without, and others with wrong meaning, so that the new interpretations presented the old texts as so many revelations of scientific value, of spiritual truths, and celestial light. To quote one such instance would be enough. The Avesta word "Yazamaide" used to be understood as "praise, laudation, or worship," the Gujarati word being "Arâdhnâ." With this meaning, it had become a riddle to solve for the sympathisers and a handle to work up an opposition for the opposers. It is the most used word in Avesta literature: and it has been used with Ahura Mazda the Creator, and His Associates on the one hand, and with the inanimate mountains and rivers and oceans on the other. In fact the whole array of the variety of its uses is beyond

calculation, and with its ordinarily accepted meaning of praise or worship, it had become perplexing and unintelligible. But "Yazamaidé" has much more in it, than mere praise or worship. To have used this word with that meaning in juxtaposition with Ahura Mazda and His Associates would be possible, but the same word in the same sense, by the side of a mountain or a river is not easy to explain. Mazdaznan has never interpreted worship to mean a joining of hands and a bowing of heads, nor has Mazdaznan ever stooped to flattery. It is out of its essence, the basis of the whole being Truth. Mazdaznans, they say, have lost millions because they would not flatter; but if Mazdaznans have stood against centuries of annihilating vicissitudes, the sturdiness of the whole is traceable to the same virtue. Mazdaznans have not flattered even Ahura Mazda. Their basic education of Truth and Independence has saved them from it. They have only been "Yezamaidé" with Hormazd; as they have been with His Good Creations. Oostad Saheb derived the word from the root "Yaz," which means to be one with. Far from the idea of a false praise or an ignorant worship, it carries in it the idea of study. It is a course of study where first the attributes are searched for and ascertained. Then follows the investigation of their effects on the constitution and affairs of man, and finally the at-one-ment with it, to utilize it for the advancement of the Good Creations of Hormazd. Every invention is first a study and a discovery of a law of Nature, and secondly a co-ordination with it to help Man evolve quicker and better. Man's evolution shall be advanced or retarded in exact proportion, as he either shall co-operate with or contradict and oppose the Order of Nature that prevails.

"Dāmim Yazamaidé,"—(Hormazd Yasht), used to be interpreted as "I praise wisdom;" it is insipid and meaningless. The sentence has the following import: "I shall strive to gain knowledge, know where to co-operate and where to contradict, and shall lead my life accordingly so that my neighbour and myself both may advance easier and sooner."

To be "Yazamaidé" therefore with Ahura Mazda, is first to know what His will is and then to do it. To be

"Yazamaidé" with the mountain both physical and ultraphysical and also in their complete physical and spiritual constitution—"Aom Gairim Yazamaidé" is to study and learn their functions in nature, to accelerate the benefits of their uses, to prevent the waste of their virtue, and to be "Yas" attuned with it all, so as to bring the greatest good to the greatest number. Ustad-Saheb was the first to teach the esoterics of "Yazamaidé," the beauty whereof will become apparent, when it is compared with its first interpretation,—*"I praise the mountain."*

Other Avesta words which received such scientific explanations, are 1. Ahunavar. 2. Hosh Bām. 3. Fravashi, and a great many others: too numerous indeed for the man of thought to appreciate and enjoy the ten thousand year old scriptures of Zarathushtra, as the revealing laws of Science, which the discoveries of the modern world confirm, and the laws of social and moral Science, which the modern humanity regret having neglected to observe.

Ustad Saheb had learnt it from the Sahebs of Demavand. The Boy Behram was receiving this type of education in the Schools of Firdos, and it was his good fortune to receive it for more than three years.

Such be the Marvels of "Khshnoom."

The Boy Behram's education at the Firdos.

During his stay at the Firdos, Behram had been a good boy. The Sahebs loved him well and called him by the pet name 'Behram.' He had learnt his lessons with zeal and had honoured and respected the discipline of the sacred enclosure. An anecdote relates that an agriculturist within the enclosure who had appreciated the worth and virtues of the Boy had offered his daughter in marriage to him. I have no data to describe the physical appearance of that girl of the 'Pairidaez' on Earth, but my imagination shall not have erred when I say that her charms must have been superb and there must have been a halo of brightness around her person to which an ordinary Earth-born individual would be attracted with an irresistible force. Her virtues must have shaped the curves

and contours of her person, and must therefore have been faultless, her colour must have been the genuine white of the Aryan race made whiter still by the innocence of her heart. The girls of Firdos are lovers of truth and excel in archery and horsemanship. The last two demonstrations of physical powers are in fact the true trainers of spiritual excellence: Riding the horse without a saddle and governing the animal by holding its mane are scientifically an electrical contact which helps the unfolding of higher virtues, and the exactitude of the eye as developed by archery is a great promoter of understanding and discrimination. Her ways and habits and temperament so trained must indeed have made her words sound sweeter and her acts look more blessed and attractive. The flowing folds of her garment, made not to expose but to protect the modesty of the wearer must have added the final touch of perfection to that picture of Iranian maidenhood. If therefore the prospects of relationship with the damsel made Behram feel himself in the highest heaven; indeed the master's refusal to permit the wedlock must have made him experience the sharpest disappointment. Behram's obedience however was ideal. Behram's future was to be beyond the limits of the Firdos, and anything therefore that would keep him in was disallowed in his own interest.

