

The primordial existence of good and evil is one of the fundamental truths revealed in the earliest Zoroastrian sources. The *Gāthās* of the prophet Zoroaster describe a choice made at the dawn of existence by two spirits or mental powers, Angra Mainiiu and Spənta Mainiiu (an epithet of Ahura Mazdā), the first for “deceit” (*druj-*) and the second for “rightness” (*aša-*). This choice mirrors human beings’ choice for good or evil in their own lives, the consequences of which are made manifest in reward or punishment after death.

Bundahišn chapters 1 and 1A continue the Zoroastrian tradition of cosmogonic speculation. These chapters, and indeed the book as a whole, serve as a commentary on the canonical accounts of creation contained in the *Gāthās* and other Avestan sources. The *Bundahišn* is based, in part, on a Middle Persian translation and exegesis (*Zand*) of now lost sections of the *Avesta* known as the *Dāmdād Nask*, meaning literally “the section on the creation of the creatures.” The numerous citations from the *dēn* in this chapter and elsewhere are an indication of the *Bundahišn*’s reliance on its Avestan sources and their *Zand* translations-cum-commentaries in Middle Persian as well.

Like their counterparts in the *Gāthās*, Ohrmazd and Ahriman are *mēnōg*, spiritual, as opposed to *gētīg*, material, beings. These two concepts are central to the Zoroastrian dualist worldview as articulated in Middle Persian literature. The term *gētīg* alludes to the material, visible, physical, and tangible aspect of the world; *mēnōg* refers to the aspect of the world that is essentially spiritual, mental, invisible, and intangible. The distinction between the material and spiritual worlds is not an ethical division; good and evil exist in both states of existence. At the same time, *mēnōg* was prior to *gētīg* in the process of creation (1:43–44), and every *gētīg*, physical being has a *mēnōg*, spiritual counterpart.

However, owing to ongoing elaboration and reworking of this central pillar of Zoroastrian belief in the *Young Avesta* and later sources, the creation story that the *Bundahišn* relates is very different from that of the *Gāthās*. Here it is the good and perfect Ohrmazd himself who faces off with the evil and false Ahriman.

The first part of chapter 1 describes the original state of the two spirits' separation and Ohrmazd's omniscience (1:1–13); Ahriman's belated discovery of Ohrmazd's existence—a result of the former's *pas-dānišnūh*, literally “afterthought” or “realization after” and his failed attack (1:14–18); Ohrmazd's peace proposal and Ahriman's rejection of it (1:19–23); the two spirits' agreement to fight for a limited period of nine thousand years (1:24–27); and Ohrmazd's revelation to Ahriman of good's final victory over evil (1:28–31).

This revelation is accomplished through Ohrmazd's recital of the *Ahunawar* prayer. *Ahunawar* is the Middle Persian rendition of the Avestan phrase *Yaθa Ahū Vairiīō*, the incipit of the prayer (Avestan *mąθra-*) that introduces the *Gāthās* (*Yasna* 27:13). Ohrmazd's revelatory recitation of this particular prayer is significant because the twenty-one words that make up the original Avestan text are understood in Zoroastrian interpretation to encapsulate within them the entire contents of the *dēn*.

The conflict between the two deities that sets in motion the creation of our material world is told in a vivid narrative style. From a literary point of view, this is one of the most gripping sections of the *Bundahišn*; Ohrmazd and even more so Ahriman seem to be fully anthropomorphized characters rather than unapproachable transcendent beings.

From this perspective, the second half of chapter 1 and the entirety of chapter 1A represent a dramatic—and complementary—shift away from myth and toward theology. These passages discuss Ohrmazd's creation of the material world, a process involving the transformation of infinite light, time, and space into their finite counterparts and the formation of the creatures, first in spiritual and then in material form.

This section also describes the creation and aid of other deities (1:52), especially the Amahraspands (“beneficent immortals,” from Avestan *Aməṣā Spənta*). These six spiritual emanations—totaling seven with Ohrmazd—are both attributes of Ohrmazd and independent divine beings. Wahman is Good Thought, Ardwaḥišt is Best Righteousness, Šahrewar is Desirable Dominion, Spandarmad is Holy Devotion, Hordād is Integrity, and Amurdād is Immortality. In addition to referring to this group of seven deities, the term “Amahraspand” is also applied to a host of other good spiritual beings. This second half of chapter 1 also describes Ahriman's fabrication of the demons (1:46–48), a false counterwork to Ohrmazd's true creation.

Chapter 1A describes the six first material creations (1A:1–18): the sky, water, and earth, and the first plant, the first cow, and the first man, Gayōmard. The latter three archetypal beings were created in Ērānwēz (Avestan *Airiianəm Vaējō*), the “area of the Aryans.” Chapter 1A also

records when these six were created during the calendar year. This passage seems to refer to the tradition of celebrating the six creations of Ohrmazd with six one-day festivals followed by five intercalary rest days called *gāhānbār*.

Time plays an important role in the *Bundahišn*'s account of creation. Time is described as the first creation, as Time of Long Dominion, that is, the limited time span of twelve thousand years (including the three thousand years of spiritual creation before the Evil Spirit's initial attack) that will end with Ohrmazd's defeat of Ahriman (1:41–42). The period of the conflict, according to our text, is divided into three eons of three millennia each: the first dominated by the will of Ohrmazd; the second, the period of the Mixture (*gumēzišn*); and the third, as we know from other chapters of the *Bundahišn*, begins with the birth of the prophet Zoroaster and ends with good's triumph in a final eschatological battle. Ohrmazd's creation of finite time, no less than his creation of the physical world, serves as a trap for the Evil Spirit. While Ahriman must fight within those temporal and spatial limits, Ohrmazd remains outside, in infinity.

The importance of time in the *Bundahišn* has been attributed by some scholars to the influence of an alternative monist creation myth. In this version, the clearest description of which is found in a famous passage of the fifth-century Christian Armenian author Eznik of Kolb, a god called Zurwān, Time, is the father of both Ohrmazd and Ahriman.

The exposition of Ohrmazd's creation, at least in part, as a descending chain of generation (1:38) is reminiscent of the Neoplatonic theories of creation by emanation that were adopted by some contemporary Islamic thinkers. In this case and others, it seems likely that the *Bundahišn*'s account of creation is in dialogue with early Islamic philosophy and theology.

Further Reading

- Cereti, Carlo G. and David Neil MacKenzie. 2003. "Except by Battle: Zoroastrian Cosmogony in the 1st Chapter of the Greater Bundahišn." In *Religious Themes and Texts in Pre-Islamic Iran and Central Asia*, edited by Carlo G. Cereti, M. Maggi, and E. Provasi, 31–59. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag.
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- Shaked, Shaul. 1971. "The Notions 'mēnōg' and 'gētīg' in the Pahlavi Texts and Their Relation to Eschatology." *Acta Orientalia* 33: 59–107.
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⁰ This is the knowledge of the *Zand*. First, on the primacy of Ohrmazd, and the onslaught of the Evil Spirit. Then on the nature of the world and the creatures, from the primal creation to the end, as is revealed by the Mazdaean *dēn*. Then on the things that the world contains with an explanation of their essence and their qualities.

¹ Thus it is revealed in the good *dēn*:

“Ohrmazd was on high, in omniscience and goodness, for eternity in the light.”

² That light is the throne and place of Ohrmazd; some call it “endless light.” And that omniscience and goodness and eternity existed just like Ohrmazd, his throne, his *dēn*, and time.

³ Ahriman was in darkness, afterthought, and aggression, down deep.

⁴ Aggression was his nature and darkness his place; some call it “endless darkness.”

⁵ Between them was a void. Some say it was Way, in which there is the Mixture.

⁶ Both spirits were finite and infinite. ⁷ For above was what is called endless light, unbounded. Down deep was endless darkness, and that is infinite. ⁸ At the border both were finite, for between them was the void, and they did not touch. Again, both spirits were finite in their own bodies.

⁹ Moreover, on account of Ohrmazd’s omniscience, all things are finitely within Ohrmazd’s knowledge, for both spirits know their measure.

¹⁰ Furthermore, at the Final Body, the creatures of Ohrmazd will have perfect power for ever and ever; that is infinity. ¹¹ And at that time, the creatures of Ahriman will be destroyed, so that the Final Body can come to be; that is finitude.

¹² Ohrmazd in his omniscience knew that the Evil Spirit exists, what he was planning to do in his jealousy, how he would mix creation from the beginning to the end, and with how many instruments; so he fashioned the creatures spiritually with the necessary instruments.

¹³ For three thousand years, the creatures were only spiritual; that is, they were unthinking, unmoving, and intangible.

¹⁴ On account of his afterthought, Ahriman was not aware of Ohrmazd’s existence. He rose up from the depths and came to the boundary within sight of the light. ¹⁵ When he saw Ohrmazd’s light, intangible and blazing,¹ because of his aggression and jealousy he attacked to destroy it. ¹⁶ Then, when he saw valor and victory greater than his own, he scurried back into the darkness and fabricated many demons, those destructive creatures hungry for battle.

¹⁷ When Ohrmazd saw the creatures of the Evil Spirit, they seemed to him awful, rotten, bad, and evil, and he did not praise them. ¹⁸ Afterward, when the Evil Spirit saw the creatures of Ohrmazd, they seemed to him profound and honorable, and he praised Ohrmazd's creation.

¹⁹ Then Ohrmazd, knowing the nature of creation and the end of the affair, went to meet the Evil Spirit. He proposed peace and said:

"Evil Spirit, give aid to my creatures and offer praise, so that, as a reward, you may become immortal and ageless, without sensation or decay. ²⁰ If you do not provoke a battle, you will not become powerless yourself and you will bring benefit to us both."

²¹ The Evil Spirit snarled:

"I will not help your creatures and I will not offer praise! No, I will destroy you and your creatures for ever and ever! I will incite all your creatures to hate you and to love me."

²² The explanation is that he believed that Ohrmazd had offered peace because he was helpless against him. He did not accept it, and made his vow.

²³ Ohrmazd said:

"You are not omnipotent, Evil Spirit. You cannot destroy me nor can you prevent my creatures from returning to my possession."

²⁴ Then Ohrmazd in his omniscience realized:

If I do not set a time for our battle, he will be able to do to my creation as he vowed, and the strife and Mixture will be forever. During the Mixture, he will be able to mislead² the creatures and make them his own.

Just so, now during the Mixture, there are many people who commit more sins than good deeds; that is, they always do as the Evil Spirit desires.

²⁵ Ohrmazd said to the Evil Spirit:

"Let us set a time, so that by this pact our battle will be limited to nine thousand years."

For he knew that in this time he would render the Evil Spirit powerless.

²⁶ Thereupon the Evil Spirit, because of his inability to foresee the end, became a party to that agreement, just like two men who set a time for a duel, saying, "Let us do battle on such and such a day until nightfall."

²⁷ Ohrmazd, in his omniscience, knew as well that in these nine thousand years, three thousand would go entirely according to his own will; three thousand, during the Mixture, would go according to the wills of both Ohrmazd and Ahriman; and in the final battle, it would be possible to make the Evil Spirit powerless and to keep evil from creation.

²⁸ Then Ohrmazd recited the *Ahunawar* prayer—that is, he uttered the twenty-one words of the *Yaθa Ahū Vairiō*—and he showed the Evil Spirit his final victory, the powerlessness of the Evil Spirit, the destruction of the demons, the Resurrection and the Final Body, and the creatures' deliverance from the Adversary for ever and ever. ²⁹ When he saw his own powerlessness together with the destruction of the demons, the Evil Spirit was stunned and senseless and fell back into the darkness. ³⁰ As it says in the *dēn*:

“When he had said one-third of the prayer, the Evil Spirit cringed with fear; when he had said two-thirds, the Evil Spirit fell to his knees; and when he had said it all, the Evil Spirit became powerless and unable to do evil to Ohrmazd's creatures.”

³¹ For three thousand years he lay³ stunned.

³² I will first describe material creation in its spiritual form and then in its material form.

³³ Before creation, Ohrmazd was not Lord, but after creation he became Lord, beneficent, wise, harmless, manifest, ever-arranging, bounteous, and all-observing. ³⁴ At first, he created the essence of creation, goodness, that spirit through which his own body was made good when he thought of creation. For he became Lord through creation.

³⁵ With his clear vision, Ohrmazd saw that the Evil Spirit would never turn from his attack, that the attack could not be made powerless except by creation, for the creatures would not become animated and begin to move without time, and when time was created the creatures of Ahriman would also be animated.

³⁶ So, of necessity, in order to render the Adversary powerless, he created time. ³⁷ The reason was that the Evil Spirit could not be made powerless except by battle. The explanation of battle [*karezar*] is that it is an action [*kār*] that needs to be done by taking strategies [*čārōmandihā*].

³⁸ From eternity, he created Time of Long Dominion; some call it “finite time.” From Time of Long Dominion, he created imperishability; that is, the things of Ohrmazd do not perish. Blisslessness was revealed from imperishability, so that the demons will have no bliss. Immutability of the spirit, the spirit that preserves the things of Ohrmazd unchanging as they were at the primal creation, was revealed from blisslessness. The perfect desire of the creatures of the world was revealed from immutability of the spirit, for the righteous creation of the creatures is harmony.

