

Two passages from the Ēvēnnāmag

Here are two passages from a lost Pārsīg book, the Ēvēn-nāmag ‘Book of Rules and customs’, that are found in the Arabic book of Tha‘ālibī.

§ The status of men

In the first passage, the quality of “wise” attributed to Kavi Usa(ḍa)n confirms the Aryan tradition of considering him as an inspired wise – a gloss of the Vīdēvdād confers on him the title of *dānāg* ‘wise’¹; in the Mahābhārata also his Indian counterpart, Kavi Uśanas, is depicted as a wise who knows scriptures (*śāstram*).²

It is strange to attribute the quality of “religious” to Aurvaṭ.aspa, and not Vīštāspa, the champion of the religion of those who worship Ahura Mazdā (*daēnā māzdayasni*). It is possible that Tha‘ālibī, in order to not arousing the suspicion of Muslims, has replaced him with his peer, Aurvaṭ.aspa.

The core of the society organized by Dahāka is money. The “people” (*vēs*) are divided into classes according to their personal wealth and money, and the power in society is exercised largely through the monetary and banking system. In the time of Husrō (Anōšervān, Chosroes) when the military needed money, a (×Jewish) merchant offered his help in exchange for assigning the scribal position in the royal Dīvān to his son. The king refused the offer, and the above passage implicitly justifies such a state of mind.³ Here a parallel is drawn between the money system of Dahāka and the practical Jewish spirit.

وفي كتاب الآمين أنّ مراتب الناس كانت في أيام جم على الاسنان فكان [اعلاهم سنًا] اعلاهم
مجلسا ثم كانت في أيام الضحّاك على الغنى والثروة ثم كانت في ملك افريدون على الغناء (العناء؟)
والسابقة ثم كانت في أيام منوجهر على الاصول والقدم ثم كانت في أيام كيكائوس على العقل والحكمة
ثم كانت في أيام كيخسرة على البأس والنجدة ثم كانت في أيام في أيام لهراسف على الدين والعفة ثم

¹ . Vd 20.1 varəcaṅ^hatəm: varzāvandān [dānāgān cōn kayus].

² . Mbh 1.94.33 asuraṇām ca bhārata usanā veda yat śāstram ayam tad veda sarvaśaḥ.

³ . See the Šāhnāma, M 6 (داستان کفشکر و خسرو). See also

تاریخ طبرستان، بهاء الدین محمد بن حسن بن اسفندیار کاتب، ع. اقبال، تهران، ۱۳۲۰، ۴۳-۴۵

كانت في ملك الملوك بعده على الاحساب ثم كانت في ايام انوشروان على اجتماع هذه الخصال المذكورة الا الغنى والثروة فانه كان لا يعتد بهما.⁴

‘In the Ēvēnnāmag [it is written that]: In the time of Yima, the status of men was according to age and the elder one was taking precedence over others; In the time of Dahāka, it was according to opulence and wealth (money); In the time of Ōraētaona, it was according to [the record of] competence and precedence; In the time of Manuš.ciθra, it was according to origin and seniority; In the time of Kavi Usan, it was according to intelligence and wisdom; in the time of Kavi Haosravah, it was according to the courage and valour; in the time of Aurvaṭ.aspa, it was according to the religion and chastity (purity); in the time of latter kings, it was according to good deeds; finally, in the time of [Husrō] Anōšervān, it was according to all these qualities, except the opulence and money which he did not consider as worthy of attention.’⁵

§ The Sovereign King and his subjects

Amongst the different relations between a sovereign king and a person under his authority, first, the relation between the father and the child is the ethical representation of sovereignty par excellence. This relation reflects the golden age of the Aryans, that is, the reign of Yima for the Perso-Aryans and the rule of Rāma (*rāma-rājya*) for the Indo-Aryans. This same relation is, according to the Mahābhārata, a prerequisite for the happiness of creatures in the world. In the Raghuvamśa of Kālidāsa it is said that the king like a father should always guard his subjects from calamities.⁶ Bērōnī states thus: “Once in the time of Pērōz

⁴ . Al-Tha‘ālibī, *Histoire des rois des Perses*, H. Zotenberg, Paris, 1900, 14-15.

