

From Yazd, Mullā Kāus travelled with his son to Isfahan with the aim of collecting more information on the calendar, yet when he reached the city found the local Zoroastrians in dire condition on account of the persecutions perpetrated by the last Safavid king who had killed, converted by force or driven off the majority of them. In order to carry on researching he turned therefore to the learned Muslims of the city, with whom he studied astrology, philosophy, logics, grammar, theology and medicine.

During his stay in Isfahan Mullā Kāus, who had by that time become an expert in astrology, predicted with absolute precision the date of surrender of the city of Bassora which had been besieged for two years by Karim Khan, and this episode as well as earning him fame and esteem of Zoroastrians and Muslims, won him the favour of the king who conferred upon him great honours and a high rank position at his court. As the death of Karim Khan drew near – a detail again revealed to him through his astrological calculations – Mullā Kāus hastened to leave Iran and after a period of three years spent forcedly in Constantinople, he reached Surat, twelve years after his departure from India, in 1780.

In the meantime Dhanjishah Manjishah had moved, together with many of his followers¹ to Bombay. Here he was joined by Mullā Kāus who shortly after was nominated *dastur* of the local Ātaš Bahrām. The following year, however, he withdrew to Hyderabad where he died in 1802, leaving the appointment to his son Mullā Firuz.

روایتی جدید به فارسی زردشتی

(چکیده فارسی)

از جمله ادبیات دینی زردشتی به فارسی که اهمیت زیادی دارد، روایت فارسی است؛ و آن، نام‌هایی است که زردشتیان ایران از پایان قرن پانزدهم تا پایان قرن هجدهم میلادی، در پاسخ به پرسش‌های مربوط به شعایر دینی به پارسیان هند فرستاده‌اند. مقاله حاضر به این روایات که به اتوتر معروف است – و آخرین مجموعه آن به تاریخ ۱۷۷۳ میلادی برمی‌گردد – اختصاص دارد. بخش اصلی روایات از هفتاد و هشت پرسش و پاسخ تشکیل می‌شود. اتوتر، همچون قالب خاص روایات، مجموعه‌ای متنوع از نظرهایی است که پیرامون مطالب گوناگون شعایر دینی و نیز زندگی اجتماعی زردشتیان آن روزگار داده شده است؛ از جمله: روش نشاندن و تقدیس آتش مقدس، آداب تطهیر، آیین‌های سوگواری، اصول قضایی، امور آیینی و مریدی و تشریف به آیین زردشتی و رسوم زناشویی.

1. The Qadimis, however, were always a small minority. According to the 1891 census out of the 91,361 Parsis who resided in the province of Bombay only 7,208 belonged to the Qadimi group (B.B. Patel, "A Brief Outline...", in *The K.R. Cama Memorial Volume*, Bombay 1900, pp. 170-182).

4 *Farhang, Linguistics*

Kharshedji Seth, an agent of the Dutch, for the Šāhānšāhis and Dhanjishah Manjishah, an agent of the English, for the Qadimis.

After the departure of Jāmāsp Velāyati from Surat, three more *revāyats* had been sent to Iran by the Qadimis and in 1768, approximately twenty-five years after the schism, Dhanjishah Manjishah decided, in order to have a definitive answer regarding the calendar, to send Mullā Kāus Jalāl¹ to Iran bearing a set of seventy-eight questions elaborated by the *dasturs* in Broach and in Surat.

Mullā Kāus left Surat and headed for Bandar Abbas in 1768 together with his ten year old son Pešotan, later known as Mullā Firuz, who left an interesting account of the journey written in verse.

In Bandar Abbas Mullā Kāus became acquainted with the local governor Haji Mohammad Khan, whose friendship resulted very useful to him during his subsequent stay in Isfahan. Upon reaching Yazd after a journey which had lasted over four months, Mullā Kāus was received with full honours by the local Zoroastrians. The head of the community, Bahrām Ardašir, was at that time in the capital, Shiraz, and only after his return two months later an *anjoman* of all the *dasturs*, *mobeds* and *behdins* was summoned to the Ātaš Bahrām of Yazd and on that occasion Mullā Kāus was able to pose them the questions contained in the *revāyat*. The assembly manifested great interest for the letter, but eluded the main question concerning the calendar and kept to the observation that their opinion in this regard had already been given on other occasions.

Once Pešotan had been entrusted to the cares of Dastur Marzbān Dastur Hošang so that he could be instructed on the religious practices and on Avestan and Pahlavi, Mullā Kāus set off for Kerman in order to study astrology and astronomy and made his way back to Yazd only after a year. Here he remained for a further three years teaching two young *behdins*, Boman Bahrām and Bahrām Sorxābval that which he had learned in Kerman. In the meantime Pešotan had completed his studies on religion and was initiated to priesthood in 1772, in the home of Behdin Ardašir Bahrām in the village of Khorramšāh.

¹. Born in Broach in 1733, Mullā Kāus was the leading exponent of the Qadimi group in his city, and the nephew of that same Dastur Dārāb with whom Anquetil Duperron had associated during his stay in Surat

left the Parsis free to either keep to their own traditional calendar or to adopt the Iranian system. For over a century the problem was ignored, until 1721 when the *dastur* Jāmāsp Velāyati came to Surat from Iran. The latter *dastur* pointed out that the Parsi calendar was a month ahead with respect to the Iranian one. The following year Manekji Edalji, an agent of the Armenian merchants, began together with other lay people, to use the Persian calendar.

