

H.P. Blavatsky

THE DEVIL'S OWN

THOUGHTS ON ORMUZD AND AHRIMAN

Hail, holy light,
offspring of Heaven first-born.
Or of the Eternal co-eternal beam.

. . . Since God is light
Bright effluence of bright essence
increate.

. . . Satan Puts on swift wings,
and towards the gates of hell
Explores his solitary flight.

--MILTON

NO more philosophically profound, nor grander or more graphic and suggestive type exists among the allegories of the World-religions than that of the two Brother-Powers of the Mazdean religion, called Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu, better known in their modernized form of Ormuzd and Ahriman. Of these two emanations, "Sons of Boundless Time"--*Zeruana Akarana*--itself issued from the Supreme and Unknowable Principle,¹ the one is the embodiment of "Good Thought" (*Vohu Manô*), the other of "Evil Thought" (*Akô Manô*). The "King of Light" or Ahura Mazda, emanates from Primordial Light² and forms or creates by means of the "Word," Honover (*Ahuna Vairya*), a pure and holy world. But Angra Mainyu, though born as pure as his elder brother, becomes jealous of him, and mars everything in the Universe, as on the earth, creating Sin and Evil wherever he goes.

The two Powers are inseparable on our present plane and at this stage of evolution, and would be meaningless, one without the other. They are, therefore, the two opposite poles of the *One* Manifested Creative Power, whether the latter is viewed as Universal Cosmic Force which builds worlds, or under its anthropomorphic aspect, when its vehicle is thinking man. For Ormuzd and Ahriman are the respective representatives of Good and Evil, of Light and Darkness, of the spiritual and the material elements in man. and also in the Universe and everything contained in it. Hence the world and man are called the Macrocosm and the Microcosm, the great and the small universe, the latter being the reflection of the former. Even exoterically, the God of Light and the God of Darkness are, both spiritually and physically, the two ever-contending Forces, whether in Heaven or on Earth.³ The Parsis may have lost most of the keys that unlock the true interpretations of their sacred and poetical allegories, but the symbolism of Ormuzd and Ahriman is so self-evident, that even the Orientalists have ended by interpreting it, in its broad features, almost correctly. As the translator⁴ of the *Vendidad* writes, "Long before the Parsis had heard of Europe and Christianity, commentators, explaining the myth of

Tahmurath, who rode for thirty years on Ahriman as a horse, interpreted the feat of the old legendary king as the curbing of evil passions and restraining Ahriman in the heart of man." The same writer broadly sums up Magism in this wise:--

The world, such as it is now, is twofold, being the work of two hostile beings, Ahura Mazda, the good principle, and Angra Mainyu the evil principle; all that is good in the world comes from the former, all that is bad in it comes from the latter. The history of the world is the history of their conflict, how Angra Mainyu invaded the world of Ahura Mazda and marred it, and how he shall be expelled from it at last. Man is active in the conflict, his duty in it being laid before him in the law revealed by Ahura Mazda to Zarathustra. When the appointed time is come a son of the lawgiver, still unborn, named Saoshyant (*Sosiosh*) will appear, *Angra Mainyu and hell* will be destroyed, men will *rise from the dead*, and everlasting happiness will reign over all the world.

Attention is drawn to the sentences italicised by the writer, as they are esoteric. For the Sacred Books of the Mazdeans, as all the other sacred Scriptures of the East (the Bible included), have to be read esoterically. The Mazdeans had practically two religions, as almost all the other ancient nations--one for the people and the other for the initiated priests. Esoterically, then, the underlined sentences have a special significance, the whole meaning of which can be obtained only by the *study* of occult philosophy. Thus, Angra Mainyu, being confessedly, in one of its aspects, the embodiment of man's lowest nature, with its fierce passions and unholy desires, "his hell" must be sought for and *located on earth*. In occult philosophy there is no other hell--nor can any state be comparable to that of a specially unhappy human wretch. No "asbestos" soul, inextinguishable fires, or "worm that never dies," can be worse than a life of hopeless misery upon this earth. But it must, as it has once had a beginning, have also an end. Ahura Mazda alone,⁵ being the divine, and therefore the immortal and eternal symbol of "Boundless Time," is the secure refuge, the spiritual haven of man. And as Time is twofold, there being a measured and finite time within the Boundless, Angra Mainyu is only a periodical and temporary Evil. He is Heterogeneity as developed from Homogeneity. Descending along the scale of differentiating nature on the cosmic planes, both Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu become, at the appointed time, the representatives and the dual type of man, the inner or divine INDIVIDUALITY, and the outer *personality*, a compound of visible and invisible elements and principles. As in heaven, so on earth; as above, so below. If the divine *light* in man, the Higher Spirit-Soul, forms, including itself, the seven Ameshâspends (of which Ormuzd is the seventh, or the synthesis), Ahriman, the thinking *personality*, the animal soul, has in its turn its seven Archidevs opposed to the seven Ameshâspends.