³⁹ Ahriman fabricated ignorance and injustice in his sinful creation. ⁴⁰ The reason and explanation for this is that Ahriman strove with Ohrmazd the

Lord; during creation, the wisdom, unity,⁴ excellence, and imperishability of Ohrmazd, and the inability, self-love, inferiority, and afterthought of the Evil Spirit were made manifest, °when [Ohrmazd] created.°⁵

⁴¹ He fashioned Time of Long Dominion as the first creation that was infinite. Before the Mixture, the perpetuity of Ohrmazd was fashioned finite from the infinite. For from the primal creation, when he created the creatures, to the end, when the Evil Spirit will become powerless, there is a measure of twelve thousand years, which is finite, and then it mixes with and turns into infinity. That is, the creatures, too, will be eternal and pure with Ohrmazd. ⁴² As it says in the *dēn*:

“Time is more powerful than both creations, the creatures of Ohrmazd and those of the Evil Spirit. Time is the measure of all things. Time is the most covetous of those who covet. Time is the most questioning of those who question. (That is, it is possible to decide in time.) Our time was laid down limited; in time, what is built up⁶ falls down. No mortal man escapes it, not if he flies upward, nor if he digs down a deep well and sits in it, nor even if he goes down under the spring of the cold waters.”

⁴³ Ohrmazd fashioned the forms of his creatures from his own essence, from light existence, in fire-form: bright, white, round, and distinct. ⁴⁴ °And from the material form of that spirit that carries away evil in both creations—some call it power, and others call it time°⁷—he fashioned the form of good Way, because Way was needed. Some call it Way of Long Dominion. ⁴⁵ With the aid of Way of Long Dominion, he fashioned his creatures, for in creation Way, too, was one of the instruments he needed for his work.

⁴⁶ The Evil Spirit fabricated his own creatures from material darkness, in that form: black, ashy, of dark worth, and evil, like the form of the most sinful vermin. ⁴⁷ From material self-love he fabricated bad, formless lust, as befits lust.

⁴⁸ First, he created the essence of the demons, evil-doing, that spirit through which Ohrmazd’s creatures were corrupted. For he created endless darkness from material darkness, from endless darkness came lying speech, and from lying speech the harm of the Evil Spirit was revealed. For he fabricated creatures by which he made himself worse, that is to say, through which he will become powerless. For he fabricated the form from endless darkness, and made his⁸ creatures in that form. He will become powerless because of his own creation.

⁴⁹ Ohrmazd created truthful speech from material light, and from truthful speech the abundance of the creator was revealed in creation, for he fashioned

the fire-form from endless light. He also created all the creatures in fire-form. This fire-form was separate from the passage of time. The *Ahunawar* came forth from the fire-form, the spirit of the verse *Yaθā Ahū Vairiō*, in which both the beginning of creation and its end are manifest, which is the *dēn*. For the *dēn* was created along with the creatures. The spirit of the year came forth from the *Ahunawar*. Now, during the Mixture, it is half light and half dark, three hundred sixty-five days and nights, which is the division of Time of Long Dominion.

⁵⁰ Both creations existed within it, in strife. ⁵¹ As it is said:

“Ohrmazd’s creatures abided in lordship, authority, adherence to justice, and were elevated in ease.⁹ The Evil Spirit’s creatures abided in insolence, oppression, sinfulness, and lowness in distress.”

⁵² When Ohrmazd created the Amahraspands, he became limited. He needed to create these six spiritual masters for the material world, and, later, at the time of the Final Body, he will need them once more to remove evil from it.

He maintains his spiritual creations spiritually. He first created the material creatures spiritually, and then created them again in material form. He first created the Amahraspands, the six principles, and then the rest, and the seventh was Ohrmazd himself. Among the material creatures created in spiritual form, there were first six, and the seventh was he himself, for Ohrmazd is both: first spiritual, and then material by means of the Amahraspands.

Afterward, from Way of Long Dominion he first fashioned Wahman, by whom Ohrmazd’s creatures were set in motion. “The Evil Spirit first falsely fabricated Akōman, and Ohrmazd first the sky, of the material creations.”¹⁰ He first fashioned Wahman from goodness and material light, and the good *dēn* of the Mazda-worshippers was with him. This means that he knew what would happen to the creatures until the Restoration.

Then he fashioned Ardwhišt, then Šahrewar, then Spandarmad, then Hordād, and then Amurdād. The seventh was Ohrmazd himself; the eighth was right speech; ninth Righteous Srōš; tenth Māns^arspand; eleventh Nēryōsang; twelfth the Exalted Judge Ratwōbrazat; thirteenth Rašn the Just; fourteenth Mihr of the Wide Pastures; fifteenth Good Ahrišwang; sixteenth Pārand; seventeenth sleep; eighteenth wind; nineteenth adhering to justice; twentieth advocacy—that is, the state of having both plaintiff and defendant, which increases peace.

⁵³ The first of the material creations was the sky, second water, third earth, fourth the plant, fifth the cow, sixth the man, and seventh Ohrmazd himself.

He fashioned his creatures with the help of Way of Long Dominion, for when he fashioned Way of Long Dominion he, too, was an instrument he needed for creation.

⁵⁴ In his antagonism, the Evil Spirit fabricated first Akōman, then Indar, then Sawul, then Nanhais—who is¹¹ Tarōmad—then Tariz and Zariz, and afterward the other demons. Seventh was the Evil Spirit himself.

⁵⁵ The Evil Spirit never thinks, speaks, or does anything righteous, nor does he need the goodness of Ohrmazd's creatures. Ohrmazd's creatures, likewise, do not need the goodness of Ahriman's creatures.

⁵⁶ Ohrmazd does not think of anything that he cannot do, but the Evil Spirit thinks of things he cannot do and, moreover, vows to do them.

⁵⁷ Ohrmazd's creatures were nourished in the spirit such that they are moist, unthinking, intangible, and immobile, like semen. After this moist state, they became mixed, like semen and blood mixed together. After the mixture they became an atom,¹² like an embryo. Then, after the atom stage, there was a separation, like hands and feet. After this separation was a hollowness, like eyes, ears, and a mouth. After the hollowness was a trembling, when it began to move. So too now, in the material world, creatures are conceived, born, and nourished in their mothers' wombs in just this way.

⁵⁸ In creation, Ohrmazd is both mother and father of his creatures: mother when he spiritually nourished the creatures, and father when he created them in the material world.

1A

On Material Creation

¹ When the Evil Spirit was dazed and powerless, as I have written earlier, he lay stunned for three thousand years.

² While the Evil Spirit was powerless, Ohrmazd fashioned the creatures for the material world. From endless light, he fashioned fire; from fire, wind; from wind, water; and from water, earth and everything corporeal in this world. ³ As it says in the *dēn*:

“At first, all creation was a single drop of water; that is, everything came from water except for the seed of humans and animals, for that seed is the seed of fire.”

⁴ He first created the sky for repelling the enemy; some call it “the first.” He created water second, to strike the fiend of thirst. Third, he created the earth and all corporeal being. Fourth, he created plants to aid the beneficent cattle. Fifth, cattle to aid the righteous. Sixth, he created the righteous man to destroy and make powerless the Evil Spirit and all the demons. ⁵ Then he created fire as embers and latched brilliance to it from the endless light, well-formed as the fire wished. Then he formed the wind in human likeness as a fifteen-year-old youth,¹³ who would sustain the water, plants, cattle, righteous man, and all things.

⁶ I will describe their natures.

⁷ First, he created the sky: bright, visible, distant, in the form of an egg; made of shining iron, its essence steel; male; joined at the top to the endless light. He created all the creatures inside the sky, a stronghold, like a fortress in which are stored all the weapons needed for a battle, or like a house in which things are kept. The root foundation of the sky is as broad as it is long, as long as it is high, and as high as it is deep, of equal measure.

Like a good workman,¹⁴ the spirit of the sky is endowed with good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, and it is aware, bountiful, and decisive. It accepted its role to be an enduring fortress against the Evil Spirit, preventing him from scurrying away in retreat. Like a heroic warrior who has donned his armor so that he can fearlessly survive the battle, so, too, the

spirit of the sky preserves the sky. To aid the sky he created joy. He fashioned joy in it so that even now, in the era of the Mixture, creatures live in joy.

⁸ Second, he fashioned water from the essence of the sky. Just as when a man places his two hands on the ground and crawls on his hands and feet, the liquid in his body collects in his belly, so too the water then flowed from on high. He created wind and rain to aid it; that is,¹⁵ mist, sleet, and snow.

⁹ Third, he created the earth from the water: round, with wide open spaces, neither basin nor range: uniform, its length equal to its width and its width to its depth; he fixed it in the very middle of the sky. ¹⁰ As it says:

“He fashioned the first third of the earth hard as stone; he fashioned the second third of the earth filled with dust; he fashioned the final third of the earth of soft clay.”¹⁶

¹¹ In the earth, he created the essence of the mountains that would later grow from it. To aid the earth he created iron, copper, sulfur, borax, and lime: all the species of the hard earth, apart from fossils,¹⁷ which belong to a different family. He fashioned the earth hard, like a man who wraps many layers of clothes tightly around his body. ¹² Underground there is water everywhere.

¹³ Fourth, he created the plant. It sprouted up initially in the middle of the earth several feet tall, without branch, bark, or thorn, moist and sweet. Its nature contained all the species and vital force of plants. To aid the plant he created water and fire, for every plant’s stalk has a drop of water at its tip and fire four fingers down. It continuously grows by that power.

¹⁴ Fifth, he fashioned the sole-created cow in Ērānwēz, in the middle of the world, on the bank of the good river Dāitī. It was white and bright like the moon and three measured rods in height. To aid it, he created water and plants, for these are its strength and sustenance during the Mixture.

¹⁵ Sixth, he fashioned Gayōmard, bright as the sun, as tall as four measured rods, his width equal to his height, on the bank of the river Dāitī, which is located in the middle of the world. Gayōmard was on the left side of the river, and the cow was on the right. Their distance from each other, and their distance from the water of the Dāitī, was equal to their heights. He had eyes and ears, a tongue, and a mark.¹⁸ °Gayōmard’s mark means this: men will be born from his seed in his likeness.¹⁹

¹⁶ He created sleep, the giver of rest, to aid him. Ohrmazd fashioned sleep in the form of a tall, bright, fifteen-year-old man.

¹⁷ He fashioned Gayōmard and the cow from the earth. From the light and golden freshness of the sky, he fashioned the sperm of men and cattle, since these two are from the seed of fire, not the seed of water. He created them in the bodies of the cow and Gayōmard, for the multitude of men and animals would come from them.

¹⁸ He created these six creations in the six divisions of the year. He calculated that a year would be three hundred sixty-five days in twelve months: in each month thirty days, apart from one month of thirty-five days. He fixed the name of an Amahraspand to every day.

¹⁹ I will describe their natures.

²⁰ First, he fashioned the sky in forty days, namely from the day of Ohrmazd of the month of Frawardīn (the first day of the year) to the day of Ābān of the month of Ardwahišt (the tenth day of the second month). He rested five days, until the day of Day-pad-Mihr (the fifteenth day of the second month). Those are the five festival days called Midspring [Mēdyōzarm]. The explanation is that on those days the abodes of the sun, moon, and golden freshness are revealed.

²¹ Second, he created the water in fifty-five days, namely from the day of Mihr of the month of Ardwahišt (the sixteenth day of the second month) to the day of Ābān of the month of Tīr (the tenth day of the fourth month). He rested five days, until the day of Day-pad-Mihr (the fifteenth day of the fourth month). Those are the five festival days called Midsummer [Mēdyōšam]. The explanation is that on those days he made the water bright, which at first was dark.

²² Third, he created the earth in seventy days, namely from the day of Mihr of the month of Tīr (the sixteenth day of the fourth month) to the day of Ard of the month of Šahrewar (the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month). He rested five days, until the day of Anagrān (the thirtieth day of the sixth month). Those are the five festival days called Harvest [Pēdišah]. The explanation is that on those days he revealed the tracks and movements of the creatures on the earth.

²³ Fourth, he created the plants in twenty-five days, namely from the day of Ohrmazd of the month of Mihr (the first day of the seventh month) to the day of Ard²⁰ of the month of Mihr²¹ (the twenty-fifth day of the seventh month). He rested five days, until the day of Anagrān (the thirtieth day of the seventh month). Those are the five festival days called the Homecoming of the Herds [Ayāšrim]. The explanation is that then leaves, scents, colors, and golden freshness appear.

²⁴ Fifth he created cattle in seventy-five days, namely from the day of Ohrmazd of the month of Ābān (the first day of the eighth month) to the day of Day-pad-Mihr in the month of Day (the fifteenth day of the tenth month). He rested five days until the day of Wahrām (the twentieth day of the tenth month). Those are the five festival days called Midwinter [Mēdyārim]. The explanation is that he then revealed his winter storehouse to his creatures.