The Boy Behram had entered the Firdos with a marked stammer on his lips, he was now going out as a 'Hâfizâ' of Avesta and Pahalvi literatures. Here was a living proof of what an Avesta 'Nirang' can do, when pronounced by the pious lips of an Abed Dastûr. The stammering had gone and a memory of extraordinary retentiveness had been bestowed on the young man. There is nothing that an 'Avesta Nirang' cannot accomplish, when pronounced by pious lips. An 'Avesta Nirang' is a selection of passages from the larger Avesta of the 21 nasks. It is a selection made by those Abeds who knew and understood the laws of the 'Staot Yasna' (the law of vibrations). These selected passages are appended to the recitation of the Yashts and other prayers of the smaller or the Khordeh-Avesta. In our ordinary experience of life the effects of a song and a screech are thoroughly well known

and these as well are but the laws of the 'Staot Yasna,' exemplified in practice. A sound vibration can bring joy or sorrow to the human mind, it can uplift a fallen soul, can alter the physical constitution of man by curing defects and by improving upon or strengthening into positive excellence, the existing weakness. It can remedy and remove all physical defects, *e.g.* stammering or deafness or a dull memory or even change a man's nature from habits of selfishness to the laudable deeds of self-sacrifice. In the realms of nature an 'Avesta Nirang' rightly selected and piously recited can help man to grow a crop of vegetation, can help man to raise or lower the level of large underground reservoirs of waters. On these principles the words of an 'Avesta Nirang' are selected and utilised to obtain desired results. These are but a few of the powers of the Ilm-Iam-Nirang of the Avestan days, but the unsurmountable difficulty for the present generation in spite of its possession of the mighty formulas, is the want of pious lips to pronounce them and the high and practised souls to know and understand their powers. Such pious lips, pious by the practice of truthfulness (Meher) and pious by the observance of Nature's laws of behaviour (Tarikat); men of unshakable faith and convictions based on experience of life, such are the Saheb-Dils of Damavand. An English poet describes though unconsciously the attributes of such blest ones. He says:

" who are the blest?

They who have kept their sympathies awake,
 And scattered joy for more than custom's sake—
 Steadfast and tender in the hour of need,
 Gentle in thought, benevolent in deed,
 Whose looks have power to make dissension cease—
 Whose smiles are pleasant, and whose words are peace:
 They who have lived as harmless as the dove,
 Teachers of truth and ministers of love;
 Love for all moral power—all mental grace—
 Love for the humblest of the human race—
 Love for that tranquil joy that virtue brings—

Love for the Giver of all goodly things;

.....
 These are the only blest!"

—(Prince).

These Sahebs sent us unimpeachable proof of the powers of an "Avesta Nirang" in the person of our revered Ustad Saheb, transformed from a stammering lad into a fiery and a fluent orator, and from a lad of about fifteen who had not gone beyond his 'Bâl-Pothi,' transformed into a 'Hâfezâ' of Avesta and Paharvi literatures. Did not Jesus cleanse the unclean by the simple 'Nirang,' "Be thou clean"? and did not the Mahatmas and Rishis of old give all the world could bestow by their 'Nirang' of but one word 'Kalyân'? The Boy Behram emerged from the Firdos, equipped as a healer of the ill and ailing; a tutor of philosophy and an interpreter of ancient texts which astonished the Pandits and Professors.

He knew: Ilm-e-Tib which was the science of medicine; Ilm-e-Nazoom which was astrology; Ilm-e-Fâl which was also something similar: Ilm-e-Zafar which was the art of influencing the mind of man, so as to make it better, untruthful into truthful and selfish into selfless. Ilm e-Ramal or fortune telling and many other arts and sciences, such as electricity (Kî-âstar), Radium properties (Râdum) etc. etc. It is important to know that Behramshah's education in the Firdos commenced under the guidance of a female Magava, Banu Tannâz who was a lady professor in the sacred enclosure and ended with the fatherly guidance of Marzbanji the Shraoshâvarez. Behram's education was thus commenced, continued and completed on principles of ideal perfection and purity. The âbeds began by the pious recitation of 'Avesta Patets' the 'stots' (vibrations) whereof, when sung with true faith and love, have the effect of inspiring contentment, desire for the performance of good deeds, and utter humility: so that when the training of the boy was begun he already was wonderfully possessed of these very essential virtues of a disciple's life. The Sahebs by the recitation of 'Avesta Nirang,' gave the boy robust health, which he possessed and