In 1736 the question was newly subjected to the scrutiny of an Iranian expert, Mobed Jamšid of Kerman, who had not been in India for long. The latter, having studied the problem together with the Parsi *mobed* Kaus Faridun, on the basis of astronomical calculations which had been done, declared the Iranian calendar to be the only correct one and exhorted the Parsis to conform to it. Years of intense discussions ensued until in 1745 a group of *behdins* of Surat decided to adopt the Persian calendar, eliminating for that year the month of *ābān*, and at the same time taking on the appellation of Qadimi. Contrasting them were the supporters of the traditional Parsi calendar, called Rasmis 'traditionalists' or better known as Šāhānšāhis.

In order to justify the difference of a month between the two calendars, the Šāhānšāhis maintained that the religion prescribed the intercalation of a month once every 120 years, and that whereas such a prescription had been observed by their ancestors during their stay in Khorasan before they left Iran for India, the same could not be said of the Zoroastrians who stayed back in the Iranian cities on account of the country's adverse conditions at that time. Moreover, forced by the difficulties which they faced during the first period of their migration, the Zoroastrians who had taken refuge in India had no longer had the opportunity to perform the other *kabise* which should have followed the first performed in Iran. By contrast, the Qadimis were trying to demonstrate that the religion did not prescribe any *kabise* and that on no account had they ever been performed with a religious purport, but possibly only for political or fiscal reasons. They maintained therefore, that the claims put forward by the Šāhānšāhis were entirely groundless. The involvement of the *behdins* in the dispute was deep and widespread and as the controversy became more marked the leadership of the two groups was taken up by two influential merchants of Surat, Mancherji

revāyat Ithoter: Zoroastrian Rituals in the Eighteenth Century, Napoli, 1996).

For the edition of the text two manuscripts preserved in the library of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute of Bombay have been used: the first (R.57) is a copy made in 1797, that is, only seventeen years after the arrival of the *Ithoter* in India, where as the second (R.303) is a direct copy of the original manuscript.

The main body of the *revāyat* consists of seventy-eight questions and their respective answers. As typical of the *revāyat* genre, the *Ithoter* is an assorted collection of opinions on various matters regarding religious practice as well as social life of the Zoroastrians of that time.

The first question and answer, for instance, is dedicated to the modalities of establishment and consecration of a new *Ātaš Bahrām*, the most important Zoroastrian sacred fire. Other major subjects the *Ithoter revāyat* deals with are purification ceremonies, funerary practices, dietary laws, priesthood and liturgical activities as well as conversion to Zoroastrianism and marriage customs.

With the *revāyat Ithoter* of 1773 the long-standing epistolary exchange between the Parsis in India and the Zoroastrians of Iran, begun in 1478 with the *revāyat* of Narimān Hošang, comes to a definitive end. For close on to three centuries the Zoroastrians who had stayed behind in the motherland had played the role of 'religious guides' by sending advice and answers to the questions posed in their letters by the Parsis of India, and by keeping regular contact with the Indian communities. The end of this long epistolary exchange is commonly motivated by the indirect involvement of the Zoroastrians of Iran in the controversy relating to the calendar, which subsequently gave rise to the division of the Parsi community into Qadimis and Šāhānšāhis.

The difference of a month between the calendar used by the Zoroastrians of Iran and that used by the Parsis is hinted at for the first time in a *revāyat* of 1005 *yazdagerdi* (1635 C.E.)¹. The Iranian *dasturs*, however, did not appear to attach great importance to the question and

¹. The topic is dealt with in two *revāyats*, the first addressed to Dastur Kāmdin Padam and the second to the Zoroastrians of Surat, Broach and Navsari (see M. Vitalone, *The Persian Revāyats: A Bibliographic Reconnaissance*, Napoli 1987).

The Last Zoroastrian *revāyat* in New Persian

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Among the Zoroastrian religious literature in Persian of great significance are the Persian *revāyats*, namely the letters sent by the Zoroastrians of Iran in answer to questions relating to religious practice posed by the Parsis of India from the end of the fifteenth century to the end of the eighteenth century. The letters published (*Darab Hormazyar's Rivayat*, edited by M.R. Unvala, 2 vols., Bombay 1922) and translated into English (*The Persian Rivayats of Hormazyar Framarz*, by B.N. Dhabhar, Bombay 1932) up to now, are made up of the compilations of *revāyats* carried out in India during the second half of the seventeenth century. However, the epistolary exchange between the Parsis and the Zoroastrians of Iran continued for another century and the letters that reached India during this latter period have mostly remained unpublished. Among these we find the *revāyat* known as *Ithoter*¹, the last of the series, which had until recently only been available as a Gujarati translation printed in Bombay in 1846. A critical edition of the Persian text, followed by an English translation, a commentary and a glossary of technical terms has been carried out by the present writer and published in 1996 (Mario Vitalone, *The Persian*

1. Unlike all the other *revāyats* which are named after messengers, signatories or addressees this *revāyat* takes its name from the number of questions and answers (*ithoter* 'seventy-eight' in Gujarati), that it contains.