During our life cycle, the good Yazatas, the 99,999 Fravashi (or Ferouers) and even the "Holy Seven," the Ameshâspends themselves,⁶ are almost powerless against the Host of wicked Devs--the symbols of cosmic opposing powers and of human passions and sins.⁷ Fiends of evil, their presence radiates and fills the world with moral and physical ills: with disease, poverty, envy and pride, with despair, drunkenness, treachery, injustice, and cruelty, with anger and bloody-handed murder. Under the advice of Ahriman, man from the first made his

fellow-man to weep and suffer. This state of things will cease only on the day when Ahura Mazda, the sevenfold deity, assumes his seventh name⁸ or aspect. Then, will he send his "Holy Word" *Mathra Spenta* (or the "Soul of Ahura") to incarnate in Saoshyant (Sosiash), and the latter will conquer Angra Mainyu. Sosiash is the prototype of "the faithful and the true" of the *Revelation*, and the same as Vishnu in the *Kalki-avatar*. Both are expected to appear as the *Saviour of the World, seated on a white horse* and followed by a host of spirits or genii, mounted likewise on milk-white steeds.⁹ And then, *men will arise from the dead* and immortality come.¹⁰

Now the latter is of course purely allegorical. It stands in the occult sense, that materialism and sin being called death, the materialist, or the unbeliever, is "a dead man"--spiritually. Occultism has never regarded the physical personality as *the man*; nor has Paul, if his Epistle to the Romans (vi-vii), is correctly understood. Thus mankind, arrived "at the appointed time" (the end of our present *Round*), at the end of the cycle of gross material flesh, will, with certain bodily changes, have come to a clearer spiritual perception of the truth. Redemption from flesh means a proportionate redemption from sin. Many are those who *seeing will believe*, and, in consequence, *rise "from the dead."* By the middle of the Seventh Race, says an occult prophecy, the struggle of the two conflicting Powers (*Buddhi* and *Kama Manas*) will have almost died out. Everything that is irredeemably sinful and wicked, cruel and destructive, will have been eliminated, and that which is found to survive will be swept away from being, owing, so to speak, to a Karmic tidal-wave in the shape of scavenger-plagues, geological convulsions and other means of destruction. The Fifth Round will bring forth a higher kind of Humanity; and, as intelligent Nature always proceeds Gradually, the last Race of this Round must necessarily develop the needed materials thereof. Meanwhile, we are still in the Fifth Race of the Fourth Round only, and in the Kaliyuga, into the bargain. The deadly strife between spirit and matter, between Light and Goodness and Darkness and Evil, began on our globe with the first appearance of contrasts and opposites in vegetable and animal nature, and continued more fiercely than ever after man had become the selfish and personal being *he now is*. Nor is there any chance of its coming to an end before falsehood is replaced by truth, selfishness by altruism, and supreme justice reigns in the heart of man. Till then, the noisy battle will rage unabated. It is selfishness, especially; the love of *Self* above all things in heaven and earth, helped by human vanity, which is the begetter of the seven mortal sins. No; Ashmogh, the cruel "biped serpent," is not so easily reduced. Before the poor creature now in the clutches of Darkness is liberated through Light, it has to know itself. Man, following the Delphic injunction, has to become acquainted with, and gain the mastery over, every nook and corner of his heterogeneous nature, before he can learn to discriminate between HIMSELF and his *personality*. To accomplish this difficult task, two conditions are absolutely requisite: one must have thoroughly realised in practice the noble Zoroastrian precept: "Good thoughts, good words, good deeds," and must have impressed them indelibly on his soul and heart, not merely as a lip-utterance and form-observance. Above all, one has to crush *personal vanity* beyond resurrection.