maintained till the end of his life. Behramshah was a stalwart, six feet high, and ever healthy and active as a young man. Behramshah had Athravan blood in his veins, and he had an Athravan temperament for the love of matters spiritual. These the Sahebs had foreseen and by proper prayers, properly recited had accelerated and even perfected the development of these phases of the boy's character. When the physical side of the boy's training had been attended to and made ready, the Sahebs turned their attention to the moral and the spiritual side of it. They knew that when the health of the body was an accomplished fact (Tan-darosti) it was time to turn to the health of his mind and speech (Man-darosti and zaban-darosti) and lastly to the health and the strength of his conscience. The boy was trained to know and to appreciate the value of balance (Patmân) in every matter, and primarily in thought. A balanced thought that will not run riot either by outer influence or temptation, and a balanced thought that does not stagnate either for fear from without or ignorance from within, is an asset impossible to estimate in terms of worldly value. The thought that remains undisturbed when attacked and undisturbed when flattered is a balanced thought. The mind that remains steady, above influence, and unmindful of surrounding circumstances is the mind that will give birth to a balanced thought and which when once established shall be difficult to dislodge from its truths. Behramshah Shroff displayed this impregnable strength of 'Patmân' (balance) on many an occasion of jealous opposition and unholy animosities. Behram's education was about the most perfect it was possible to impart. He was educated in the philosophy of human life, from its seed to its end, (its Ebtedah to its Intehâ) and all that would intervene between the two; the compound character of life which is a mixture of good and of evil and the principles on which the good was to be loved and increased and the evil not to be hated but merely to be reduced or transformed. The necessity of evil for the preservation and increase of the good was as we have seen a strong factor of Behramshah's education

in the Firdos. The instructions were not one sided only, in the preaching of the professors, but it was very rigorously a double process where the exertions of the boy to respond to the prayers of Āfreenghān, Daham-āfreettee were required to be obeyed to by the observance of strict procedure. (Tarikats). The boy was a willing worker, first by truth, then by temperament and lastly by determination of Nature. He responded with harmony and rhythm and a will to achieve. This was enough; he achieved, he preached and he made his name immortal in the history of the progress of his Mazdaznan religion. He knew the mysteries and the marvels of 'Khashnoom,' he had received the knowledge 'Bish-Pish' and 'Bish-Pish' he gave it unto others.

The Professors of Firdos.

Just the same that a flower becomes the cause of admiration of the tree, it happens that the high attainments of a disciple become the cause of inquiry about the proficiency of his gurus. The life of Behramshah was a brilliant instance, which stirred up universal curiosity regarding his teachers at the Firdos. Behramshah's gratitude towards them was very outspoken, and the same was always declared by him in unmistakable terms. He would so often say, and say it with assurance for himself and his hearers that his Sahebs of the Demavand would help all as they helped him, if there was for them and him faith and love combined with a disinterested desire to learn and to teach. His description of their character and learning and piety were as interesting and wonderful as the best tales of adventure and romance. Apart from us all who honoured and believed what our Ustad Saheb had to relate, there is a very large number, who disbelieved and scoffed at it. It is the mentality of man, it is his faith, and it is his love, which always guides and even determines the direction of his likes and dislikes and the presence therefore of those that scoff is from a philosophical point of view just as essential for society and for the advancement of learning as is the presence of those who revere and respect the same. Herein is the correct understanding and

interpretation of the Avesta philosophy of duality. There is the inseparable and the most essential co-existence of the "Angra" and the "Spenta" in every noticeable phenomenon of the whole of the Universe; be it in the domain of its physical, moral or spiritual activity. There is nothing truly hateful in the idea of the "Angra," but that there is in its existence an appreciable and an inevitable importance quite indispensable for the regulation of the world's affairs. Without the "Angra," the "Spenta" would be practically inert; and without the "Angra" there would be no impetus to evolve and to conquer. The best proof that in the heart of Hormazd these two factors, ever so opposing they may seem, are equally beloved, is, in the use of the word, 'Mino,' made common for the description of both of them. For the advancement of man to his goal, therefore there shall be love for "Spenta" for he is a Mino and there shall not be any hatred for the "Angra" for he too is a Mino, and without its existence the earthly life of man would be like unto a pool of stagnating water instead of a brightly flowing river running to its blessed destination. Advance the "Spenta" and reduce the "Angra" so that the former may ever grow and increase and, compress the latter so that it may exist no bigger than a point in mathematics. The Saheb-Dels of Demavand are a band of Zarathushtrian Mystics, who live unseen by and unknown to the world. They are like the guardian spirits of Mazdaznan, and they are the holders of the secrets and true esoterics and who also hold with themselves the true science of Avestan hermeneutics, the 'Stot Yasna.' The Saheb-Dels are the true Servants of Mazdaznan Society. Their service is in the strength of their thoughts. They hold the Humata as a weapon of offense and of defence and when the Mazdaznan society attains excellence in any direction whatever, it is the thought power of these Abeds that has worked for it. The blessedness of a thought sent out from a devout and a pious heart is ever creative and omnipotent. The philosophy of "Humata," that Zarathushtra first revealed to the world though pronounced by and known to every individual is not an easy thing to conceive. It is the mightiest force imagi-

