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NIRANG-I-JASHAN-I-BURZIGARÂN.*

A RELIGIOUS FORMULA USED AS A CHARM ON THE DAY OF THE FESTIVAL OF THE CULTIVATORS (THE FIFTH DAY OF THE CURRENT PARSEE MONTH, SPENDÂRMAD, i.e., 15th AUGUST 1900).

Read on 29th August 1900.

President—LIEUT. COL, G. WATERS, I.M.S.

The fifth day of the current Parsee month, which is the twelfth and the last of the year, was known among the Persians as the Jashan-i-Burzigarân, i. e., the festival of the agriculturists. This twelfth month bears the name of Spanta-Ârmaiti (Spendârmad), and the fifth day of every Parsee month also bears the name of Spendârmad. So the fifth day of this month bears the same name which the month bears.

Among the Parsees, each day of the month and each month of the year bear special names, and these names are the names of the Yazatas or Angels, who are believed to preside over the days or months. Spendârmad, who gives names to the current twelfth month and to the fifth day of each month, is one of the seven Amesha-Spentas or Archangels of the Avesta.

The word has been variously translated, but taking all the different meanings and comparing them with the Sanskrit Armati, the word can be understood to mean "obedience, devotion, wisdom." As Dr. Haug says, "She represents the pious and obedient heart of the true worshipper of Ahûra Mazda who serves God alone with body and soul."

Now, as, according to the Parsee books, each of the archangels and angels has, as it were, a field of activity both in the moral and in the material world, this angel Spenta-Armaiti

has the earth for its sphere of activity in the material world. She is a feminine angel, and is the protectress of the earth, which also, we know, is spoken of, by many nations, as the mother-earth. The earth is susceptible of being cultivated by those who ardently work for it, and yields to the efforts of men. So it is placed under the guardianship of Spenta-Armaiti, who, in the moral world, rules over 'obedience.'

Thus, then, the month, which bears the name of Spenta-Armaiti, and the fifth day of the month which bears the same name, are connected with earth. Hence, the propriety of celebrating that day as the festival of the agriculturists, whose sole business is that of tilling the earth. All men look to earth as the mother-earth, because they derive their sustenance from it. The agriculturists, who live upon it, are directly interested in it. In season, and out of season, they pray for its fertility and ask for God's blessings upon it.

Now, to keep the earth pure, is one of the most important dictates of the Avesta. Let it not be polluted by foul things. It is on that ground, that burial is prohibited in the Avesta. The earth, being polluted with the decomposing matter of dead bodies, is likely to contaminate surrounding substances. Whatever good that the earth produces, is the creation of the good principle, Spenta Mainyu. Whatever evil or noxious that it produces, is the creation of the evil principle, Angra Mainyu, Snakes, ants, worms, and such other insects are the production of Ahriman or Satan. So, they must be destroyed. They have their abode in the earth. So, the earth requires to be freed from these noxious creatures. It can be freed by practical means as well as by prayers. The above festival day was a special day for such prayers. As it is the cultivators who are the most interested in the question, that the ground should be free of worms, rats, snakes, and such other insects and reptiles that devoured their crops and rendered the cultivation difficult, the festival was mostly celebrated by them, as its name signified.

But these insects and reptiles were no less a nuisance to non-agriculturists living in towns. They were a source of harm and danger to them. So to townspeople also, the festival was of some importance.

We find from the traditions of many a nation, that physical evils and nuisances are sought to be removed by means other than practical means and regular prayers. Such means are what are called, mystical expedients.

"Faith in the virtue of charms, amulets and talismans is common to almost all nations and all ages. The belief has been prevalent at one time or another in almost all countries. Pieces of parchment, with passages from the Talmud, were carried about by the Jews on their bodies as amulets, and they were known as phylacteries. Pieces of paper, with passages from the Koran, are carried about by the Arabs under the name of Tâviz (amulets). One very often comes across such amulets among the Hindus." In a paper, read by me before this Society on the 28th of March 1894, with the above prefatory remarks, I had submitted a Parsee charm or amulet for the diseases of the eye. In this paper I give another Parsee charm or amulet for the extirpation of insects from a house. The charm given in this paper, is an instance of this kind presented by the Persian Revâyets, which are, in some of their parts, the "collections of memoranda regarding ceremonial observances." I give this charm from the oldest copy of the Revayet preserved in our University Library.