Here is a suggestive fable and a charming allegory from the old Zoroastrian works. From the first incipient stage of Angra Mainyu's power, he and his

wicked army of fiends opposed the army of Light in everything it did. The demons of lust and pride, of corruption and impiety, systematically destroyed the work of the Holy Ones. It is they who made beautiful blossoms poisonous; graceful snakes, deadly; bright fires, the symbol of deity, full of stench and smoke; and who introduced death into the world. To light, purity, truth, goodness and knowledge, they opposed darkness, filth, falsehood, cruelty and ignorance. As a contrast to the useful and clean animals created by Ahura Mazda, Angra Mainyu created wild beasts and bloodthirsty fowls of the air. He also added insult to injury and deprecated and laughed at the peaceful and inoffensive creations of his elder brother. "It is thine envy," said the holy Yazatas one day to the unholy fiend, the evil-hearted, "Thou art incapable of producing a beautiful and harmless being, O cruel Angra Mainyu" . . .

The arch-fiend laughed and said that he could. Forthwith he created the loveliest bird the world had ever seen. It was a majestic peacock, the emblem of vanity and selfishness, which is self-adulation in deeds.

"Let it be the King of Birds," quoth the Dark One, "and let man *worship him and act after his fashion.*"

From that day "Melek Taus" (the Angel Peacock) became the special creation of Angra Mainyu, and the messenger through which the arch-fiend is invoked by some¹¹ and propitiated by all men.

How often does one see strong-hearted men and determined women moved by a strong aspiration towards an ideal they know to be the true one, battling successfully, to all appearance, with Ahriman and conquering him. Their external *Selves* have been the battle-ground of a most terrible, deadly strife between the two opposing Principles; but they have stood firmly--and won. The dark enemy seems conquered; it is crushed in fact, so far as the animal instincts are concerned. Personal selfishness, that greed for self, and self only, the begetter of most of the evils--has vanished; and every lower instinct, melting like soiled icicles under the beneficent ray of Ahura Mazda, the radiant EGO-SUN, has disappeared, making room for better and holier aspirations. Yet, there lurks in them their old and but partially destroyed vanity, that spark of personal pride which is the last to die in man. Dormant it is, latent and invisible to all, including their own consciousness; but there it is still. Let it awake but for an instant, and the seemingly crushed-out personality comes back to life at the sound of its voice, arising from its grave like an unclean ghoul at the command of the midnight incantator. Five hours--nay, five minutes even--of life under its fatal sway, may destroy the work of years of self-control and training, and of laborious work in the service of Ahura Mazda, to open wide the door anew to Angra Mainyu. Such is the result of the silent and unspoken but ever-present *worship* of the only beautiful creation of the Spirit of Selfishness and Darkness.

Look around you and judge of the deadly havoc made by this last and most cunning of Ahriman's productions, notwithstanding its external beauty and harmlessness. Century after century, year after year, all is changing; everything is progressing in this world; one thing only changeth not--*human nature*. Man accumulates knowledge, invents religions and philosophies, but himself remains still the same. In his ceaseless chase after wealth and honours and the

will o' the wisps of novelty, enjoyment and ambition, he is ever moved by one chief motor--vain selfishness. In these days of so-called progress and civilization, when the *light* of knowledge claims to have replaced almost everywhere the *darkness* of ignorance, how many more volunteers do we see added to the army of Ahura Mazda, the Principle of Good and Divine Light? Alas, the recruits of Angra Mainyu, the Mazdean Satan, outnumber these, daily more and more. They have overrun the world, these worshippers of Melek Taus, and the more they are enlightened the easier they succumb. This is only natural. Like *Time*, both the boundless and the finite, *Light* is also twofold; the divine and the eternal, and *the artificial light*, which paradoxically but correctly defined, is the *darkness of Ahriman*. Behold on what objects the best energies of knowledge, the strongest human activity, and the inventive powers of man are wasted at the present hour: on the creation) amelioration and perfection of war-engines of destruction, on guns and smokeless powders, and weapons for the mutual murder and decimation of men. Great Christian nations seek to outvie each other in the discovery of better means for destroying human life, and for the subjecting by the strongest and the craftiest of the weakest and the simplest, for no better reason than to feed their peacock-vanity and self-adulation; and Christian men eagerly follow the good example. Whereon is spent the enormous wealth accumulated through private enterprize by the more enlightened through the ruin of the less intelligent? Is it to relieve human suffering in every form, that riches are so greedily pursued? Not at all. For now, just as 1.900 years ago, while the beggar Lazarus is glad to feed on the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table, no means are neglected by Dives to hedge himself off from the poor. The minority that gives and takes care that its left hand remains ignorant of what its right hand bestows, is quite insignificant when compared with the enormous majority who are lavish in their charity--only because they are eager to see their names heralded by the press to the world.