nable by men and it is therefore also the most difficult virtue to attain. The professors of the Firdos are the best masters of their own Humata. They can conceive the good thought and they can wield its utmost strength. The fortune that befell Behramshah to be in their company for over three years and to be instructed by them in the marvels of Mazdaznan was one really to be envied. It was the result of his 'Keshâs' good deeds of former lives when too he was good and obliging, that the recompense for the same came to him, in the form of this tutelage. Within the precincts of the Firdos these high souls are working for the good of mankind in general. They have their grade of dignity not according to the value of their possessions, but according to their personal development of piety and learning. The higher grade is known as the 'Khâs' and the other as the 'âm.' The former grade has in itself one group of perfected souls known as the 'khâs-ul-khâs' which group always consists of 72 men, whom the Avesta distinguishes as the 'Magava.' Above all these master-minds is the 'Shroshâvareh'-Sâheb. He gets his name from the arch-angel 'Sraosha,' with whom he is in perfect tune, the rhythm of his holy breath keeps him attuned with the emanation of "Sraosha." These saints of Firdos have their bodies, mind, brain, speech and conscience all attuned to ideal truthfulness and sincerity, and love which enables them to know all and to see all. They are much more than what we ordinarily understand as clairvoyants. They have power and capacity to turn all evil into good whatever it is, and for all their worth they are known as the 'Saheb Dils.' It was Behramshah's rare fortune to have learnt this law under such professors. The Sahebs are ever averse to waste of any kind, a rule that has come down to this day to the Mazdaznan; to whom every species of waste, large or small, is a sin. The commonest and the most practical illustration of it is revealed to us to-day in the Mazdaznan annoyance at the sight of water running to waste from an open tap. The Sahebs are sincere believers in the 'Had-Insâf' of Ahuramazda and they never interfere where they see the limitations prescribed by nature, and

when they see that justice has prevailed. This rule as well has come down to the Mazdaznans who on occasions of dire distress only say 'Let the will of Ahuramazda be done.' This resignation to the divine dispensation has permeated Islam, and the very word 'Muslim' means nothing more than the one who is resigned to the will of Allah. The same principle can also be seen in the verses of the holy Bible, where we find the words 'Thy will be done,' so emphatically impressed on the reader's mind. The sâhebs are followers of angelic virtues, they imitate 'Armaiti' and always make mighty acts of self-sacrifice their first and only pleasures. The good of the neighbour is the first concern, and the good of the neighbour is the last concern. Self-sacrifice is the breath of their life, and the contrary idea is unknown and non-existent in Firdos. This virtue as well has survived to this day in the life habits of Mazdaznan, for whom it has practically become their differentia, and has marked them out from humanity at large. The Mazdaznan has always looked first to his neighbour and then to himself. He loves his neighbour as himself and his pleasures are regulated on the principle contained in that Gem of Avestan thought, the first line of the first verse of the 'Ustavaity Gâthâ.'

'Ushtâ Ahmâi, yahmâi Ushtâ, Kahmâi chit.'

'True pleasure shall be his through whom true pleasure has been brought to a neighbour.'

The Boy Behram leaves the Firdos.

The Boy Behram had now been at the Firdos for more than three years. On the principle of "Bish-Pish," he had learnt so much as he had the strength to assimilate, and as much as he had become ripe to receive. It was now once again the mother's love that worked. In the inscrutable dispensation of Nature it was that same motherly affection, a temporary aberration whereof had led to an estrangement and had pushed him away from home, now reacted to stir in her the contrary feeling of a longing to see her son. The same Master who had once seen her enjoy gossip with her neighbours on the anniversary of her birth, now saw her a

second time waiting and feeling lonely and miserable because of the absence of her son. It was a coincidence which the Master rightly foresaw and understood to be the proper time for the return of the Boy to the world outside the Firdos. Naturally enough when the Master had so televized for himself the scene of the sad condition of Behram's mother and had communicated same to him, it excited in the Boy a spontaneous pull of filial love. The Iranian word for what we know as television is "Sezda:" and the difference between the two is that according to Mazdaznan beliefs the former is the result of an act of a Scientific outrage on the elements of Nature, whereas the latter is the natural outcome of the inherent powers of the Soul developed by a person through individual piety and spiritual advancement. That the former is really an outrage on Nature is explained and proved by a very recent discovery of Science, which records that as the direct result of the tremendous atmospheric disturbances caused by the radio and other aerial waves, lunacy among men has considerably increased. The "Sezda" is free from all such sinister consequences. It is a condition of life acquired by those high souls, who have purged themselves of all sins, who have discarded the lusts of life, who have lived solely for the elevation of others, who have believed in self-sacrifice and self-effacement as pleasure, and who have co-ordinated with the vibrations of Nature. To them time and space stand annihilated; to them distance does not disturb and the time it takes to twinkle an eye becomes enough for the accomplishment of their heart's desire. The true condition of a "Sezda" is nothing but the genuine realization of the fabulous looking "Music of the Spheres." It is the adjusting of the wave-lengths of one's thoughts to the undulations of Nature. Of this there are two stages, the one lower and the other higher. The former is the "Sezda-e-Nimroo," which requires for its successful operation the presence of the master (Guru), and the latter is the "Shezda-e-Amroo," where the pious man can officiate independently relying on his own psychic & spiritual attainments. The 'Sezda' is in fact a result of the super-

development of an individual, which evolves his personal powers and potentialities through spiritual exercises (Tarikat) and personal piety (Asha). It is a stage of perfection which enables the Abed to feel and to see and to hear all that an ordinary mortal in his ordinary life can never hope to feel, to see or to hear. Let not the materialist scoff at this idea. If he does, let him read what sightless John Milton prayed for & sincerely believed he would get, and he did get. He said;

"So much the rather thou, Celestial Light,
Shine inward and the mind through all her powers,
Irradiate; there plant eyes, all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell,
Of things invisible to mortal sight."

(Milton's Paradise Lost; Book III, Lines 51 to 55).