⁵ . It may be rendered into Pārsīg thus:

ped ēvēnnāmag nibišt ēsted kū: gāh ud pāyag ī mardōmān andar zamānag ī jim ped dād būd, harv kē-š dād mehdar būd hē ped gyāg ī azabardar nišast hē; ud ped āvām ī x^vadāyīh ī az ī dahāk ped tuvānīgīh ud x^vāstag būd; ud andar x^vadāyīh ī frēdōn ped abzār ud pēšēnag; ud andar x^vadāyīh ī manušcihr ped bun gōhr ud mehdarīh; ud andar x^vadāyīh ī kayus ped xrad ud dānāgīh; ud andar x^vadāyīh ī kay hōsrō ped dilīrīh ud arvandīh; ud andar x^vadāyīh ī luhṛāsp ped dēn ud pahrēzumandīh; ud andar x^vadāyīh ī abārīg x^vadāyān ī pas az ōy ped hukunišnīh; ud andar x^vadāyīh ī husrav anōšervān ped hāmōyēn hunarān ī azabar [guft] bē az hān ī hangadīh ud x^vāstag, cē-š xīr ī gētīg vahāg nē burd.

⁶ . Ragh. 2.48:

bhūtānukampā tava ced iyaṃ gaur ekā bhavet svastimafī tvadante
jīvan punaḥ śasvad upaplavebhyaḥ prajāḥ prajānātha piteva pāsi.

(5th century), the grandfather of Anōšervān, the rain was kept back, and people in Ērānšahr suffered from barrenness. Therefore, Pērōz remitted them the taxes of these years, opened the doors of his storehouses, borrowed money from the properties of the fire-temples, and gave all to the inhabitants of Ērānšahr, taking care of his subjects as a parent does for his children; and the consequence was that during those years nobody died of hunger.”⁷

On the other hand, the unjust and inconvenient behaviour of Dahāka (and Fraņrasyan) disturbs the sound relation in the society, and the subjects suffer disaster. The Aryans hopelessly observed the ruin of their countries and the massacre of a whole people by the onslaught of the Tāzīg, that is, the Arab-Muslims belonging to the third Judaism. Āḍar Kēvān (16th century) gives the Persian version of the above passage, and he adds: “The conduct of Husrō (Anōšervān) towards his subjects was like that of a partner towards a partner; the other (Persian) kings till Yazdegird, the last Persian king, followed the same conduct. But after the fall of the Persian kingdom, the behaviour of most of our (Muslim) governors is like that of victors towards the defeated, or rather that of oppressors against the oppressed.”⁸

وكان يقال ان رافة جم برعيته كانت كرافة الوالد بولده وكان صنيع الضحاك بالرعية صنيع الضرة
بالضرة وكان افريدون لرعيته كالاخ لاختيه وكان افراسياب للرعية كالعدو للعدو وكان بشتاسف للرعية
كالمؤدب للصبيان.⁹

‘It is also said that: The kindness of Yima for his subjects was like that of a father for his child; Dahāka treated his subjects

⁷ . *The Chronology of Ancient Nations*, E. Sachau, London, 1879, 215.

الأثار الباقية عن القرون الخالية، ابوريحان البيروني، پ. اذكائي، تهران، ۱۳۸۰، ۷۲.

Homa Nategh has compared this period of dearth with the years of famine in Persia during which (the 1870s), because of the attitude of the Muslim clergy and the Muslim sultān (Nāšir ad-dīn Šāh) nearly half of the population perished.

⁸ . (Mulla Feroze Library, Mumbai, R VIII 50, fol. 140 / R VIII 51, fol. 159 a).

حضرت ذوالعلوم می فرمود (می فرماید): سلوک ملوک عجم در داستان با رعایا تا سلطنت فریدون چون سر کردن پدر بود با پسر، و زندگانی فریدون با ایشان چون برادر با برادر، و این قاعده تا حکومت گشتاسپ بود؛ پس سیرت گشتاسپ با رعیت چون استاد بود با شاگرد، و این طریقه تا زمان نوشیروان باقی و مرعی بود. پس خصوصیت او با رعایا چون اتباع بود با اتباع، و این قاعده تا سلطنت یزدگرد که آخر ملوک عجم است رعایت کردند. بعد از آن کردار اکثر حکام ماصدق (د. ماصدق) چون معیشت غالب با مغلوب است بل ظالم با مظلوم.

⁹ . Al-Tha'ālibī, *Histoire des rois des Perses*, H. Zotenberg, Paris, 1900, 15.

like a wife her rival; Ɖraētaona was for his subjects like a brother for his siblings; Fraṅrasyan was for his subjects like an enemy against his enemies; and Vīštāspa was for his subjects like a master towards his young students.¹⁰

¹⁰ . It may be rendered into Pārsīg thus:

jim mihrbānīh abar bannag ī x^vēš ōn būd ceōn hān ī pidar abar frazend; ud kunišn ī az ī dahāk ō bannag ī x^vēš rōn ceōn hān ī habōg būd ō habōg rōn; frēdōn bannag rāy ceōn brād būd brādar rāy; frāsyāb bannag rāy ceōn dušmen būd pedīrag dušmen; vīštāsp bannag rāy ceōn frahangbed būd rēdakān rāy.