²⁵ Sixth he created man, Gayōmard, in seventy days, namely from the day of Rām of the month of Day (the twenty-first day of the tenth month) until the day of Anagrān of the month of Spandarmad (the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month). He rested five days until the day of Spandarmad (the thirtieth day of the twelfth month). Those are the five festival days—some call them intercalary days and some call them stolen days—called Hamspasmēdim. The explanation is that he then revealed great hosts in the world, for people's *frawahrs* assembled in hosts. ²⁶ The names of those five intercalary days—which some call the five days of the *Gāhān*, and others the good five—are, in religious terms, Ahunawad Gāh, Uštawad Gāh, Spandmad Gāh, Wohuxštr Gāh, and Wahištōišť Gāh.

²⁷ Thirty days make a month: Ohrmazd, Wahman, Ardwahišt, Šahrewar, Spandarmad, Hordād, Amurdād, Day, Ādur, Ābān, Xwar, Māh, Tīr, Gōš, Day, Mihr, Srōš, Rašn, Frawardīn, Wahrām, Rām, Wād, Day, Dēn, Ard, Aštād, Āsmān, Zāmyād, Māraspand, Anagrān. ²⁸ The names of the twelve months are also from the Amahraspands: Frawardīn, Ardwahišt, Hordād, Tīr, Amurdād, Šahrewar, Mihr, Ābān, Ādur, Day, Wahman, and Spandarmad. ²⁹ I will describe their natures one by one.

Astronomy and its companion, “applied science” of astrology, were central features of the intellectual landscape of the early Islamic period. As this chapter and chapter 5 show, the *Bundahišn* is no exception. Observation of the heavens as well as the science of astronomy have long pedigrees in Iranian culture generally and Zoroastrian texts specifically. During the Sasanian period, Babylonian, Greek, and Indian traditions were synthesized in a single science that was then translated and adapted as part of the Islamic intellectual tradition. A special class of professionals was active at the Sasanian court, producing horoscopes and predictions, as well as serving as translators and specialists on mathematical and scientific issues.

This chapter of the *Bundahišn* reflects this multiple heritage. David Pingree has argued for the influence of Indian astronomy, especially in the chapter’s focus on the lunar mansions of the zodiac (also part of the Greek tradition) (2:2), and the idea that planetary motion is affected by cosmic chords. Walter Bruno Henning noted the chapter’s preservation of clearly pre-Achaemenid ideas, such as the sun and the moon being further from the earth than stars (2:1), the size and speed of the stars (2:18–19), and the complete absence of the planets. The chapter also reflects several elements related to the Greek astronomical tradition, such as the discussion of stellar magnitudes (2:7).

The Hellenistic tradition is central to the *Bundahišn*’s astronomical discussions; even the word for the firmament, *spihr*, comes from the Greek word that is the source for our own English “sphere.” This is not only because of the centrality of Greek science in Islam, but because of an earlier translation and cultural adaptation movement under the Sasanians. Sasanian kings, in particular Šāpūr I (241–272 CE) and Khosrow I (531–579 CE), aimed to “recover” those parts of the *dēn*, which included all human knowledge, that tradition claimed had been scattered by Alexander the Great’s conquest of Iran. Many of the Greek and Indian works on astronomy and astrology, as well as medicine, mathematics, and other topics, first translated into Middle Persian at this time were likely retranslated into Arabic, sometimes via Syriac, during the more famous Arabic translation movement under the Abbasid dynasty.

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On the Fashioning of the Lights

¹ Ohrmazd fashioned the lights and set them between the sky and the earth: the “fixed” stars and the wandering stars, then the moon, and last the sun.

² This is how:

First, he fashioned the firmament and set the “fixed” stars in it, foremost among them the twelve signs of the Zodiac called Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces.

These are further divided and reckoned in twenty-seven lunar mansions that are called Padēwar, 41 Arietis, Pleiades, Aldebaran, λ Orionis, Betelgeuse, Raxwat, Canis Minor, ζ Hydrae, Regulus, Mayān, Abdōm, Māšāha, Spur, Husraw, Srū, War, Dil, Drafš, Vega, Gāw, Altair, Muri, Bunya, Kaht-sar, Kaht-mayān, and Kaht. ³ Each of the first, primal material creations made one of them its dwelling, so that when the Adversary came, they could do battle against their particular antagonists, and save the creatures from their adversaries, like an army and troops arrayed for battle.

⁴ Six million four hundred and eighty thousand small stars were fashioned to help those constellations. That is how the astrologers now reckon them, apart from the countless stars that are also there to help them.

⁵ He appointed four generals over those stars, one for each of the four directions, and he appointed a single general over these four. He appointed many well-known, counted¹ stars, in every direction and everywhere, with the aim to invigorate and strengthen the stars. ⁶ As it says:

“Sirius is the general of the east, Deneb is the general of the south, Vega is the general of the west, and Ursa Major is the general of the north.”

Polaris, which they call “the stake² in the center of the sky,” is the supreme general. The star Pārand, the star Mazdā-dād, and others of this kind are also district commanders.

⁷ Astronomers now call these inerrantes stars, and instead of “large,” “small,” and “medium,” they use the expressions “first magnitude,” “second magnitude,” and “third magnitude.”

⁸ He established the firmament like the year: the twelve constellations are like the twelve months, and each constellation has thirty degrees, just as each month has thirty days.

⁹ He appointed Ursa Major in the north, where hell would be established after the Adversary's onslaught. In order to arrange the continents during the Mixture, a band ties each of the seven [*haft*] continents to it. That is the reason why it is called Ursa Major [*Haftōring*].

¹⁰ Ohrmazd established the sphere of the stars like a spinning wheel, so that during the Mixture it would keep revolving. ¹¹ He fixed other, unmixable stars above these, so that when the Adversary came they could repel him in battle and keep him from carrying his pollution higher up. He appointed the Glory of the good Mazdā-worshipping *dēn* as general over them. That place is called "the core of the battle," the manifestation of purity in the Mixture.

The reason why they are called unmixable stars is because the Adversary did not pollute them. Astronomers call this "the sphere above the sphere." This sphere has no reckoning and progression, for they cannot observe in the pure ones any characteristics of the mixable ones.

¹² Above that he fashioned the moon in which the seed of cattle is stored, ¹³ and above that the sun whose horses are swift. ¹⁴ He appointed the sun and moon as captains of the mixable and unmixable stars; that is, they are all bound to the sun and moon. ¹⁵ Above the sun he fashioned the place of the Amahraspands, which are fastened to the endless light, the throne of Ohrmazd.

¹⁶ These are the six stations of the six creations, corresponding to the six material creations.

¹⁷ Between the earth³ and the firmament he appointed the wind, the clouds, and the Wāzišt fire. So that when the Adversary came, Sirius, with the help of those great spirits, could seize the waters and cause the rain to fall. He bound these also to the sun, the moon, and the stars. Thus Sirius is the general of the east, the helper and assistant of the Wāzišt fire, the wind, and the clouds.

¹⁸ Among these stars, the large ones are like a piece of rock the size of a house, the medium ones are like a rolling wheel,⁴ and the small ones like a cow's head. The moon is the size of a two-*hās^ar* racecourse; each *hās^ar* is equal to an average earth *frasang*. The sun is the size of Ērānwēz.

¹⁹ Before the coming of the Adversary, the moon, sun, and the stars stood still and did not move. They passed the time in purity under a perpetual noon. After the coming of the Adversary, they began moving and will not stop until

the end.²⁰ The motion of the sun is like that of a giant, three-feathered arrow that a giant man shoots from a giant bow. The motion of the moon is like a medium sized three-feathered arrow that a medium sized man shoots from a medium sized bow. The motion of the stars is like a small three-feathered arrow that a small man shoots from a small bow.

²¹ Among the stars, these are the swiftest: Sirius, Betelgeuse, Canis Minor, ζ Hydrae, Padēwar, and 41 Arietis. ²² The interval of time from the sun leaving a constellation until its reaching it again is as much as it takes for a man to pick up a stone and throw it.

Like chapter 1, chapter 3 tackles the topic of creation, but from a different point of view. The chapter describes Ohrmazd's final preparations before Ahriman's attack on the material world. Ohrmazd appoints each of his six Amahraspands and himself as protectors of human beings, cattle, fire, metal, earth, water, and plants, and designates different spiritual assistants to aid them (3:12–22).

This section contains an important passage for the understanding of Zoroastrian theories of psychology and the soul: a description of Ohrmazd's creation of human beings in five parts—the body and the four spiritual elements of vital breath (*gyān*), soul (*ruwān*), form (*ēwēnag*), and *frawahr*—and the function of each (15). The last element, the *frawahr* (Avestan *fravaši-*), is a concept unique to the Zoroastrian tradition. References to the *frawahrs* occur throughout the *Avesta* and subsequent literature, and they are addressed in their own Avestan hymn (*Yāšt* 13). Scholars continue to disagree over the precise meaning and origin of the term, which encompasses at once a vast host of ancestor or warrior spirits and the divine, preexisting component of each man and woman. *Frawahrs* inhabit the upper air, nurture the water and plants, and protect sons in the womb.

The last section of the chapter (3:26–27) contributes to the understanding of the Zoroastrian conception of free will. The final defeat of evil and the following salvation and purification of creation are the result of the battle of Ohrmazd's creatures against the forces of Ahriman. Human beings are granted the choice to do good or evil through their thoughts, words, and deeds. This choice, which each individual makes during the course of his or her own life, reflects a similar choice made by the *frawahrs* at the beginning of creation. Ohrmazd presented the *frawahrs* a foretaste of the fight against Ahriman and offered them the choice of whether or not to come to earth and battle against evil. The *frawahrs* freely decided to come to the material world, thus setting in motion, in a way, the long universal process that leads to the eschatological Restoration (*frašgird*).

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On How and Why Creation Went to Battle

¹ Ohrmazd assigned the names of the thirty Amahraspands to the thirty days of the month in this way: The first day is Ohrmazd, then six Amahraspands, making seven; the eighth is Day, who is the creator. Then again six Amahraspands, making seven; the eighth is Day, who is the creator. Then seven Amahraspands, which makes eight; the ninth is Day, who is the creator. Finally, seven Amahraspands, which makes eight. In this way, he placed his own name four times in the month: Ohrmazd, and the three Days. One is the name, one is the throne, one is the *dēn*, and one is time—these have always been.

² When the Evil Spirit attacked, Ohrmazd fashioned Time of Long Dominion in the form of a shining, white-eyed, tall, and powerful fifteen-year-old man, whose power comes from virtue, and not from thievery and oppression.

³ He himself put on a white garment of priestly splendor, for knowledge is always with priests who convey it to people, and everyone teaches a portion of it. ⁴ Furthermore, Ohrmazd's duty was creation, and creatures can be made only through knowledge. That is why he wore the garments of the wise; that is, the clothes of the priesthood.

⁵ Good Way put on a garment of gold and silver, studded with gems, red and many colored, the clothes of a warrior: for pursuing enemies, striking the Adversary, and protecting creatures. ⁶ As it says:

“Way's duty is removing¹ evil from both creations, for the Good Spirit created him in order to put an end to the Evil Spirit during the battle, and to increase Ohrmazd's creatures and destroy those of the Evil Spirit.”

⁷ From time he fashioned the firmament, the body of Zurwān of Long Dominion, Lord of Fate. He put on a blue garment, the clothes of a farmer. For his duty is fostering good in the world, just as farmers were fittingly created to cultivate the land.

⁸ Just as Ohrmazd inserted his own name between that of every six Amahraspands in the calendar, he created the spiritual and material creations in the same manner. Thus, in the spiritual world, too, Ohrmazd was

accompanied by the six Amahraspands—Wahman, Ardwaḥišt, Šahrewar, Spandarmad, Hordād, and Amurdād—and thus the sky has seven levels as well: first the cloud station; second the firmament of the stars; third the unmixable stars; fourth paradise, where the moon resides; fifth heaven, also called “infinite light,” where the sun resides; sixth the place of the Amahraspands; and seventh the throne of Ohrmazd in the endless light.

⁹ Similarly, he also fashioned the seven creations: first the sky, second water, third earth, fourth plants, fifth cattle, sixth human beings, and seventh fire, clothed in the splendor of the endless light, Ohrmazd’s place.¹⁰ He fashioned fire and distributed it among all his creation like the master of a house who enters his house and puts his garments² in their proper places.³ ¹¹ He commanded fire to serve men during the onslaught of evil: to cook food and to overcome cold.⁴ When men blow on kindling, fire emerges, and when they set wood upon it, it catches fire.

¹² He appointed and placed all the Amahraspands to help and to fight together with creation so that when the Adversary came, each one would challenge his own opponent in battle, without need of a new command. ¹³ I will describe their natures further:

¹⁴ First among the spirits is Ohrmazd. He chose human beings for himself from the seven fundamental material creations. His helpers are those three Days: the throne, *dēn*, and time, the name of “All Creator’s Day” [Wisp-Day-nām], which is the spirit of all creation. ¹⁵ He created human beings in five parts: body, vital breath, soul, form, and *frawahr*. The body is material. Vital breath is tied to the wind and the inhaling and exhaling of breath. The soul, together with perception, is in the body, and hears, sees, speaks, and knows. The form resides at the sun station. The *frawahr* waits before Ohrmazd the Lord. He fashioned it because, when men die during the onslaught of evil, their bodies join the earth, their vital breath joins the wind, and their forms join the sun, but their souls join the *frawahr*, so that the demons cannot destroy the souls.