The intended object of the charm is the extirpation of the noxious insects that infest the earth, and are the cause of nuisance, and even danger, to the inmates of a house. In ancient Greece, by "the magic acts of the physician Apis, the brood of monstrous serpent forms, which, through the anger of the gods, had infested it, were driven out." In

¹ Charms or Amulets for some Diseases of the Eye.—Journal of the Bombay Anthropological Society. Vol. III, No. 6—pp. 338-45. Vide above pp. 43-50.

² Religion in Greek Literature, by Dr. Campbell, p. 205,

Ireland, even now, St. Patrick, the patron Saint of the country, is believed to clear a piece of ground of its reptiles. What Apis, the physician, was to Greece, and what St. Patrick is to Ireland, Faridun was to ancient Irân. Like the Grecian Apis, Faridun was also a physician, nay, he was the first physician of Irân. It is only in this respect that Faridun, the Irânian physician, is a counterpart of Apis, the Grecian physician. In other respects of bodily ailments, he is the counterpart of Æsculapius, the god of the medical art, who was at first a mere physician, but was latterly raised to the dignity of a god.

It is enjoined, that the charm may be written on the skin of a deer, or on a paper with saffron water, and then may be pasted on the front door of the house. Again, it is not to be written in an ordinary way, The writer, generally a priest, must perform his Kusti ceremony, i.e., must wash his hands and face and then ungird and re-gird his sacred thread with the recital of the prayer known as Nirang-i-kusti. He must then take the Bâj of Asha-vahishta, i.e., recite prayer with the special mention of Asha-vahishta, the angel presiding over health and purity—purity both physical and mental. It is after having done this, that he is to write down the charm as said above. Having written it, he is to finish the Bâj, i.e., complete the prayer, in the midst of which he has written it.

I now give the charm in Pahlavi as given by the copy of the Revâyet in our University Library (Vol. II Folio 403a l. 3).

पानकिष्या भिक्ष्या प्रतिमा त्यमेक्या ता क्रीन कर्या वित्रा वित्रा व्यक्ष्या कर्या क्ष्या वित्रा वित

¹ Le Zend Avesta par Darmesterer, Vol. II., p. 685,

مع د دیماداده ها هع د الد دیمردسا ها ها ها د درهاده و الد دیمردسا ها ها ها د درهاداده و الد درهادوسا ها ها در درهاداده و الد درهادوسا ها در درهاداده و درهاده و درهاداده و درهاده و درها

Translation.

"By the name of the Creator, the Omniscient Lord, on the day Spendârmad of the month Spendârmad, I close the mouths of all noxious creatures, the demons, the demonesses, the sorcerers, the sorceresses, the tyrants, the mentally blind, the mentally deaf, the sinners, the robbers, the wolf-like, the oppressors. By the Glory of God, by the Glory of brave Faridun, by the Glory of the star Tishtar (Sirius), by the Glory of the star Satovis, by the Glory of the star Vanand, by the Glory of the star Haftorang (I close the mouths of, &c.)"

It must be specially noted, that the charm, besides wishing to extirpate the noxious creatures that infest the ground, wishes for the destruction of all evil-minded persons In almost all the Nirangs, charms or amulets, the spiritual idea is never lost sight of. The mental and moral evils are always thought of, as the most important to be got rid of. The physical evils are sought to be rid of, so that the inmates of the house or the town may be better able to extirpate moral evils. Tishtrya, who was presiding over Sirius, the most brilliant of stars, was also the angel presiding over rain. The position of Sirius in the heavens, had a good deal to do with the rainy season in ancient Irân. So, with the other stars named in the charm, its appearance in the heavens had a connection with the rains So, the names of these stars are also invoked for the fertility of the ground (Spendarmad), and for the extirpation of physical and mental evils.

Others copies have ro sham, i.e., name.

² Other give 4)100

Now, the posting of the above charm-paper in the fields, or on the doors of houses, was not the only thing done on this day—the day of the festival of the cultivators. Sang-rize, نسنك ريزة i.e., a kind of sand, was consecrated on that day and sprinkled in all the nooks and corners of the house or of the field, on this festival day. It was consecrated in a way similar to that in which the above consecrated paper or tablet was perpared, with this difference, that in the case of the sand, the Bâj is recited with the name of Spendârmad, the angel presiding over earth.