It is not the eyes that see; nor the ears that hear; nor the tongue that tastes. There is a power and a spirit behind these senses who is the true enjoyer and worker of all, and in the proportion that an individual by his own spiritual advancement comes closer to that indwelling Atom of Light, that he is able to feel independent of the burden of all his physical senses. The Sâheb-Dils of Demâvand were very advanced souls, possessed of super-normal powers, and they really could "see and tell of things invisible to mortal sight." The television on the other hand is that knowledge of material Science, which spreads violence in the silence of Nature, disturbs its rhythm to a degree and shows a result which looks mighty and marvellous only in its outward appearance. It acts and there is reaction to balance it. It is the reaction that neutralizes the goodness of the show, and for the short-lived pleasures of the science-made marvels there follow a series of unthinkable and unremediable disasters, which leave humanity and the world more miserable than before.

To continue the thread of our story, there is in Nature a balanced reciprocity of affection between the mother and her child. It holds good for the whole of the human family on Earth,—be the child born on the ice slabs of frigid

Greenland or be the child born under the scorching rays of the Sun in Torrid Mid Africa. God made man the same everywhere in his primary likes and dislikes, but man himself yielded to the influences of his individual circumstances and surroundings and suffered himself to be segregated into clans, castes, and creeds, unnatural and repugnant in themselves to the canons that govern the Universe. Nature exemplifies her laws for the guidance of man on Earth and also for his progress towards his goal in regions beyond. But it is his own negligence to obey, that leads him astray and delays his salvation. It is one of the teachings of "Khshnoom," that there is not a single principle of human life, the truth and the virtue whereof is not exemplified in the exuberance of inanimate Nature: and that there is no ceremonial on Earth which is not a counterpart and the reminder of the activities of higher entities in the regions of heaven. One such instance of the regulation of the love of a child for its mother is so beautifully illustrated by a great poet, who observed and disclosed the spirituality that lay hid behind the behaviour of a banyan tree. The really inspired words of the poet are:

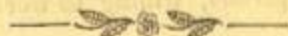
"They tell us of an Indian tree,
Which, howsoever the sun and sky
May tempt its boughs to wander free,
And shoot and blossom wide and high,
Far better loves to bend its arms,
Downward again to that dear Earth,
From which the life that fills and warms
Its grateful being, first had birth.
It is thus, though wooed by flattering friends,
And fed with fame (if fame it be),
*This heart, my own dear mother, bends,
With love's true instinct, back to thee.*"

—Moore.

The Boy Behram now succumbed to a different feeling. It was the remembrance of his 'Home Sweet Home.' He for a time at least became unconscious of the joys and the

comforts of the Firdos and became unsupportably impatient to return to his saddened mother and once more to see himself in the humble and rugged rooms of his residence in Bombay. It was indeed "The Mother's love calling." It was all wonderfully in the dispensation of things that the end of Behram's education at Firdos coincided with the endearing impatience of Behram's mother to see her long absent and dearly beloved son. He must go back to his mother and to his friends and relatives, and to preach and propagate the grand Science of Khshnoom, that was being overspread every day more and more by the heaps of rank and spurious misinterpretations and misunderstandings born of ignorance and fanaticism. The prospects of the return journey were indeed more grim than the ones that had led him to the Firdos. When he came to Firdos, there had been friends with him more loving than a parent, more knowing than the best of guides, and more reliable than the best of friends; but now on the return there was none to accompany the Boy, none to be friend and none to protect or guide the youth through the hazards of the arduous travel. The ways of the Sâhebs are inscrutable, yet perfect, and though apparently careless, yet full of love and sympathy and guardianship. The value of a pious man's blessings is beyond measure, and the potentiality of that utterance is unconquerable by the worst of world's evils. It becomes the guiding voice of a friend, the protecting love of a mother, and the instructing wisdom of a "guru." These blessings, the Boy Behram had received to their full: with these, he was armed to defend himself when attacked, and himself to attack when surrounded by a danger. These blessings were an inspiration, to embolden the boy to undertake the journey home alone. He became brave, trusting to higher powers with sincere faith; he also became self-confident and self-reliant. The sahebs saw the courage of the youth, his eagerness to return to his mother, and in these feelings of a man, they also saw the successful working of the words of blessing they had so piously and devoutly pronounced on him. The young man was ready to depart. It must have been a moment of pain for all concerned, for the youth had been of good behaviour, obedient to his superiors, willing to work and willing to

please, willing to learn and willing to undertake the grand mission he was destined to fulfil. All changes of times and circumstances have to be surrendered to. Preparations for the arduous return journey were made and completed. It was obvious the young traveller would long be in unknown and unfriendly land before he reached his destination, and during all that period a thousand necessities would have to be answered. It is on record and we who honour the memory of our Ustad Saheb believe that the Sahebs of Demāvand had given him a phial of "Aksiré-Azam" with the most definite and the most rigorous and strict instructions for its use. It was a solution of chemicals which had the power by mere application of turning copper into gold. It was to provide him with pocket money just enough to keep him out of ordinary difficulties and no more. He had used and he had never had to beg for his existence. When this incident became an established fact, many a jealous one started unpleasant insinuations against the life incidents of Behramshah Shroff and imputed motives and practices which would hurt him as a man of honour and learning. Behramshah Shroff was a good man, a learned man, a man of ideal humility and a man who believed in giving whenever he could find a receptacle worthy to receive. When he left the academy of esoteric Avestan research of the Demāvand, he was blind-folded for a while, and let out by a reliable and loving guide for a certain distance away, when the folds were removed, he was blessed once more and left to follow his own way home. The strength of the blessings received on this return journey though apparently unprotected and without a guide he could with perfect safety travel over the whole of Iran, the whole of upper India and could even penetrate into the mysterious lands of Tibet right upto Bahoma. (The friendship of the Sahebs was not broken by Behram's departure from the Firdos; he could tell his mind to the masters of the Firdos and he could hear their replies thereon. He had been instructed in the mysteries of the "Sezda," and he understood its intricacies. His immediate disciples in India know he could televize with his grand master Marzbanji and solve the difficulties which were too great for his individual intelligence). He returned via Peshawar, where he once more met his dear uncle and thence to his dear mother.