¹⁶ Second among the spirits is Wahman, who was appointed over cattle of different species of all the material creations. He created the moon, Gōš, Rām, Zurwān without origin, lord of the firmament, and Zurwān of Long Dominion as his helpers and assistants. ¹⁷ He fashioned cattle in five parts: body, vital breath, soul, form, and spirit, so that, during the onslaught of evil, Gōšurwan would receive animals’ seed from the moon station, through the aid of good Rām, and spread it forth in the world. When they die, their bodies join Gōšurwan, their souls join Rām, their forms join the moon, and their spirits join Wahman, so that⁵ they cannot destroy them.

¹⁸ Third among the spirits is Ardwahišt, who was appointed over fire of all the material creations. He created Ādur, Srōš, Wahrām, and Nēryōsang as his helpers and assistants. For during the onslaught of evil, Wahrām established fire in the home: he defends it and Srōš protects it. When a fire is extinguished, it leaves Wahrām to join Srōš; from Srōš, Ādur; and from Ādur it returns to Ardwahišt, so that the demons cannot destroy it.

¹⁹ Fourth among the spirits is Šahrewar, who chose the metals for himself among the material creations. He created the sun, Mihr, the sky, Anagrān, good Sōg, Ardwišūr, divine Hōm, divine Burz, and Dahmān Āfrin as helpers and assistants. For the solidity of metal is from the sky, and the basic essence of the sky is metallic, arranged by Anagrān. Anagrān means “infinite light”—a golden abode, studded with gems, joined on high to the place of the Amahraspands. Because of this partnership, during the onslaught of evil the demons cannot destroy the metals.

²⁰ Fifth among the spirits is Spandarmad, who was appointed over earth of all the material creations. She created Ābān, Dēn, Ard, Māns^arspand, Aršišwang, Ardwišūr, and Anāhid as her helpers and assistants: Ābān is the spirit who purifies the earth and the seed of the waters; before her is Māraspand, that is Māns^arspand, the word of Ohrmazd. Ard and Dēn are in the house of glory. There is one who says Aršišwang is the glory of heavenly righteousness. Ardwišūr and Anāhid are the father and mother of the waters. Because of their partnership, everything was prepared for the onslaught of evil. These partner spirits keep watch⁶ over Glory.

²¹ Sixth among the spirits is Hordād, who was appointed over water of all the material creations. He created Tīr, Wād, and Frawardīn as helpers and assistants: Tīr is Sirius, who, during the onslaught of evil, gathers the waters with the aid of Frawardīn—some say: with the *frawahrs* of the righteous—and entrusts them spiritually to Wād. Wād swiftly disperses water to the continents, carrying it by means of the clouds. With these assistants, he makes it rain.

²² Seventh among the spirits is Amurdād, who was appointed over the plants of all the material creations. He created Rašn, Aštād, and Zāmyād as his helpers and assistants. During the onslaught of evil, these three glories judge the souls of men for good and bad on the Činwad Bridge.

²³ Other innumerable spirits have been tasked with aiding creation, as has been written above regarding the firmament of the “fixed” stars.

²⁴ He also divided each day of the month into five periods, and assigned a spirit to each: dawn to the spirit Hāwan; noon to the spirit Rapihwin; evening

to the spirit Uzērin; sunset to the spirit Ēbsrūšrim; and night to the spirit Ušahin.²⁵ He appointed them as assistants to other spirits: Hāwan to Mihr; Rapihwin to Ardwahišt; Uzērin to divine Burz; Ēbsrūšrim to the righteous *frawahr* and Wahrām; Ušahin to Srōš and Rašn. They were tasked as assistants because he knew that when the Adversary came, the day would be divided into these five periods. Before the Adversary's coming it was noon all day; that is, Rapihwin.

²⁶ It was at noon that Ohrmazd and the Amahraspands forged the spirit of worship. During the celebration of the worship, he created all creation. He consulted with men's perceptions and *frawahrs*, instilling in them all-knowing wisdom. He said:

"What seems more profitable to you: That I fashion you in the material world, fighting bodily against the demons and destroying them, so that in the end I will restore you, whole and immortal, and I will return you to the material world undying, ageless, and unopposed for ever? Or, that you always require protection from the Adversary?"

²⁷ With their all-knowing wisdom, the *frawahrs* of men saw the evil that would befall them in the material world from the demons and Ahriman. But because in the end the Adversary would be vanquished and they would become whole again and immortal forever in the Final Body, they agreed to go to the material world.

As described in chapter 4, Ahriman's attack on creation quite literally sets the world in motion. After awaking from a fainting spell lasting three thousand years (4:1–3), Ahriman and his demonic minions launch their onslaught against Ohrmazd's creation (see chapter 1A).

The demon Jeh (Avestan *Jahī-*), the primordial whore, has a prominent role in reviving Ahriman. She announces her plans to pollute creation and attack the righteous man and the cow, stealing their Glory (Middle Persian *xwarrah*, Avestan *x^varənah*), the divine light or charisma granted to kings and other worthy beings. A satisfied and reassured Ahriman kisses her head, which causes Jeh to menstruate (4:4–5). This episode provides an etiological myth for an important component of Zoroastrian purity law—menstruating women are considered impure and contaminating—and, like the similarly female demon of impurity caused by corpses and other “bodily refuse,” Nasā (Avestan *nasu-*), points to the role gender plays in the Zoroastrian conception of evil.

The second section of the chapter describes Ahriman's penetration (*andar dwāristan*) of the sky and his attack on the created world. Here as elsewhere, the ontological distinction between good and evil also extends to language. The verb *dwāristan* is used only to describe the motion of Ahriman and the demons; we have translated it “scurrying,” “scuttling,” “creeping,” and, in the case of this verb, “burrowing through.” Similarly, the verb *dawīdan* (4:2, 4, 6, etc.), translated as “howling,” “whining,” or “snarling,” is used only of demonic speech, and *kirrēnidān*, “to fabricate,” only of Ahriman's creation.

The word we have translated here and elsewhere as “corporeal,” *astōmand*, literally means “boney,” or “having bones,” and comes from a term used to describe the material world in the *Avesta* (*astuuant-*).

Other Zoroastrian Middle Persian texts, particularly *Wizīdagihā ī Zādspram* (chapter 2), describe Ahriman's attack on the seven primal creations—the sky, water, earth, the plant, the cow, Gayōmard, and fire—in similar terms. In his dissertation, Harold Walter Bailey argues that this section of the chapter, especially the different creations' declarations to Ahriman (4:12, 14, 16, etc.), reflects a now-lost Avestan source.

In the case of chapter 4A, however, we do have the original text in the *Avesta*. This section describes the complaint of Gōšurwan, the soul of the sole-created cow, to Ohrmazd after the death of Gayōmard. Gōšurwan is worried that creation will now have no protector against evil (4A:2), but Ohrmazd reassures it by revealing the *frawahr* of Zoroaster. While Ohrmazd easily placates Gōšurwan in the *Bundahišn*'s version, in *Yasna* 29, one of the Gathic poems, it is not satisfied with this answer and complains that Zoroaster is too weak and powerless to fulfill his task. Like the *Gāthās* overall, this poem has been the subject of much scholarly debate—a fact that can be attributed in large part to the difficulty of the Old Avestan language in which the poems were composed. Helmut Humbach, for example, has argued that the poem evidences sacrificial mysticism and spiritual esotericism, in the context of the cessation of animal sacrifices in Zoroaster's new religion. Martin Schwartz, in contrast, has focused on the structural aspects of the *Gāthās*, arguing that the prophet used encryption, alliteration, and ring-composition techniques within and between poems in the corpus in their composition, thus showing that *Yasna* 29 is Zoroaster's first poem and a declaration of his poetic and prophetic mission.

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On How the Adversary Burrowed Through to Creation

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

When the Evil Spirit saw that he and the demons were powerless over righteous men, he fell down stunned, and remained in a stupor for three thousand years. ² During his stupor, the chiefs of the demons came to him one by one, howling:

“Get up, father! For we will make war against the material world, and Ohrmazd and the Amahraspands will strain and suffer because of it.”

³ And they counted off all their evil deeds in detail one by one. ⁴ But the wicked Evil Spirit was not comforted and did not rise from his stupor because of his fear of the righteous man. Finally, after three thousand years had passed, evil Jeh came to him. She whined:

“Get up, father! For during the battle I will so harm the righteous man and the plowing cow that their lives will not be worth living. I will steal their glory. I will torment the waters, the earth, fire, plants, and all of Ohrmazd’s creation.”

⁵ As she enumerated these evil deeds in detail, the Evil Spirit was comforted. He awoke from his stupor, and kissed Jeh on her head. At that very moment, the filth called menstruation appeared on her body. ⁶ The Evil Spirit snarled to Jeh:

“I will grant you whatever you desire.”

⁷ But Ohrmazd, in his omniscient wisdom, knew that in that moment the Evil Spirit could fulfill Jeh’s every wish. So, in order to profit from it, he caused the Evil Spirit, who was like a frog to look at, to appear to Jeh like a fifteen-year-old man,¹ and bound her thoughts to him. ⁸ Jeh howled to the Evil Spirit:

“Grant me the desire for men.”

That means: “I want to stay at home under a man’s authority.”

⁹The Evil Spirit snarled:

“I will not tell you what to ask, for you know to wish only for what is damaging and bad.”

Once she had asked, the time for wishes had passed. He was not able to give her anything else.

¹⁰ Then the Evil Spirit and all the powerful demons rose up against the lights. He saw the sky, which had already been shown to them spiritually before it had been corporeally created. He attacked it with jealous desire.

The sky was at the star station, but Ahriman dragged it down into the void—which, as I have written earlier, was originally between the light and the darkness—so that one third of the sky remained above the star station. He wished that, like a snake, the sky would fall down² and break apart on the earth. He burrowed through at noon on the day of Ohrmazd in the month of Frawardīn; the sky feared him like cattle fear a wolf.

Then he came—as I have said—to the water that had been made ready under the earth, and he burrowed through the middle of the earth and went inside. He came to the plant and to the cow and Gayōmard, and then he came to the fire. Like a fly, he scuttled over all of creation. ¹¹ He made the world so dark that noon seemed like dark night; he darkened everything under the sky and above the earth.

¹² The spirit of the sky said to the Evil Spirit:

“I must keep watch to the furthestmost time, so I will not let you out.”

¹³ He gave the water a bad taste. ¹⁴ The spirit of water said:

“The creation of Wahman, Ardwašīst, and Šahrewar”; that is, thus he makes it come to me; that is, “now that the Adversary has come, where is my reward³?⁴”

¹⁵ Ahriman loosed vermin over the earth, now made firm: biting, poisonous vermin like dragons, snakes, scorpions, lizards, turtles, and frogs. He did not leave so much as a pinpoint of the earth free from them. ¹⁶ The earth said:

“I will be avenged against these vengeful beings through the creation created against them.”

¹⁷ He raised so much poison in the plant that it withered away at once.

¹⁸ The spirit of the plant said:

“Because of his reverence for them, Ohrmazd will cause the plants to grow.”

¹⁹ He set lust, need, danger, pain, disease, greed, and sloth on the cow and Gayōmard.

²⁰ Before the Evil Spirit reached the cow, Ohrmazd fed it healing henbane—which some call *bang*—and rubbed some on its eyes to lessen its discomfort from the evil, damage, and blows. The cow at once became weak and sick, it spilled its seed, and passed away.

²¹ The cow said:

“Excellent work and labor should be ordered for created cattle!”

²² Before the Evil Spirit reached Gayōmard, in the time it takes to utter one strophe of the *Gāthās*, Ohrmazd brought sleep to him; for Ohrmazd fashioned sleep in the form of a tall and bright fifteen-year-old man. ²³ When Gayōmard woke from his sleep, he saw that the world was dark as night. Not even a pinpoint of the earth was free from scurrying vermin. The firmament was turning, the sun and moon were moving, and the earth echoed with the roar of the giant demons battling the stars.

²⁴ The Evil Spirit thought:

“All of Ohrmazd’s creatures have become powerless except for Gayōmard.”

He loosed Astwihād on Gayōmard with a thousand deadly demons, but because his fate was fixed, they found no means to kill him. ²⁵ As it says:

“At the primal creation, when the Evil Spirit attacked, the length of Gayōmard’s life and lordship was fixed at thirty years.”

That is, after the coming of the Adversary he lived thirty years more.

²⁶ Gayōmard said:

“Now that the Adversary has come, all mankind will be from my seed; they will perform good deeds, and that is a good thing.”

²⁷ The Evil Spirit came to the fire and mixed it with smoke and darkness.

He mixed the seven planets, with the aid of many demons, into the firmament to battle the stars. Like fire fills everywhere with smoke, he defiled all creation and fought to reach and mix the place of the heavenly beings. For ninety days and nights the divine spirits were locked in combat with the Evil Spirit and all the demons in the material world, until they overcame them and cast them into hell. They made the sky a stronghold so the Adversary cannot mix anything beyond it.

