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OUR COVER PICTURE-A HAKHAMANIAN ENGRAVING ITS MEANING AND MESSAGE

On the cover page, just above the name of this humble Parsi Pukar, a picture appears. Please have a close look at it.

It is a picture of a part of an inscription engraved on an "Asto-daan" on a mountain in Iran, known as "Naksh-e-Rustom" (Astodaan means, a small "Dokhma", where the bones from a dead body left after its flesh is eaten away by the birds, are collected for their disposal through the sun light.)

This and other inscriptions found in Iran were not the egoistic fancies of the Iranian kings. Each of them has a message to give. There were rules for reading these inscriptions and deciphering their message.

The central figure in the inscription is a King, a 'Shah', not any particular King, but a symbolic depiction. This was engraved during the Hakhamanian Dynasty (547 B.C. to 331 B.C.). The Hakhamanian Empire was founded by Cyrus the Great (599-529 B.C.). The formal historians declare this as the first Parsi Empire. However there are indications that the first Zarathushtrian Dynasty of the Kyani Kings who ruled during the times of Asho Zarathushtra, was followed by other Empires known (or not much known) as Hookhshathrayaan, Hooafriidaan, Kudervan and Median.

KINGS OF DIVINE STATURE

The Kings, in the Iranian sense, were not mere worldly Kings, ruling their subjects and administering an Empire. They had divine and spiritual status and power. The Avesta word "Khshathra" does not mean just any power or any kingdom. It signifies divine power, and divine kingdom within and without man. The Biblical "Thy kingdom come" refers to this. The cover picture depicts a King of such divine power.

BOW-THE POWER OF TRUTH AND 'ASHOI'

The King has a bow in his left hand. It is not just a weapon of pre-historic, primitive times as the western Darwinian - oriented historians want us to believe. In the rules of inscriptions - reading, a bow indicates the Power of Truth, which conquers the untruth, the evil, with its divine strength. It is a weapon to scatter and break-down the clouds of evil. These clouds are generated and genetically engineered by Ahriman through the evil thoughts, words and deeds of man. The Shah breaks them With his bow so that the humans may not be lured by them and may lead a pure life ordained by Daenaa (Dharma), and thereby march and evolve towards Frashogard - Salvation, Mukti.

In Genesis 9, 13 (Old Testament), God says:

"I set my bow to the cloud, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between me and earth"

The bow is set to scatter away the clouds of evil hovering over the earth so that man and all life on earth may evolve towards the Divine Freedom. One of the meanings of the Avesta word 'Asha' is Freedom - freedom from all the evil within, "Aazaadi" - not in the political sense but in the divine sense.

The Shah in the picture holds the bow, showing that he is on the last 72nd step of 'Ashoi', the Divine Purity, Enlightenment, stature. He himself has attained divine Freedom to a high degree and it is now his anxiety to lead his subjects on the path of Daenaa.

THE THREE STEPS

He is standing on three steps before the holy Atash (Fire). The three steps indicate Manashni, Gavashni, Kunashni - the divine thoughts, words and deeds, which have elevated him above the ground. We ordinary humans have to exert hard to keep our thoughts, words and deeds pure and 'good' - good as defined by Daenaa and not what we in our selfish ways think to be good. Often we fall; we violate the Rules ordained for us. We have to be ever vigilant against the onslaught of evil within us and without us; and if we fall, we have to do 'Pateyt' i.e. we must feel repentant, express our repentance to Ahura Mazda, determine not to do 'it' again and be prepared for the reaction which is sure to follow.

The Shah is beyond this. His subjects *walk* on the ground, he *stands on the three steps* of Manashni, Gavashni, Kunashni He guides his subjects to elevate themselves spiritually. He provides them with all the state facilities to follow the path of Daenaa, to observe 'tarikats', to be truthful and selfless. He is not just a worldly political king. He is also the spiritual mentor and monitor of every person walking in his kingdom.

THE HOLY ATASH

The Atash before the Shah is not an ordinary fire. It is consecrated by certain divine procedures ordained in the Daenaa. The two-stepped stand on which the Atash is kept indicates that it is placed within a divine field and is encircled by a divine orbit. (The Holy Atash in our Atashbehran and Aderaas are similarly consecrated, purified and placed within a powerful field of divinity.)

The Atash before the Shah has a round ball vertically above it. This is to show the divine stature of the Atash. It indicates that the Atash is directly connected with the Fire of Ahura Mazda. It is constantly receiving the currents of blessings from the divine world. It is placed on a throne and is a divine Padshah with spiritual power. (See, why we say Atash-Padshah?)

FORMULATION OF MANTHRA AND MITHRA

In the picture, the lifted right hand of the King shows that he is in prayer before the Holy Atash. His prayer is through the pronouncement of the Manthra (mantra) from the Nasks of Asho Zarathushtra and the circuits of his divine thoughts (Mithra) passing in him. The Manthra and the thought-circuits result in certain subtle formulations in the atmosphere around him and culminates in the figure of the 'Keherpa' shown between him and the Atash.

We, Parsis, are fond of a similar picture we generally call 'Farohar' and fix and stick it all around. It is NOT Farohar; that is something entirely different. What we mistake as Farohar is a depiction of an advancing Ruvaan (the soul). The wings with the rows of feathers, the ring in the left hand, the knot around the waist, the lifted right hand have profound significance and message. This will be presented in the next issue of this humble magazine.