The Boy Behram Returns Home.

1878—1908.

Physical courage and physical endurance had come to the Boy Behram as the natural and expected result of his education at the Firdos: And therefore when he left that sacred enclosure, his boldness and his hardihood enabled him to wander through the vast countries of Iran, Burma and India, before he reached Home. Ever so welcome, and pleasureable this new surrounding may have been to him, yet, it must have seemed to him something unbelievably different from the one he had left behind. The charms of the Firdos were unforgettable, and with the sudden vanishing of that enchanting vision he must have experienced a dullness very difficult to shake off. This is true, but the psychology of the human mind works marvels, when it comes to its climax in its exhibition of the feeling of filial love and affection,—a son coming back to his mother's embrace after a long absence. The physical part of the first joy as to what Behram and his mother may have said and done to each other, is easy to imagine: but what their throbbing hearts and panting breath had to preach for the permanent uplift of their soul is beyond the power of the pen, even faintly to translate into articulate words. The mother's love is a mighty mystery both for its strength and its meakness. The love of the Mother, who bears the child, who nourishes it with the very essence of her own life, and who, to present it to the world, suffers the throes of child-birth, the very extreme of physical pain known to nature, that love is the most faithful reflection of that divine emanation, whose spark permeates the Universe and whose effulgence shelters the entire creation through all space and through all time. It is well said:—

"God could not be everywhere and therefore he made mothers."
(*A Jewish proverb.*)

Of the protecting and ever watchful Light, that is God, the mother's out-spread arms that yearn to close around her

child, is but a diminutive, yet faithful symbol. There are many a record of the spontaneous display of a mother's love; one atleast of which deserves to be truthfully recorded. Once upon a time, it so happened that a good mother had for long been separated from her dearly beloved son. Decades had passed and she had received no news from him. She had always hoped and waited, and in so doing had become old and shrivelled to the bone.

"Years to a mother bring distress
But do not make her love the less,"

(*Wordsworth; The afflictions of Margaret.*)

She had made it a habit of her life ever to sit at the window of her humble hut, and ever to keep gazing at the vast and unanswering expanse of barren land in front of her, and ever had she nurtured within her heart the undying expectation, to see a speck appear on the distant horizon, which as it drew nearer, would transform itself into the image and person of her dear son. Of the mother alone can it be said with absolute appropriateness, and as of a rule without exception that, "Absence makes the heart grow fonder." Between the mother and her son, it is wonderfully true. The waiting and the ever hoping mother of our story was a marvellous illustration of this great rule. She had suffered, her sufferings had always increased, and she was being enfeebled the more with the close of each day, as "Khorshed" the source of all light sank beyond the horizon and disappeared. The patient mother, was now feeling her end draw near; and she prayed unto the Lord, that she would welcome the angel of Death, and would without a murmur accompany him with joy and contentment, if only before the arrival of that great moment she could have a sight of her son, and feel him well in her motherly embrace. It is often the lament of ungrateful man that his prayers are neither heard nor answered. This is not true. The acceptance and the rejection of the prayer, is regulated, first, by the righteousness of the supplication made, and secondly, by the faith and sincerity of mind, and the sinlessness and the piety

of the heart of the one who prays. (See the *Âvesta Âban Yast.*) No prayer, breathed out with faith, sincerity and piety, and the same being righteous in its purpose, was ever left unanswered. None and never. Of this let man be ever sure :

"And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

(*St. Matthew Ch. XXI. verse 22.*)

The prayer of the good mother, righteous as it was, and heaved out in faith and piety was heard and answered and granted. The withered form once more was at the window one day, staring vacantly as ever she had done. When lo! a fast moving form disturbed the monotony of that faultless line beyond; The speck drew near; the fast-ebbing life-breath of the mother, rose atonce into a raging flood. A scream of rapturous joy escaped her lips,—it was the son come back to his mother. They met and the records say that in the tumult of the moment's high emotions, the mother sprayed forth in unbelievable profusion, the most precious of all fluids,—the milk of her breasts. The scene indeed was sanctifying. The happiness of Beheram's mother could not have been different nor could it have been less. We narrate this story, not for its novelty, but, as we have just said, for its ennobling influence. The mother's embrace and the mother's joy are a potent factor in the formation and development of the son's character and ideals. A three and a half year's stay at the Firdos with its uplifting and emboldening influence, and added on to this, the one single incident of the mother's embrace, had well combined to transform Behram from a stammering youth, into a stalwart orator, from an illiterate youngster into a veritable Ustad or Guru, and from a crude unpolished individual into a man of humility and humanity. His education and his knowledge had been consummated into perfection at the Firdos; but his personal inclinations, his marvellous tolerance, and his ideal love both for man and beast, his sedate bearing, and the solemn dignity of his general behavior, were the direct result of that overwhelming sentiment of his mother's embrace. The Boy Behram had returned a Ustad or Guru from the Firdos,

and now the Pandit Behram had been transformed into a philanthropist. The mother's love had done it. It had gone deep into every limb of his, and had changed its action from ordinary self-seeking proclivities, into a selfless behaviour of an all-including goodness.