²⁸ Hell is in the middle of the earth, where the Evil Spirit first pierced the earth and burrowed through.

So it was that all the treasures of the material world were revealed by the double movement of opponent and adversary, up and down, in the Mixture.

4A: The Cow's Complaint

¹ It also says this:

When the sole-created cow passed away, he fell to the right side. Then Gayōmard passed away and fell to the left side.

² Gōšurwan—that is, the soul of the sole-created cow—came out of his body and stood beside it. It complained to Ohrmazd in a voice as loud as a thousand men crying together:

“To whom have you given authority over creation, now that the earth lies injured, the plant is withered, and the water defiled? You said: I will create a man who will protect you with his words. Where is he?”

³ Ohrmazd said:

“You are ill, Gōšurwan. You have been infected by the sickness of the Evil Spirit and the malice of the demons. If I could have created that man in time, the Evil Spirit's tyranny would never have come to be.”

⁴ Gōšurwan ascended to the star station and complained; he ascended to the moon station and complained; he ascended to the sun station and complained. ⁵ Then Ohrmazd showed it the *frawahr* of Zoroaster and said:

“I will create him in the material world and he will protect you with his words.”

⁶ Gōšurwan was appeased and satisfied. He said:

“I will nourish creation.”

That is, he agreed to be re-created in the material world as cattle.

The struggle between good and evil extends throughout creation, from the earth to the heavens. Good and evil spirits, creatures, and attributes are paired in opposition, as can be seen with the list of antagonists that opens chapter 5. As in the case of chapter 2, the focus of these three chapters, though, is the firmament, the stars, and the planets. Like other material beings, astral bodies are divided into good and evil camps: the good stars and the sun and moon on the one hand, and the evil planets and their accomplices on the other.

Scholars believe that the demonization of the planets occurred in the Sasanian period. The Avestan corpus reflects an earlier, pre-Ptolemaic model of the cosmos that does not distinguish between planets and stars as such and pits evil “falling stars” (i.e., comets) against the good “fixed” stars. Even in the *Bundahišn*, the evil association of the planets is not absolute, and certain passages present them positively, such as 5B:12 and 28:4.

The planets’ apparent retrograde motion in the celestial sphere, as opposed to the regularly moving stars, is a central part of the planets’ demonization. This distinction is also reflected in the etymology of the words for “star”—also meaning constellation—and “planet,” *axtar* and *abāxtar*. However, the terms also have the wider meanings of “good celestial body” and “evil celestial body,” which sometimes compounds the confusion of the *Bundahišn*’s already technical astronomical and astrological discussions.

In addition to the five evil planets, there are two other demonic celestial bodies, both of which appear in the *Avesta*: Mūš Parīg, likely a comet, and the celestial dragon Gōzihr, who spans the sky between the two lunar nodes (those points where the moon’s orbit crosses the plane of the ecliptic, causing lunar and solar eclipses).

Chapter 5A contains a “world horoscope” (*zāyč ī gēhān*), known in Hellenistic astrology as a *thema mundi*, that provides the positions of the astral bodies at the beginning of the universe. In this case, the horoscope depicts the very first moment of material existence in the seventh millennium of time. Like the horoscope for Gayōmard in chapter 6, this horoscope draws from both Greek and Indian astrological traditions. The seven planets—apart from Mercury—occupy their exaltations, each one’s point of maximum strength and influence in the Zodiac, and the horoscope makes

use of the Greek astrological system of twelve houses or “places” (*gyāg*) (5A:2). Different *Bundahišn* manuscripts provide slightly different diagrams of the horoscope.

Chapter 5B provides further information about the nature of the planets, as well as an ancient cosmographic model, found already in the *Avesta*: a flat, circular earth is surrounded by the Harburz mountain range, and the sun revolves around the peak of Tērag, located at the center of the world. A corollary of this model of solar movement is found in the Sanskrit *Purāṇas*, which depict all the astral bodies revolving around Mount Meru. The chapter also describes the Zoroastrian model of the division of the earth into seven continents, known by their Middle Persian names of Avestan origin. Six are arrayed around the central continent Xwanirah, the homeland of the Iranians (5B:8–11).

Further Reading

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On the Opposition of the Two Spirits

That Is, How the Demon Chiefs Came Spiritually
to Oppose the Spiritual Deities

¹ They are:

Ahriman against Ohrmazd;

Akōman against Wahman;

Indar against Ardwašīst;

Sawul against Šahrewar;

Nanhais, whom they call also Tarōmad, against Spandarmad;

Tariz against Hordād and Zariz against Amurdād;

Xēšm against Srōš;

Lie and falsehood against truth;

The sorcerer's spell against Māns^ar;

Excess and deficiency against moderation, which is the good *dēn*;

Evil thoughts, words, and deeds against good thoughts, words, and deeds;

Astwiḥād, which is called Evil Way, against Rām, which is Good Way;

Trackless Waran against innate wisdom;

The evil eye, which is repudiation, against the spirit of watchfulness;

Indolence against diligence;

Sloth against sleep;

Vengeance against peace;

Pain against pleasure;

Stench against fragrance;

Darkness against light;

Poison against antidote¹;

Bitterness against sweetness;

Miserliness against generosity;

Waste against discriminate giving;

Winter against summer;

Cold against heat;

Dryness against freshness;

Hellishness against heavenliness;
 Sin against rectitude;
 Heresy against sanctity;
 Old age against youth;
 Night against day;
 Blame against compassion;
 Corruption, which is contentiousness, against bountifulness;
 Filth against cleanliness;
 Impurity against purity;
 Sadness against happiness;

² And other demonic spirits against divine spirits, such as the demons, fiends, sorcerers, and giants against the deities, lords, and Amahraspands.

³ So, too, in the material world:

Darkness against the sky;
 Thirst against water;
 Excrement, vermin, and frogs against the earth;
 Burning² against plants;
 Hunger and thirst against animals;
 Death and sickness against health;
 Pains of all kinds against mankind.

Also:

Extinction and burning against fires: that is, when people and cattle are burned by dryness.

In the corporeal state:

Lions, wolf species, and cheetahs³ against dogs and cattle;
 Frogs against fish;
 Owls and other winged vermin against birds;
 Heretics and sinners against the righteous;
 Jeh against women;
 Sinful weaponry against honest weaponry;
 The fiends' destruction⁴ against the vitality of renewing generations;
 Other material fiends came to oppose the material deities.

⁴ So, too, in the firmament:

The dark sun came to oppose the sun, and the dark moon the moon bearing the cow's seed. They bound them to their own chariots by cords. Other sorcerers and witches, with the thirty-fold⁵ destructive planets, against the stars, and the generals of the seven planets against the generals of the seven constellations: the planet Mercury against Sirius; the planet Jupiter against Ursa Major; the planet Mars against Vega; the planet Venus against Deneb; the planet Saturn, who is supreme commander of the planets, against Polaris; and Gözihr and the tailed comet Mūš-Parīg against the sun, moon, and stars.

⁵ The sun bound Mūš-Parīg to its chariot by a cord in order to keep it from causing too much damage. But when it becomes free, it causes great evil before it is caught again.

⁶ So, too, at the cloud station, Spinjaruš came to oppose the Wāzišt fire, and the demon Apōš opposed Sirius and his assistants.⁷ Other demons from the same source⁶ came to oppose the deities who make wind and rain.

There are many more details. Their motion,^o their struggle in progressing,^{o7} and their length are revealed astrology.

5A: On the World Horoscope and How It Came to Be

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

"The Adversary burrowed through at noon on the day of Ohrmazd in the month of Frawardīn, when day and night are equal."

² The Souls were in Cancer passing at the nineteenth degree in the lunar mansion ζ Hydrae; the star Sirius was inside, and among the planets there was Jupiter. Purses⁸ was Leo, the Brothers were Virgo, the Fathers were Libra; there was Saturn. The Sons were Scorpio, the Sick were Sagittarius; there was the tail of Gözihr. The Nuptials were Capricorn; there was Mars. The Deaths were Aquarius, the Travelers were Pisces; there were Venus and Mercury. The Medium Caeli was Aries; there was the sun in the lunar mansion Pēš-parwēz.⁹ The Fortunate were Taurus; there was the moon. The Unfortunate were Gemini; there was the head of Gözihr [see Figure 5.1].

³ When these planets burrowed through the firmament, they fought against the fixed stars in this way:

The dark sun and the dark moon against the sun and the moon, princes
among lights;

Jupiter against Ursa Major, general of the north;

Venus against Deneb, general of the south;

Mars against Vega, general of the west;

Mercury against Sirius, general of the east;

Saturn against Polaris, the supreme commander.

Leo Virgo	Cancer Jupiter	Gemini Gōzihr (head) Tauris Moon
Libra Saturn	Water Earth	Aries Sun
Scorpio Sagittarius Gōzihr (tail)	Capricorn Mars	Pisces Mercury Aquarius

Figure 5.1 This twelve-sectioned horoscopic diagram depicts the positions of the planets in the signs of the zodiac, and of the zodiac relative to the horizon, at the time of Ahriman's attack on creation. Versions of this diagram are found in different manuscripts of the *Bundahišn*. However, this version, based on manuscript TD1 (20v), is the only one that corresponds to the text; we have added "earth" and "water," which were omitted from the central square in the original. Horoscopic astrology, which uses such diagrams as the basis for predictions, was common throughout the ancient world, and similar figures can be found in Islamic and Latin sources. These diagrams from the *Bundahišn* are the only extant Zoroastrian examples (see further Raffaelli 2001, 74–75, 97–99). Pakzad's (2005, 77) edition includes a slightly different version of the diagram.

⁴In the sky, there was the same division among the planets:

Mercury was general of the east, Mars general of the west, Venus general of the south, Jupiter general of the north, Saturn supreme commander, and the dark sun and the dark moon princes among the darkness. ⁵ Gōzihr stood in the middle of the sky like a snake, with its head in Gemini and its tail in Sagittarius. In this way, there are always six constellations between its head and its tail, and its fiendish movement is retrograde; every ten years, its tail returns to the place where its head was, and its head takes the place of its tail.

⁶The sun bound the winged and tailed Mūš-Parīg to its chariot to keep it from doing harm. When it becomes free, it causes great damage in the world until it is bound again to the sun by a cord.

⁷Among these planets, the dark sun and Mūš-Parīg are bound during the Mixture by a cord below the sun to the sun's chariot, and the dark moon is bound to the chariot of the moon.

⁸The other planets are also bound to the same chariot of the sun in their elongation and conjunction. They cannot go further away than the length of that cord. Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars are each bound at a maximum distance of one hundred eighty degrees from the sun; Mercury at a distance of twenty-two degrees and thirty minutes; and Venus at a distance of forty-seven degrees and thirty minutes from the sun.

⁹The house, detriment, exaltation and dejection, terms, trigons,¹⁰ decans, happiness, and affliction, and many other positions of these planets in the firmament of the twelve constellations have been revealed. ¹⁰ They destroy all the order of time that, as can be clearly seen, is connected with the "fixed" stars; they turn it upside down, and increase the diminished. Their motion is also not like the "fixed" stars, for they move sometimes fast and sometimes slow, sometimes retrograde and sometimes stationary. They are named "planets" [*abāxtarān*] because they are not stars [*nē axtar*]. The light that shines from them is the same light of Ohrmazd, like villains dressed in knights' armor, like the light in the eyes of vermin. The benefit from it is this: on the one hand, because they are adorned in this light, they do less harm, and on the other, men seeing them are not afraid—so too the "fixed" stars move.¹¹ For this reason, when these demons of old age and evil-doing run across the firmament, its light is agitated and becomes visible.

¹¹It says in the *dēn*:

"If a person looked directly at these fiends, his eyesight would fail."

5B

¹ Mount Harburz surrounds the world and Mount Tērag is in the center of the world. The sun's revolution is like a crown around the world in purity. It revolves around Tērag, above Mount Harburz. ² As it says:

“My sun, moon, and stars return from behind the peak [*tērag*] of Harburz.”

³ For in Harburz there are one hundred eighty windows in the east, and one hundred eighty in the west. Every day the sun comes in through one window and leaves through another window. The moon and the “fixed” stars, and even the planets, are all connected to and move according to the sun. Every day its light heats three and a half continents.

⁴ As can be clearly seen, every year day and night are twice of equal length. ⁵ For at the beginning of the battle, when the sun progressed from the first lunar mansion of Aries, day and night were equal; this is the season of spring. Then, when it reaches the first lunar mansion of Cancer, the days are the longest; this is the beginning of summer. When it reaches the first lunar mansion of Libra, day and night are equal; this is the beginning of autumn. When it reaches the first lunar mansion of Capricorn, the nights are longest; this is the beginning of winter. When it reaches Aries anew, night and day are again equal.

⁶ So, from the time it turns from Aries until it reaches Aries again, in three hundred sixty days plus the five intercalary days, it enters and leaves from the same window. These windows were not spoken of, because if they had been mentioned, the demons would have discovered the secret and would have caused harm.