There is a difference in the usual popular picture and the one over the Shah on the cover page. This will be dealt with later.

The Shah is standing on a decorated platform, which has the mouths of lions at the two ends.

WHY ANIMALS IN SCRIPTURES?

In the Holy scriptures, different animals symbolise certain divine Forces and Energies. In all the Holy Mantra Scriptures of the world, cow, horse, camel, cock, lion and even donkey are referred to. As Max Muller in his spiritual ignorance wondered: how can the scriptures of the East contain noble and divine messages but mixed up with so much that is "unmeaning, artificial, silly

and even hideous and repellant" (S.B.E. Vol. I, XII) Cows and cattle and shepherds pervade the scriptures of almost all the Religions. There is a question in the Gatha, Haa 44-18 : when will I get ten pregnant mares and one camel? Beheram Yashta is full of animals.

Moon in Mahbokhtaar Niyash is stated to be having the seed of the cow (Gao-chithra).

In Haptan Yashta a donkey is stated to be standing in the midst of a sea called Zarh-e-Vourukash, and the Paharvi 'Bundahishna' says that donkey has three legs! What are these "lower evolutionary animals" of Darwin doing in the Holy Books?

As Aurobindo has pointed out, the Authors of scriptures were required "to mask their meaning with symbols and symbolic words"; and such words have several meanings and messages, impossible to be translated or conveyed into English ("Hymns to the Mystic Fire" - page 11 - Pondichery Ashram Edition)

LIONS WITH THE HORNS

In the cover pictures of the Hakhamanian engraving, there are two lions and they seem to have horns and they are embedded on the Shah's platform!

What message is masked in these lions?

Lion is a symbol of strength - not mere physical strength, but the strength and power of the Divine-emanating from the Shah's high spiritual stature. To show that these lions do not have the ungodly ferocity, they are depicted as having horns. Horns are possessed by a cow, bull and cattle. Cattle in the mystical symbology indicates selflessness, the virtue of "Gava"; i.e. natural inclination to give away without caring for oneself. The lion is strong, it can be ferocious, it can kill, but he does not, because of his Gava-virtue. He uses his strength to protect the weak and to destroy the evil; to confer bounties on others; to ensure that the others (i.e. the Shah's subjects) can themselves practise virtue without any hindrance from the vicious. If the evil create obstacles on the Religious path tried to be treaded by the godly people, the lion will roar and attack.

Thus, the lion with his ferocious paws and teeth and embedded with the cow's horns is a unique combination of the divine power. The earthly power is dark with corruption; the spiritual power shines with might and selflessness. It uses might to crush and conquer the evil so that the good may march towards Ahura.

BAHMAN, ASHA, KSHATHRA

In the mystical science of 'Ameshaspends', a unique feature of the Zarathushtrian Daenaa, Bahman, Asha Vahishta and Khshathra Vairya go together. Bahman is the divine personification of Gava, the selflessness and the virtue of giving away. Asha Vahishta is the divine personification of Purity; of freedom from all the carnal vices; of the serene Beauty and Order; of the Divine Law of Truth. Khshathra Vairya is the personification of the Power Divine. Gava, selflessness is the first step on the path of life. It leads to purity and freedom from evil, which in turn confers divine power and God's kingdom within us.

The Shah has passed through these stages. He has attained the Power of Purity. That is why the Holy Fire before him is attuned with the Divinest of the Divine Atash of Ahura Mazda Himself. That is why the king has a bow of power in his left hand and his right hand is lifted in prayers. That is why his throne has two lion heads with horns - ferocious but cow-like, ready to attack the evil and love the good. What is love but an expression of selflessness? By the way, in the Biblical literature Lord Christ is described as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah".

THE WINGED BULL

We often see ancient Iranian pictures and statues of a bull with a lion's head and wings. The lion and the bull indicate the attainment of power and strength emanating from the Gava-like disposition. (Bull is a male cow). The wings indicate the flight towards Ahura Mazda. We, the earthly mortals, are firmly stuck to the earth. But we can develop wings - wings to fly to H--i--m, through Gava and win the lion-like Power divine.

FOURTEEN MEN

On the cover-picture, the Shah's throne is shown to be lifted up by 14 men on their heads and hands. They are shown standing in a kind of rectangular box. In the original engraving there is another such box below the one shown in the picture with another group of 14 men. Men in the box below lift up the box above which in turn supports the throne. This is no indication of slavery. (The Western scholars devoid of any spiritual and mystical inkling may have thought so.)

The digits of figure 28 add to 10. Number ten indicates fullness. The message is that the whole world and all its nations are fully happy, not materially but spiritually in the Shah's regime. The 14 men are dressed in different fashions. (So also the 14 in the not-shown lower box). The variety of dresses indicate the variety of the nations. Under the protecting divine umbrella of the King, every nation is in ecstasy. It is a perfect civilisation on earth, leading all nearer and nearer to Ahura. The happiness of the nations is symbolised by the decorative supports spread throughout the length of the throne and the pillars below the Lions.

The inscription conveys what a ruling Shah on earth should be. It is a message from a Hakhamanian King to all the Kings of the world.

We will deal with the message of the Keherpa shown between the Atash and the Shah, next time.

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