I append here, the full text of the injunctions given in the Revayets about the consecration of this sand. Fortunately, the text about its consecration is more full than in the case of the above charm. The injunctions are given in Persian, the Bâj, i.e., the preparatory prayer, is given in Avesta, and the formula for consecrating the sand itself is given in Pâzend. The portion marked with a black line on the margin in the text is the special charm for the consecration of the sand. I append a translation of this special portion:—

نیرنگ سنگریزه یشتن یعنی خرنستر زدن بروز اسپندار مد به اه سپندار مد جشن بر زیگرانست بدان روز البته سنکریزه برند بر خانه و اندر گوشه و کنجه و بر بالا خانه و بر جای سنکریزه انداختن تا خرنستران کم شوند بنام یستن و واج اسپندار مد کرنتن اولا (پیه د. همراکه پول. مهج افعاده سیده سده سره کرنتن می (پیه د. همراکه پول. مهج افعاده سیده سده سره و ایل می در برای در برای

אפרו נששם שמששי משך. לעולנול. נו שמשונום מת-خواندة شود راج بكذاشتن رسك. مع (3) كويد. سيديسد. تاسر داج خواندن و بديك باد ايثا بدويويد كشكارا كفتن يس جونك بفت بار سلاس عدي . عدي السد واسد واستمس عن به جنين بفت بار نيرنك در عدالدوسع . مي ددسط الالها. خواندس و كارد اندر سنكروزة كردس (מסינת. עששים. חבש. שמחשלעצייןינת. בינטבעה. يس عابر خواده مالاماس. ملاوم. طدوروخ. ماس שנושני שנושות פולשנה (ניאוי בנטדמולשנות. (עלעה. נותש. מטשוש. נעטוטיעוצע. נעש. צעושה עלעוני על מון מון מון 94Uyolu- முட்டுவூட் உடி அட்ட மேஆ छपासून. १५/५८. जय्छ. विश्ववृद्धाः अममार्थात्यः स्वायसून wagze. zewel. duch. zubla wuzu. Bulbuagulyt. ucesypem . dug. due . ucesypem . dy. (5). ueusyell. sug. suw. ueusyell. sug. 3m40. " uchzytem . 3ug. (4). uchzytem . 3ugl. سي دادي ک د پس اين نيرنک بداء خداند To (may s. र्वाहणा डे. र्वे दें. ट्वेलि भू s. व्याहणा अप इ. ובי פי שונשי שונביסף. בעוציאים שונושים. שנונישים וויסושים. פביט(ינושי שעצעבשומעינושי עשיולניושי טטיולטנות.

تاسر ساق آب استهد. دو بهم ددست وادو به ددستا. سا ته ده واربه و استهددستا. وادو به و المحلف و استهدد و المحلف و معدد المعلم و المحلف و الم

Translation of the special formula for consecrating the sand.

"In the month Aspendârmad and on the day Aspendârmad, on the day Aspendârmad of the month Aspendârmad, in month Aspendârmad, on day Aspendârmad, I shut up the poison and the venom of the mouths of all noxious creatures by the name and strength of brave Faridun, by the help of the star Vanand which is created by God. May it (i. e., the influence of this) spread and prevail. May purity be its remedy. I strike, I strike well (these noxious creatures) for the removal of sins, for righteousness, for pleasing my soul."

We find from the above formulæ, that not only were the noxious creatures infesting the ground sought to be extirpated, but evil-disposed persons, sorcerers, &c., were also sought to be removed.

We are told that similar things are even now sought to be done in some of the villages of England.

"In the parish of Kingstone, about seven miles from Hereford, in another direction, it was a custom, a very few years ago, to nail up two bits of wood—oak, we believe—in the form of the Greek cross over each of the house-doors of the room of alms-houses in that parish. When asked about this, the people said they did it with the object of scaring away witches and evil spirits. . . . Similar crosses are still to be seen over some of the houses and stable doors in Kingstone."

Again we read: "On the eve of Monday, the farm labourers of several villages in that country (British Isles) are in the

habit of erecting a high pole in their master's farmyard. They are said to hold, that at that time, witches and such folk are especially evil disposed towards his live-stock. This pole is inavriably a young birch tree. Not far from the top and thus forming a cross is placed a branch of what the country people thereabouts call the Wittern tree, a species of elder. The birch pole is decorated with streamers of red-coloured rags or handkerchiefs."

It is very rare to find now-a-days the above Nirang on the house of a Parsee in Bombay, but it is not so rare in Nowsaree, Surat, and other towns of Gujarat.

¹ Symbolism of the East and West, by Mrs. Murray Aynsley, p. 124.