⁷ From the place where the sun rises on the longest day to where it rises on the shortest day is the east, the continent of Arzah. ⁸ From the place where it rises on the shortest day to where it sets on the shortest day is the direction of the south, the continents of Fradadaš and Wīdadaš. ⁹ From the place where the sun sets on the shortest day to where it sets on the longest day is the west, the continent of Sawah. ¹⁰ From the place where it rises on the longest day to where it sets on the longest day is the direction of the north, the continents of Wōrūbaršn and Wōrūjaršn.

¹¹ When the sun rises, it heats the continents of Arzah, Fradadaš, Wīdadaš, and half of the continent of Xwanirah. When it sets on the other side of Tērag, it heats the continents of Sawah, Wōrūbaršn, Wōrūjaršn, and half of the continent of Xwanirah. When it is day here, it is night there; for night appears because of Mount Tērag.

¹²In the beginning, when the Adversary burrowed through, it so happened that the dark sun and dark moon were unable to cause harm because of the common cord of the chariot of the sun and moon.

Ursa Major and Deneb were stronger than Jupiter and Venus, and they prevented Jupiter and Venus from causing harm. This is the reason why astrologers call them “benefic.”

Mars was stronger than Vega and Saturn than Polaris, and their harmfulness is evident. For this reason, astrologers call them “malefic.”

Mercury—who is the demon Apōš—came to battle Sirius. Both are equal in strength and equal in power. This is the reason why astrologers say that Mercury is beneficent with the “benefic,” and is maleficent with the “malefic.”

“One says: Apōš is not Mercury.”

¹³This is the reason why they say that Jupiter is the planet of life and Saturn is the planet of death. For Jupiter, because of its powerlessness in this conflict, distributes what its opponent wishes; that is, it gives life, greatness, and wealth. Because Saturn triumphs over its opponent, it does what is detrimental; that is, death, evil, and poverty. This is the reason why it is called “the adversary.”

¹⁴One says that Venus is of a watery nature, since its opponent Deneb is of a watery nature. They say that Mercury is airy since its opponents are Sirius and Wād, the rainmakers.

¹⁵Again, a period of six thousand years elapsed before the Adversary came: three thousand years in a spiritual state and three thousand years in a pure material state. Those six thousand years were from Aries to Virgo, each constellation ruling one thousand years.

¹⁶When the lordship of the millennium passed to Libra, which is the dejection of the dejections of the sun, the Adversary burrowed through from underneath. ¹⁷Saturn was in Libra, and because Libra was its exaltation, Saturn received lordship of the millennium. As Libra was down and Aries up, Saturn the lord of darkness and the sun the lord of light, the opponent of darkness, so too Libra became the exaltation of Saturn and the dejection of the sun and Aries the exaltation of the sun and the dejection of Saturn.

¹⁸On account of the long yoke of Saturn and Libra, during this millennium men were taller and bigger. ¹⁹The sun, too, lord of light, stood above all the fixed stars, while Saturn, the lord of darkness, stood above the planets.

²⁰The time it takes for the sun to advance and to return to the place where it began is one year, reckoned as three hundred sixty-five days, five hours,

and a fraction. Every day is twenty-four hours, half of which is dark and half light—night and day. And the five periods of the day and night were revealed.

²¹ Just as each creature battles its own opponent, so too, day opposes night, as the six months of increasing day oppose the six months of increasing night.

²² Other astrological principles are manifest, and the most explicit are those revealed in the good Mazdaean *dēn*.

²³ That sign in the sky, which is called the Milky Way, is the brilliance of Gōzihr that is like a snake in the firmament, as mentioned in detail above.

Chapter 6 turns the previous chapter's astrological focus in a mythic direction. The chapter overall discusses the ten battles that Ohrmazd's creation fought against evil during Ahriman's attack on the world. That onslaught and creation's reaction are responsible for the nature of the world as we know it today, including the growth of the mountains (6C and compare *Wizīdagihā ī Zādspram* 3:26–33) and the proliferation of plants (6D) and animals (6E). As discussed further in chapter 34, at the end of days, after the Restoration of the world to its original state and the final vanquishing of evil, the earth will be again made flat and the mountains leveled to the ground.

Two parts of this chapter have received considerable scholarly attention. Section 6B retells the story of the battle between the star Sirius (Tištrya), the brightest star in the sky that is sometimes confused with the planet Mercury (Tīr) in ancient sources (e.g., 6B:12), and the demon Apōš (meaning “drought”). One of the most important and complete astral myths preserved in the Iranian tradition, the *Bundahišn's* version is based on the hymn to Sirius in *Yasna* 8 and other Avestan sources. As here, the *Avesta* describes how Sirius first assumed three forms, that of a man, a horse, and a cow, and made rain for ten days in each form. Then Sirius descended to earth in the form of a horse and was defeated in a contest against Apaōša, as he is called in the *Avesta*. After Ahura Mazdā himself offered a sacrifice, Sirius returned with renewed strength and bested his opponent, releasing the rain; the Avestan hymn goes on to describe Sirius's fight against the shooting stars.

This myth connects the lack of rain during the dry Iranian summer with two astral phenomena. The first is the month-long heliacal rising of Sirius, when the star is visible on the eastern horizon just before sunrise, in July, and the second is the meteor showers in August and September that precede the return of the rain in the fall.

Interestingly, the *Bundahišn's* comparison of Sirius's strength to an arrow (also referred to as *tīr*) in 6B:13 may reflect another Iranian mythic tradition. Islamic-era historians Tha'ālebī, Ṭabarī, and Bīrūnī relate the story, only hinted at in earlier sources, of the archer Āraš (Avestan *Ērəxša*, *Yasht* 8:6) who shot an arrow a superhuman distance to establish the borders of Iran.

Chapter 6F discusses Gayōmard's horoscope, which provides an astral explanation for his life and death at the hands of the Evil Spirit; while one generally thinks of horoscopes as predictive, retrospective horoscopes were common in late antiquity. At the moment of Ahriman's attack, the beneficent planet Jupiter was able to counterbalance the influence of the maleficent planet Saturn, causing Gayōmard to live on until the age of thirty (compare 5B:12–13 and the similar account in *Wizīdagihā ī Zādspram* 2:21). He dies when Saturn is again in its exaltation, at the height of its power, but Jupiter is in its dejection. This section also introduces other topics, such as the birth of the first man and the first woman, that are discussed in detail in chapter 14.

Further Reading

- Lincoln, Bruce. 1983. "The Earth Becomes Flat': A Study of Apocalyptic Imagery." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 25: 136–153.
- Panaino, Antonio. 1990. *Tištrya, Part I: The Avestan Hymn to Sirius*. Rome: IsIAO.
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On the Stages of the Battle of Material Creation against the Evil Spirit

6A

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“When the Evil Spirit burrowed through the sky, and he saw the usefulness of creation, the supremacy of the deities, and his own impotence, he wanted to scurry back out the way he came. ² But the spirit of the sky arrayed himself against the Evil Spirit like a brave warrior clad in metal armor—that is the very description of the sky itself—and vowed to remain until Ohrmazd constructs around the sky a stronger defense than the sky itself. ³ He set the *frawahrs* of the righteous warriors, with valiant horses and spears in hand, around the fortress like hair crowns the head, like righteous men guarding a fortress; that fortress, in which the righteous dwell, is called the Knowledge of the Righteous.

⁴ But the Evil Spirit did not find a way to scurry back; he saw the destruction of the demons and he himself made impotent, just as clearly as Ohrmazd saw his ultimate victory and the achievement of the Restoration of his creatures forever and ever.”

⁵ This was the spirit of the sky’s first battle against the Evil Spirit.

6B

¹ The waters fought the second battle.

² On the very day that the Adversary burrowed through, the star Sirius, which was in the water sign of Cancer, in the lunar mansion of ζ Hydrae — which some call Souls—reappeared higher¹ in the evening in the west.

³ For each month has its own zodiacal sign. The month of Tīr is the fourth month of the year, and Cancer is the fourth constellation from Aries. So the (natural) possession of Cancer, which belongs to Sirius, showed signs of

making rain. It caused the water to ascend to the clouds by the power of the wind.⁴ Sirius's assistants are Wahman and Hōm for guidance, divine Burz for assistance, and Ardā Fraward for determining the right measure.

⁵ Sirius transformed into three forms: the form of a man, of a horse, and of a cow. For thirty days and nights he flew through the light, and made rain for ten days and nights in each form. As astrologers say, "Each constellation has three forms."

⁶ Every drop of rain became as big as a basin of water used to celebrate the festival of Ābānīgān;² water covered the earth as deep as a man's height.⁷ The earth's vermin were all killed by the rain apart from a few, small winged ones who hid in the holes of the earth.

⁸ Then the spirit of the wind—who remained unmixed—moved through the wind in the atmosphere like the soul moves in the body, and swept the water to the edges of the earth, where it formed the Frāxkard Sea.

⁹ The dead vermin were left lying on the ground, their poison and stench mixing in the earth. In order to remove their venom, Sirius descended to the sea in the form of a white, long-tailed horse. The demon Apōš, in the form of a black, short-tailed horse, charged him and chased Sirius a *frasang* away.

¹⁰ Sirius asked Ohrmazd for strength, and Ohrmazd made him strong.¹¹ As it says:

"At once, the strength of ten young³ horses, ten young camels, ten young bulls, ten mountains, and ten rivers came to Sirius."

¹² He chased Apōš back one *frasang*.¹³ That is why they say:

"An arrow [*tīr*] with Sirius's strength."

¹⁴ Then Sirius took up water in the clouds—some say that a jug is the measuring instrument for that work—and he made it rain as fiercely as possible, the drops the size of a cow's head and a man's head, handfuls⁴ and fistfuls, large and small.

¹⁵ During the rainmaking, Spinjaruš and Apōš battled against them, and the Wāzišt fire brandished his mace, making the water boil in the clouds. Spinjaruš roared and bellowed from the blows of the mace, just as now the thunder and lightning from that same battle can be seen when it rains.

¹⁶ He made it rain for ten days and nights. The vermin's poison, which had been in the earth, mixed with the water. It made the water salty for it remained in the earth. From those seeds the vermin are still conceived.

¹⁷ Then, after three days, the wind calmed the waters all over the earth in the same way. Three great seas and twenty lakes were formed, and two sea-springs appeared: Čēčast and Sōwar, which are connected to the source of the

seas.¹⁸ He also caused two rivers to flow from the north. One went to the east and the other to the west: these are the Arang and the Weh rivers.

¹⁹ As it says:

“Ohrmazd first drew⁵ the depth and the courses of these rivers with his finger.”

²⁰ Both rivers circle the earth and mingle again in the Frāxkard Sea.²¹ When they began to flow, eighteen navigable rivers also flowed from the same source, then other waters flowed from those navigable rivers. All pour back into the Arang and the Weh, which bring benefit to the world and long life to the creatures.

²² This was water’s first battle against the Evil Spirit.

6C

⁰ The earth fought the third battle.

¹ When the Evil Spirit burrowed through, the earth shuddered. As the earth quaked, the essence of the mountains, which had been created in the earth, at that moment caused the mountains to begin to move.

First Harburz of good fortune, and then the other mountains throughout the earth. For when Harburz grew, all the mountains began to move, since all grew from the roots of Harburz. At that moment, they came up from the earth like trees whose branches stretch above and whose roots reach down below, and their roots crossed each other and made a web.² Afterward the earth could no longer tremble.³ As it says in the *dēn*:

“The mountains are the great bond of the earth.”

⁴ The route to the source of the waters lies in the mountains, below and above the roots of the mountains; that is, it flows through them, like the roots of trees in the earth, and like the blood that brings strength to the body through the veins.

⁵ Finally, apart from Harburz, all the mountains rose from the earth over the course of eighteen years, and men are helped and profited by them.⁶ As it says:

“They were created for the banquets of priests, warriors, and farmers.”

⁷ This was the earth’s first battle against the Evil Spirit.

6D

⁰The plant fought the fourth battle.

¹When the plant became withered, Amurdād, because he was appointed over plants, pounded a small part of it and mixed it with the water Sirius had brought. Sirius then made that mixture rain over the whole earth. ²Plants grew over all the earth like hair on the head.

³Ten thousand plants sprouted from that one, unique plant in order to counteract the ten thousand diseases that the Evil Spirit fabricated against creation. ⁴From these ten thousand, another one hundred thirty thousand different species of plants grew.

⁵The Tree of Many Seeds, created from the seeds of all those plants, sprouted in the Frāxkard Sea. The seeds of all the species of plants continue to grow from the seeds of that tree. ⁶Nearby was the Gōkarēn tree, created to withstand the foul breath of old age. It gave perfect aid to the world.

⁷This was the plant's first battle against the Evil Spirit.

6E

⁰The sole-created cow fought the fifth battle.

¹When it passed away, because of the plant essence within it, fifty-five species of grains and twelve species of medicinal plants grew from the limbs of the cow, from the earth.

²The light and strength in the seed of the cow was entrusted to the moon.

³The seed was purified in the moon's light, adorned with colors, and instilled with life.

⁴From there, a pair of cattle, male and female, then two of each species, which makes two hundred eighty-two, appeared on earth.

In the same way, it says in the *dēn* that two *frasang* makes eighteen *hās^{ar}*.

⁵The cattle's abode is the earth, the birds' is the air, and the fish swim in the water, which provide abundant nourishment for creation.