Thus reformed Behram had yet a full fifty years of life before him, wherein to exhibit the knowledge, which would reveal to the world, the esoterics of the Zarathushtrian tenets and teachings as an unchallenged proof of his stay at the Firdos; and also to exhibit his perfect humanity and humility as an unchallenged proof of the marvellous alchemy of the mother's embrace. This half a century divides itself into two periods of thirty and twenty years each: during the first of which Behram remained inactive and incognito, till an accident discovered him. And the second period of twenty years of extreme activities of preaching, of practise, and of the founding of various religious literary associations, and societies. The first period of apparent silence and seeming inactivity is the theme of the present chapter. The reader must appreciate the fact that this period was a psychologic necessity, and even though it may look like a species of lethargy, yet, at the same time that it was physical inertness, it also was a period of great mental gestation and exertion. The youth was assiduously eschewing and digesting the rich banquet of high religious lore that had been forced down into him during his short stay at the Firdos. He was practically regurgitating the heavy meal, and recapitulating the value of every individual item of the precepts and principles, he had been blessed with. He indeed was preparing for practise. He yet was a boy of but twenty years of age, and though he had within him all the requisites of a fully evolved "Pandit", yet he knew he was too young to declare himself as such. A true Pandit has been defined to be the one whose hands and heart co-ordinate in perfect unison with his head. Here was the young disciple steadying himself to withstand the expected oscillations that would inevitably come. He had a message to give, the message his Magav Masters had entrusted him with. He was to preach humility and practise it. He was to manifest

by example, the true script of Mazdaznan self-sacrifice. He was to unfold the highest philosophy of Nature's genesis, of Nature's Order, and of Nature's eschatology with relation to all created beings. He was not to be a teacher of time-worn precepts, but he was to be a teacher with forensic accuracy and logical exactness, supporting every statement he made, nay, every word he uttered, by the undisputed authority of ancient Avesta and Pahlavi texts. He was to reveal the secrets of those ancient treasures, which hitherto lay either uninterpreted, or only half-interpreted, or even misinterpreted. He was destined to bring to light (for India,) the marvellous knowledge of "Khahnoom", of whose salutary and life-giving rays, the world at large had yet remained woefully unconscious. The word "Khahnoom" occurs but twice in the whole Avesta literature. It is to be found, first, in the Gāthā spentomad. HA. 48, verse 12; and secondly in the Gāthā Vahishtoishtha HA. 53, verse 2. It would be a difficult and even a vain search to find a similar instance in any other literature of the world. This rather rare phenomenon, perhaps is responsible for its remaining unnoticed by the scholars of India, but so far as the professors of Firdos were concerned, it was the very breath of their life, and the one goal of their life's study. It was to them an unending source of joy, and it was for them the path of salvation. Just the same that "Khahnoom" is a word which but a few can correctly pronounce, so also is it a science which but a few can understand and appreciate. It is but natural therefore, that from amongst us, there be only a few who revere, and many who rail at it: and even from among the few that revere, there are fewer still who can look at the Light without being dazzled. Is it then any wonder that our Ustād-Sāheb himself, after he had learnt the theories first-hand, took thirty long years, to assimilate the great truths, and to put them forth in balanced thoughts and words for the enlightenment of those who were located in darker corners? This was Behram's mission in life and he fulfilled it in a manner that agreed with the rhythmic pulsations of Nature's Laws. Behram was a great believer in the

doctrine of the fitness of times for the accomplishment of any undertaking, and in later life, when pressed by his disciples, either to take a definite step towards a future venture, or for the explanation of some mystery word, he would often persuade the impulsive spirit of youth to have patience, and would in a fatherly manner, tell them, "झरिझरि-मरि-मरि" (my children, the time is not yet ripe for it). He was not a fanatic fatalist, nor would he suffer himself to be the victim of the moment's urge: but he would ever consult the voice that would come to him from his Masters (Sôzdâ.) That voice would either encourage him to action or bid him be quiet, till a better opportunity offered itself. The silence period of his life, was an unmistakable proof of this great principle. He controlled himself to remain obscure, he gave a practical demonstration of studied patience, and proved himself thoroughly deserving and worthy of the honourable appellation of "Ustâd-Sahab" which his appreciative disciples subsequently gave him. Every endeavour shall bear fruit, provided it is launched forth in right time, and no one will deny that an untimely effort must needs lead to disaster. The genius of man reveals itself in the correct selection of the time to begin. Behram indeed was correctly constituted and abundantly blessed. He had the support and the sympathy of his masters and he thoroughly understood and appreciated the significance and the necessity of his own initial inactivity. He knew the justice and wisdom of Nature's Dispensations.