⁶This was the cow's first battle against the Evil Spirit.

6F

⁰ Gayōmard fought the sixth battle.

¹ It was determined in the horoscope of Gayōmard that, in the battle between the planets and the stars, he would live on for thirty years after the onslaught of evil.

² As it was said in the time before the onslaught of evil:

“Valiant Gayōmard was created for thirty winters of life and lordship.”

³ When the Adversary came, the star Jupiter was in the water sign of Cancer, in the Souls, in its own exaltation. Because of its superiority over its opponent (Ursa Major), it decreed the life of the soul of Gayōmard.

⁴ The star Saturn was in Libra, in the fourth house—which is the “underground Peg”—in its own exaltation, for the sake of its victory over its opponent (Polaris), it decreed the death of Gayōmard.

⁵ Since Jupiter was in its own exaltation in the Cusp of Souls and victorious over Saturn, it held off Gayōmard’s death for thirty years.

⁶ When Saturn returned again to Libra, in its own exaltation, at that time Jupiter was in Capricorn, which is its dejection.

On account of Saturn’s victory over Jupiter, death came to Gayōmard and he fell to the left side. ⁷ As he passed away, his seed entered the earth, just as now, too, all men spill their seed as they pass away.

⁸ Since Gayōmard’s body was made of metal, seven metals were revealed from his body.

⁹ His seed entered the earth and forty years later Mašyā and Mašyāne sprouted up; they were the source of the world’s human multitude, the demons’ destruction, and the Evil Spirit’s undoing.

¹⁰ This was Gayōmard’s first battle against the Evil Spirit.

6G

⁰ Fire fought the seventh battle.

¹ The Wāzišt fire stood against Spinjaruš during the rainmaking. The Farrōbag fire, the Gušnasp fire, and the Burzēnmihr fire are protectors of the world and defenders of creation. The other fires—those that sustain the lives of plants, mankind, and animals and make them grow and that order the creatures of the world—come from them.

² This was fire’s first battle against the Evil Spirit.

6H

⁰The stars fought the eighth battle against the fiendish planets.

¹Each one is set in battle against its own opponent, arrayed against its rival until the Restoration, as I have written in the chapter on the horoscope of the world.

²This was the stars' first battle with the Evil Spirit.

6I

⁰The deities, who cast the Evil Spirit, battered and defeated, to hell, fought the ninth battle.

¹As it says:

"The spiritual deities were vigilant and motionless⁶ for ninety days and nights during that battle."

6J

⁰The unmixable stars fought the tenth battle, when they prevented darkness and sin from mixing with the upper region.

¹As it says:

"The glory of the good Mazdaean *dēn* was kept in place surrounding the sky like a girdle"—that is, like the *kustīg*, adorned with stars and made by the spirits with three folds and four knots.² Those stars will battle the Evil Spirit until the end, as I have written. The core of the fight is there; they call it, "the limit of purity in the Mixture."

Chapter 7 continues the focus on Ahriman's attack on creation, in particular on the fate of the primordial plant, cow, and Gayōmard. After each one was destroyed by Ahriman, Ohrmazd took up their forms and consigned them to the stars (7:1), moon (7:5), and sun (7:8), respectively. This is why these celestial bodies now shine their light on earth.

A version of this story is already found in the *Avesta*. *Yasht* 12, dedicated to enumerating the dwelling places of Rašnu, the deity of justice, includes a reference to the “moon which contains the seed of the animal” (12:33) and “the swift-horsed, radiant sun.”

The idea of lunar preservation and purification was taken up by Mani, the third-century CE prophet of a syncretic, dualist religion known as Manichaeism. In Manichaean cosmology, those portions of good light mixed into the evil material world are collected and carried up to the moon by the savior known as the Third Messenger. From there, they enter the “ship of the sun” and are taken to paradise. Here as elsewhere, Manichaeism draws considerably on Iranian myth, cosmology, and ontology.

The chapter also mentions the three different essences of the stars: water essence, earth essence, and plant essence (7:2–3; compare *Sīh-rōzag* 2:13 and *Mēnōg ī Xrad* 49), a continuation of the astronomical discussions of chapters 2 and 5. This highlights, once more, the great eclecticism of the *Bundahišn*'s astrological and astronomical discussions.

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On the Likenesses of the Creatures

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“When the Evil Spirit burrowed through, he came not in a year, a month, or a day. Rather, because he was swift, he came in an hour. First, he came to one-third of the earth, second to one-fifth,¹ and finally to the whole earth. Then he came to the plant. Then Ohrmazd took up its form, carried it up to the star station, and entrusted it to the stars.” It is this light that the stars now shine back on the material world.

² As it says:

“Stars have water essence, earth essence, and plant essence.”

³ The stars with a water essence are Sirius, Canis Minor, ζ Hydrae, Padēwar, 41 Arietis, and seven² stars called the Pleiades. They all are of the water species. The stars with an earth essence are Ursa Major and Polaris; they are of the earth species. Apart from those, the others have a plant essence.

⁴ Then the Evil Spirit came to the cow. The cow fell toward the south, on his right side. It first folded its right leg. ⁵ Ohrmazd took up the form and likeness of the cow and entrusted them to the moon; it is this light that the moon shines back to the world.

⁶ As it says:

“The cattle-seed moon.”

That is, the form of cows and sheep remains in the moon station.

⁷ Then he came to Gayōmard. Gayōmard fell toward the south, on his left side. He first folded his left leg. ⁸ Ohrmazd took up his form and entrusted it to the sun; it is this light that the sun shines back on the world.

⁹ For the cow was like the moon and Gayōmard was like the sun. Ohrmazd fashioned them in the material world, but when the Adversary came he carried them high up above to shine back down on their place of origin, so that their glory, which the demons would use to rule, would not fall into their hands. If he had not done this, their light would not have shone on the material world. Like a fire joined to the brilliance of the endless light, when it is lit, it sheds light from above on its own place of origin.

¹⁰ It also says:

When death came to Gayōmard, the Evil Spirit first penetrated the pinky toe of his right foot, then let loose his hunger on his heart. Ohrmazd stood near him, countering the Evil Spirit by feeding Gayōmard meat and butter; he prevented the demons from tearing him apart by starvation. That is the reason why Gayōmard's vital breath was hardest in his chest. Then he came to his shoulder, and scurried inside the top of his head.

¹¹ The light left Gayōmard's body, as when a blacksmith strikes a red-hot iron on an anvil and it becomes black. ¹² This is also how people die now: first the legs wither, then the other limbs, and finally the vital breath itself. The vital breath turns hard in the chest and they eat food. People often mistakenly believe that the body is recovering, but then they die swiftly, and when they die their color changes.

Chapter 14 provides an account of the first human couple, Mašyā and Mašyāne, and their offspring, the progenitors of the diverse races of mankind. Two additional passages focus on “others”: women (14A) and monkeys and bears (14B).

Gayōmard, as earlier chapters of the *Bundahišn* tell us, was the first man who was killed during Ahriman’s attack on and pollution of creation. The myth of Gayōmard also appears elsewhere in the Iranian tradition. In the *Avesta*, Gayōmard is the prototype of mankind, without sharing fully in humanity himself, while here and in other Middle Persian texts he is recast and begins to take on royal attributes. This trait becomes dominant in the early Islamic histories and in the *Shahnameh*, which portray Gayōmard as the first Iranian king who, in poet Abd al-Qasim Ferdowsi’s retelling, ruled thirty years and gave birth to a son, Syāmag.

In our chapter’s version, Mašyā and Mašyāne are twins born of a rhubarb plant that grows from Gayōmard’s final, dying emission of semen (14:5–6). After being tempted by the demons, the pair consummate their relationship (14:28–29). Such sexual relationships between first-degree relatives—mother and son, father and daughter, or, as here, brother and sister—are known as *xwēdōdah*. Though Middle Persian texts hail *xwēdōdah* as a cardinal virtue, it is unclear how much it was actually practiced historically among Zoroastrians.

Pure and impure sexual relations have a strikingly prominent role in this chapter, given the lack of discussion of purity and pollution, a central theme in Zoroastrian legal works, elsewhere in the *Bundahišn*. Gayōmard’s final emission of semen is purified by the sun and watched over by Nēryōsang and Spandarmad (14:5). This special protection is not only necessary because this seed holds the future of the human race. It is also required because emissions of semen were considered “bodily refuse” (*hixr*), just like blood, nail clippings, and any part of the body separated from it, and thus impure.

Similarly, sexuality plays a central part in Mašyā and Mašyāne’s temptation by the demons. Having gained a stranglehold on their minds, for fifty years the demons keep the pair from any thought of intercourse (14:28). This is a threat not only to their individual happiness but to the survival of humanity.

This episode demonstrates that in Zoroastrianism, sexuality is not only not a sin; it is a necessary virtue. As the pair say when they consummate their relationship, one suspects not without some humor, “For fifty years we should have been doing this!” (14:29).

The chapter ends with human genealogy, making special mention of Tāz and Tāzag, the eponymous progenitors of the Arabs, and Hōšang and Gūzag, the forefathers of the Iranians (14:34).

In chapter 14A, Ohrmazd bemoans having created women, who are sexually voracious and the offspring of the demon Jeh, who awakens Ahriman from his slumber in chapter 1, but Ohrmazd complains that he could not have ensured the continuation of the human race any other way. The section parallels Ohrmazd’s lament over having created the Warīšag bird in 13:29.

Chapter 14B focuses on Africans, monkeys, and bears (14B:2). This castigation of Africans as the offspring of demons and human beings may have a connection with the extensive exploitation of African slaves during the first Arab caliphates and their ensuing dehumanization.

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On the Nature of Mankind

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“I fashioned ten species of men. The first was the bright, white-eyed Gayōmard. The others up to the tenth species, including the ninth, were like Gayōmard; the tenth is the monkey, which is called the lowest of mankind.”

² When Gayōmard became sick he fell to his left side. ³ Lead appeared from his head, tin from his blood, silver from his brain, iron from his legs, copper from his bones, crystal from his fat, steel from his arms, and gold from his departing spirit. That is why now, because of its value, men are willing to give their spirit for it.

⁴ Death entered Gayōmard’s body from the left side,¹ and thereby death descended on all creatures until the Restoration.

⁵ As he was passing away, Gayōmard emitted seed that was purified in the light of the sun. Nēryōsang kept watch over two parts of it, and Spandarmad accepted one part. It was in the earth for forty years. ⁶ At the completion of forty years, Mašyā and Mašyāne sprouted from the earth in the form of a rhu-barb plant with a single stalk and fifteen leaves. The two were joined together and their hands were fixed beside their ears; they had the same stature and the same appearance.

⁷ Glory descended upon them both. Since they had the same stature, it was unclear which was male and which female. The creator Ohrmazd’s Glory was with them, that is the Glory given to mankind.

⁸ As it says:

“Which was created first, Glory or the body?”

Ohrmazd answered: Glory was created first and the body was created afterward. Glory was created in the body, fashioned for its proper function, and the body was created for its proper function.”

⁹ The explanation is this: The soul was created first and the body after. The soul directs the body’s proper function.

¹⁰ Then both Mašyā and Mašyāne changed from plant form to human form, and Glory spiritually entered them; that is, through the soul. Now, too, that plant is likened to a sprouting tree whose fruits are the ten races of men.

¹¹ Ohrmazd said to Mašyā and Mašyāne:

“You are human beings, the parents of the world. I have created you with full awareness. Do work, follow the law, and practice full awareness: think good thoughts, speak good words, perform good actions, and do not worship the demons.”

¹² They both had the same first thought about each other. They thought: This is a human being. ¹³ The first action they did was walking and thinking. ¹⁴ The first words they spoke were:

“Ohrmazd created the water, the earth, plants, animals, the stars, the moon, the sun, and every good thing revealed through righteousness.”

One says: “Both the principal and the interest therefrom.”

¹⁵ Then the Adversary burrowed into their minds and polluted them. They howled:

“The Evil Spirit created the water, the earth, plants, animals, and all other things.”

¹⁶ As it said:

“The first false speech that deceived² them was uttered at the compulsion of the demons.”

The Evil Spirit robbed them of their first happiness with that false speech. Both became wicked and their souls will remain in hell until the Final Body.

¹⁷ For thirty days, their food was to be purified and they dressed in garments of grass. ¹⁸ After those thirty days, they came upon a white-haired goat in the wilderness. They suckled the milk from its udders with their mouths.

¹⁹ When they had drunk the milk, Mašyāne³ said:

“The peace I felt before drinking this semen-milk was greater than it is now that, having drunk it, there is something bad in my body.”

²⁰ By this second false speech, the demons gained power. They stole their taste for food so that only one-hundredth remained.

²¹ After another thirty days and nights, they came upon a dark sheep with white cheeks and killed it. Directed by the spiritual deities, they made a fire from lotus and box tree, as these two woods burn the best. They kindled the fire with their mouths and burned as fuel first straw, olive, frankincense, and fibers of date palm.⁴ They prepared the sheep on a spit. They cast three handfuls of the sheep’s flesh into the fire and said:

“This is the portion of the fire.”

They threw one part to the heavens and said:

“This is the portion of the gods.”

²² A vulture flying over them grabbed it and ate it like a dog eating its first meat.

They first covered themselves with leather garments, then they spun hemp against the cold of the wilderness.²⁵ They made woven clothes and covered themselves.

²³ They dug a hole in the earth. They melted iron and beat it on a stone. They made a blade, cut wood with it, and made wooden bowls.

²⁴ On account of their ingratitude, the demons became oppressive²⁵ and brought upon them the sin of jealousy. They assaulted one another and struck and tore at each other, and pulled out each other's hair.

²⁶ Then the demons howled from the gloom:

"You are human beings! Worship the demons so long as jealousy dwells in you."

²⁷ Mašyāne sprang forward, milked a cow, and poured the milk toward the north.

²⁸ Through that demon worship, the demons became powerful. They made them so indolent⁶ that for fifty years they had no desire for any intercourse. Even if they had had intercourse, there would have been no children.

At the end of fifty years, the desire for a son occurred in their minds. First to Mašyā and then to Mašyāne. Mašyā said to Mašyāne:

"When I see your belly,⁷ mine becomes big and rises up."

Then Mašyāne said:

"Brother Mašyā! When I see your penis, my belly⁸ trembles."

²⁹ Desire overwhelmed them both. And as they were fulfilling their desire, they thought:

"For fifty years we should have been doing this!"

³⁰ After nine months, twins were born, a girl and a boy. Because the children were so sweet, the mother devoured one and the father the other. Then Ohrmazd removed the thought of the children's sweetness from the minds of their parents, and set as much desire to nourish them in its place.

³¹ They had six pairs of twins, male and female; all the brothers married the sisters. Along with Mašyā and Mašyāne, these were the first six pairs.

³² All of them gave birth to a child in their fiftieth year and died in their hundredth year.

³³ Of those six pairs, one was called Syāmag, a boy, and Wašāg, a girl. Twins were born from them. The name of the boy was Frawāg and the girl was called Frawāgē. ³⁴ From them fifteen pairs of twins were born, each pair of a different race. Their progeny populated the whole world.

Nine of those fifteen races crossed the Frāṅkard Sea on the back of the Bull Srisōg to the other six continents and settled there. Six races remained in Xwanirah.

One of those six was a pair, male and female, called Tāz and Tāzag.⁹ They lived in the Arab [*tazīgān*] desert; this is the reason why the Arab desert has that name.

Another pair was a man called Hōšang and a woman named Gūzag. The Iranians are descended from them. The people of Māzandarān are descended from another pair of twins.

³⁵ This reckoning includes those in Iranian lands and non-Iranian lands; those in the land of Tūr; those in the land of Salm—that is the land of Rome; and those in the land of Sin—that is China; those in the land of Dāh¹⁰ and those in the land of Sind; and those in the six other continents, all from the line of Frawāg son of Syāmag son of Mašyā.

³⁶ The ten races of men mentioned at the beginning, plus the fifteen races descended from Frawāg, makes twenty-five human species, all from the seed of Gayōmard: terrestrial men; aquatic men; men with ears and eyes on their chests; one-legged men; men with wings like bats; forest-dwellers with tails and fur on their body like animals called bears; monkeys; people of Māzandarān¹¹ who are seven times a normal man's height; thumb-sized midgets who are one-sixth of a normal man's height; Romans; Turks; Chinese; Dāyīgān¹²; Arabs; Sindhis; Indians; Iranians; and others whom they say inhabit the six continents. Many other, newer races came from each of these races.

³⁷ Here, too, there was mixture on account of the Adversary. Such as Africans from the mixture of terrestrial and aquatic men, amphibious men who live on both land and water, and others of this kind.

14A: On the Nature of Women

¹ When Ohrmazd fashioned woman he said:

"You, too, are my creation, you who belong to the Adversary's race of whores. I have created a mouth near your anus so that sex seems to you like the sweetest taste of food in your mouth. You are my helper since man is born from you, but you are also my tormentor; I am Ohrmazd. If I had found a vessel in which I could make man, I would never have created you, you who belong to the Adversary's race of whores. But I searched under the water and

on the earth, among the plants and the animals, on the highest mountains and in the deepest riverbeds, and I did not find a vessel to make righteous men but women, the Adversary's whore."

14B: On the Nature of Monkeys and Bears

¹ It also says this:

"When Glory departed from Jam on account of his fear of the demons, he took a demon for a wife and gave a demon to his sister Jamag to wed. The monkeys and the bears, the tailed forest-dwellers, and the other sinful races descend from them. His line did not continue."

² Regarding Africans, it says:

"During his reign, Azdahāg set a demon on a young woman and a witch on a young man. They copulated under his gaze, and from that blameful¹³ act came black people."

³ When Frēdōn came, they scurried away from Iran and settled on the shores of the sea. Now with the overrunning of the Arabs, they have again mixed in Iran.

Chapter 15 provides the scientific counterpart to the previous chapter's mythological account of human origins. The chapter lays out a theory of conception in human beings (15:1–7) and in various animal species (15:8–13). Male and female seed are distinguished by their different functions, as well as their differing qualities in the rubric of the theory of humors: hot and dry in the case of male seed, cold and moist in the case of female seed. Male and female seed also form different parts of the embryo, with the father contributing the limbs, bones, and hair, as well as the mother's milk, and the mother the blood and muscle. Strikingly, the chapter considers menstruation to be a biological process that is a necessary part of the reproductive cycle, and not, as is the case in Zoroastrian ritual law, a sign of impurity (compare 4:3–6).

The reference to the theory of the four humors, which is discussed at greater length in parallel passages in *Wizīdagihā ī Zādspram* 30, points to the chapter's dialogue with Greek medicine, especially in the writings of the famed second-century CE physician and philosopher Galen. Galen was a syncretic thinker who incorporated ideas from pre-Socratic thinkers like Democritus and Anaxagoras as well as from Aristotle, even when they disagreed; the *Bundahišn's* eclecticism could reflect Galen's own. As in our chapter, Galen proposed a dual-seed theory of conception and divided female and male into opposing categories of hot/dry and cold/wet. Galen also revived the earlier Hippocratic idea that male seed originates in the brain, as in 16:4. While the role of menstrual blood is not explained consistently in Galen's account of conception, in some cases he identifies it as female seed, following Aristotle. Galen also proposed a role for the uterine tubes (see 13:5), which had been discovered by the third-century BCE anatomist Herophilos.

Scholars disagree as to when Iranians first began studying and practicing Greek and Hellenistic medicine, with some arguing that Greek doctors were present already in the Achaemenid court. However, certainly by the late Sasanian period, Galen's writings, and Greek medical literature as a whole, were translated and adopted in Iran. According to the Byzantine historian Agathias, seven Greek Neoplatonists sought refuge at the Sasanian court of Khosrow I to escape persecution at the hands of Emperor Justinian, who

closed the School of Athens in 529 CE. One of these refugees was Priscian of Lydia, who composed his *Solutiones ad Chosroen* on physics, the theory of the soul, meteorology, and biology for the Sasanian king of kings. This process only accelerated and expanded under the Abbasid dynasty beginning in the eighth century, as part of the larger movement to translate Greek literature into Arabic. The *Bundahišn* could be relying on either or, more likely, both of these engagements with the Greek tradition.

The accompanying chapter 15A concerns the gender of various creations. The sky, metal, wind, and fire are only male, while water, earth, plants, and fish are only female, though this final statement contradicts the later description of the asexual reproduction of fish (15A:7–8). Aside from fish, the list seems to follow the gender division of the seven Amahraspands, four of whom, including Ohrmazd, have a male association, while the rest have a female one.

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On the Nature of the Birth of All Species

¹ It says in the *dēn*:

“If a woman is approached by a man up to ten nights after she washes following her menstruation, she becomes pregnant more easily.”

So, too, horses, donkeys, and onagers up to seven nights; dogs and pigs up to five nights; and sheep, goats, and cows¹ up to one night; burrowing creatures and aquatic creatures, too, up to one night after.

² Menstruating women and menstruating animals are in seclusion [*wardag*] because when animals are in heat [*wardagīh*] they discharge blood.

³ A woman can thus become pregnant until she menstruates again, but during those first ten nights she becomes pregnant more easily. Having washed herself after menstruation, when the time for pregnancy has arrived, as long as the man’s seed is stronger, the child will be a boy. If the woman’s seed is stronger, a girl will be conceived. If both seeds are equal, there will be twins or triplets.

⁴ If the male seed comes first, it becomes fat; it makes the woman grow and become stout. If the female seed comes first, it becomes blood; the woman is weakened by it. The female seed is cold and moist, it flows from the side and is red and yellow in color. The male seed is hot and dry, it flows from the brain, and it is white and blue in color. ⁵ The female seed always comes first and circulates in the uterine tubes [*kadagīhā*]. ² The male seed settles on it and fills the uterine tubes; whatever excess remains turns back into blood and enters the woman’s veins. During birth, it returns to the breasts as milk that nourishes the child after birth; that is, all milk comes from the male seed. Then the male seed and the female blood mix and bind together, like milk and whey, in a cocoon in the opening of the uterine tubes.

⁶ Donkey’s semen remains liquid for forty days; of men, the different species of horses, oxen, and others, for thirty days; of sheep, for sixteen days; of dogs, for ten days; of foxes, for seven days; of weasels, for five days; and of rats, for six days.

It remains in a mixed state for three days, semen and blood, then grows like a lump³ sprouting eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. ⁷ The hands, feet, limbs,

all⁴ the bones, and hair are from the father; the blood and muscle are from the mother.

⁸ Mother camels become aware of their pregnancy in six months; people, horses, and cattle in five months; weasels in one month; and rats in fifteen days. Growth depends on what food the mother eats.

⁹ Camels are born after twelve months; people, the different species of horses, and cattle after ten months; sheep after five months; dogs after five months; foxes and pigs after three months; weasels after two months; and rats after one month.

¹⁰ Regarding birds, it says that eagles, vultures, Sēn birds, and other large birds remain forty days as semen, thirty days in a mixed state, fifteen days in the egg, and ten days until their wings grow. Others remain seven nights as semen, seven nights in a mixed state, seven nights in the egg until they hatch, and seven nights until their wings grow.

¹¹ This, too: The chick is conceived from the yolk of the egg, which is like milk, and the white is like an animal's flesh.⁵ For the egg has nourishment from the yolk and the white. As long as it is in the white of the egg, it lives on it like a child who lives on milk after it is born. When it has eaten the white, like milk, it becomes a chick and hatches. Some chicks gather their own grain, like roosters, and others' mothers gather it for them because they do not have wings.

¹² Roosters, which are also called *parōdarš* birds and foreseers, lay an egg every day: some lay them in secret, and some in the open among people. Roosters are the only birds of this kind.

¹³ Mountain buzzards, which they also call small mountain hawks, migrate to warm regions in summer and to cold regions in winter. They have chicks three times a year: the first time the chick lives in the winter, the second time in cold and warm seasons, and the third time in summer. Their chicks eat worms.

15A

¹ It says this, too:

"Four things are male and four female: the sky, metal, wind, and fire are male, and never otherwise. Water, the earth, plants, and fish are female, and never otherwise. The rest of creation can, then, be male and female."

² As it says about fish:

“During the season of desiring offspring, they go down into the running water to a depth of one *hās^ar*, which is one fourth of a *frasang*. They swim down in the water two by two, then swim back up the same way one *hās^ar* against the current. In that coming and going, they rub their bodies together and their sweat mingles⁶ until both become pregnant.

³ In the Frāxkard Sea, the Kamrōd Sea, and other lakes, if there is no tide or movement of the water, they do the same thing when the wind ripples and stirs the water; it seems just like running water to them. ⁴ These fish feel the desire for offspring in shallow water, and give birth in deep water.”

⁵ It says about the Wās of Five Hundred Lakes that five hundred of its young reach maturity and two thousand of the Kar fish; this is the number that they nourish. Nine thousand Arzuka fish reach maturity every year, eight thousand Marzuka fish, seven thousand Warzuka fish, six thousand Takawirō fish, five thousand Spigzak fish and Atezak fish, four thousand Pašmāzag fish, and five thousand Somakčit fish. ⁶ These are names of fish in the *Avesta*.

⁷ Fish also have eggs. Each pair of fish is in the water,⁷ and there is a pair in each egg.⁸ The eggs mature. Like animals, they are round, each according to its own size. They nourish them when they have laid the eggs in a hole in the womb to which the entrance of the egg attaches. They nourish the eggs in the water and they hatch. Little fish come out of them one by one, and then grow, each according to its own size. ⁸ When the fish return to the deep water to lay eggs, they eat the superfluous eggs and scatter and nourish the others.

⁹ In the same way, water, earth, and plants nourish their own offspring; that is, there are no males.

¹⁰ Fish become pregnant in the month of Šahrewar, that is, the intercalary month of Tīr, in the spring. They give birth in the month of Frawardīn, that is, the intercalary month of Spandarmad, during the festival of Hamspasmēdim.

¹¹ Among male birds, only roosters lay eggs; some even lay them when people are watching.

The *Bundahišn*

The Zoroastrian Book of Creation

Edited and translated by

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