The transition from silence into speech:—

It may happen that a precious jewel hangs round a buffalo's neck for days and weeks: but the time shall surely come when an appreciative jeweller will pass by and recognise its worth. The Boy Behram was also a rare jewel loitering about unrecognised, till the connoisseur passed by and saw its value. Though silent, he had interviewed Pandits and Molvis, and such of them as were pious and unprejudiced, they had recognised the merits of the Boy. The One however,

who had a discerning eye, and who was capable of appreciating the true worth of a true jewel, even though it dangled round a buffalow's neck and to whom the full merits of first discovering the latent genius of the Boy Behram must be awarded was Mr. Munchershaw Palonji Kaikobad (Master). He was a man of sincere and genuine love for the sacred literature of Iran. He was himself a man of learning, and he was a true philanthropist as well. His orthodox activities in Surat were being counteracted by the Reformist movement in Bombay. The Reformists of Bombay laid primary importance on philology as the most potent instrument for religious research: where-as the orthodox workers of Surat had been attracted by inherent merits, which under the guidance of the Ustâd-Saheb subsequently formulated itself as the hermeneutics of the "Stôt Yasna." It was indeed a divine intuition that had prompted Mr. Kaikobad, to found in Surat the "Bazmè Ruzè Hormazd." It was an Institution for the study and search of the religious literature of the Parsis. Here indeed took place the grand transition of the Boy Behram into Ustâd-Saheb Behramshaw, as also the change from the Boy's period of preparatory silence into that of the Ustâd-Saheb's masterly orations. It must have been a happy day, and auspicious too, when one day young Behram, went for his morning prayers at the Adaryan Saheb of the Bâg-e-Parsâ. It was here that the said Bazma was also having its classes of religious study and re-search. Behramshaw, on that day, when he had finished his prayers before the Kiblâ, just turned to an adjoining room to see what was going on there. It was the room where, as we have just said, the Bazma was holding its classes: and where, just on that day, a member of the Chiniwalla family was lecturing on the subject of Atash-e-Vohu Friân. Behramshaw when he was seen at the door was welcomed in and given a seat. The day's work was duly concluded, and Behramshaw after the class was over and when the members were about to disperse, said that he had heard with sincere interest the discourse of the Vohu Friân, Fire, and added, that there were also many other kind of Fires described

in the Avesta literature viz., Atash-e-Vaziseta, Atash-e-Spenishsta, Atash-e-Dara, Atash-e-Néryosangha, etc. And he then questioned whether the gentlemen there present knew anything about them. These words were just enough for Mr. Kaikobad (Master) to scent in the speaker, a saintly scholar. Mr. Kaikobad frankly admitted, they did not. They both became friends. This was the beginning of the Professorial part of Beramshaw's life, and let us not miss the auspicious aspect of the whole, which was that he had begun his first discourse, on the subject of Fire just after he had offered his heart's devotion to that sacred element. The future preaching of "Khshnoom" had thus received its auspicious, happy and firm foundation. Mr. Kaikobad introduced Behramshaw to Mr. Kaikhashru Barjorji Choksi, who brought Mr. Behramshaw to Bombay. With Mr. Behramshaw's coming to Bombay the transition had been completed and the last and the blessed preaching period of his life had commenced. No life account of Ustâd-Saheb Behramshaw Nawroji Shroff would be complete without the grateful remembrance therein of these two great names,—Mr. Munchershaw Pallonji Kaikobad (Master) who first discovered the genius that sparkled behind the very simple looks of our Ustâd-Saheb; and the name of seth Kaikhashru Barjorji Choksi without whose selfless and to a very large extent thoroughly self-sacrificing philanthropy, Ustâd-Saheb would hardly have been able so lavishly to shower the blessings of "Khshnoom" on all. These two names must ever be remembered with Mazdaznan gratitude by every student of "Khshnoom" as being next only to that of Ustâd-Saheb himself. These two great names, and their great efforts must really have been in right time, because they succeeded in securing the heart-felt co-operation of the pillar-like services of the other four equally great equally selfless, and equally self-sacrificing gentlemen of sterling sincerity and rare learning. These gentlemen co-workers are first, the present Ustâd-Saheb of "Khshnoom", Dr. Framroz Sorabji Chiniwalla, B. A., L. M. & S., a master-mind of wonderful frankness and spirituality. Secondly,

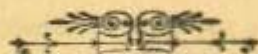
Mr. Jehangir Sorabji Chiniwalla, B.A., LL.B., Advocate, O.S., a young man of rare oratorical gifts, and learned both in law and letters; Thirdly, stands the name of Ervad Saheb Firoz Shapurji Masani, M.A., LL.B., Solicitor, the editor of *The Frasho-Gard*, a quarterly journal of the most marvellous revelations. He is a scholar of Avesta and Pahlavi of great originality, and is also the author of many an enlightening Book on the esoterics of Avestan lore. And fourthly, stands out in a prominent manner the hard-worked yet unassuming intellect of Mr. Dinshaw Shapurji Masani, B.A. He is an impressive preacher, a deep student and a good and an enthusiastic worker in the cause of "Kshnoom". May Mazda preserve them all for long. Amen. With this body-guard battalion of six stalwarts Behramshaw started the last and the preaching period of his life which continued for nearly thirty years.

"Nana Buildings,"
Near The Tardeo bridge,
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3rd June 1942.

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Nanabhoy F. Mama.





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