Great is the power of Ahriman! Time rolls on, leaving with every day the ages of ignorance and superstition further behind, but bringing us in their stead only centuries of ever-increasing selfishness and pride. Mankind grows and multiplies, waxes in strength and (book-)wisdom; it claims to have penetrated into the deepest mysteries of physical nature; it builds railroads and honeycombs the globe with tunnels; it erects gigantic towers and bridges, minimizes distances, unites the oceans and divides whole continents. Cables and telephones, canals and railways more and more with every hour unite mankind into one "happy" family, but only to furnish the selfish and the wily with every means of stealing a better march on the less selfish and improvident. Truly, the "upper ten" of science and wealth have subjected to their sweet will and pleasure, the Air and the Earth, the Ocean and the Fire. This, our age, is one of progress, indeed, an era of the most triumphant display of human genius. But what good has all this great civilization and progress done to the millions in the European slums, to the armies of the "great unwashed"? Have any of these displays of genius added one comfort more to the lives of the poor and the needy? Is it not true to say that distress and starvation are a hundred times greater now than they were in the days of the Druids or of Zoroaster? And is it to help the hungry multitudes that all this is invented, or again, only to sweep off the couch of the rich the last-forgotten rose-leaves that may uncomfortably tickle their well-fed bodies? Do electric wonders give one additional crust of

bread to the starving? Do the towers and the bridges, and the forests of factories and manufactures, bring any mortal good to the sons of men, save giving an additional opportunity to the wealthy to vampirize or "sweat" their poorer brother? When, I ask again, at what time of the history of mankind, during its darkest days of ignorance, when was there known such ghastly starvation as we see now? When has the poor man wept and suffered, as he weeps and suffers in the present day--say, in London, where for every club-visitor who dines and wines himself daily, at a price that would feed twenty-five families for a whole day, one may count hundreds and thousands of starving wretches. Under the very windows of the fashionable City restaurants, radiant with warmth and electric lights, old trembling women and little children may be seen daily, shivering and fastening their hungry eyes on the food they smell each time the entrance door is opened. Then they "move on"--by order, to disappear in the dark gloom, to starve and shiver and finally to die in the frozen mud of some gutter. . . .

The "pagan" Parsis know not, nor would their community tolerate, any beggars in its midst, least of all--STARVATION!!

Selfishness is the chief prompter of our age; *Chacun pour soi, Dieu pour tout le monde*, its watchword. Where then is the truth, and what practical good has done that light brought to mankind by the "Light of the World," as claimed by every Christian? Of the "Lights of Asia" Europe speaks with scorn, nor would it recognise in Ahura Mazda a *divine* light. And yet even a *minor* light (if such) when practically applied for the good of suffering mankind, is a thousand times more beneficent than even infinite Light, when confined to the realm of abstract theories. In our days the latter Light has only succeeded in raising the pride of Christian nations to its acme, in developing their self-adulation, and fostering hard-heartedness under the name of all-binding law. The "personality" of both nation and individual has thrown deep roots into the soil of selfish motives; and of all the flowers of modern culture those that blossom the most luxuriously are the flowers of polite Falsehood, Vanity, and Self-exaltation.

Few are those who would confess or even deign to see, that beneath the brilliant surface of our civilization and culture lurks, refusing to be dislodged, all the inner filth of the evils created by Ahriman; and indeed, the truest symbol, the very picture of that civilization is the last creation of the Arch-fiend--the beautiful Peacock. Truly saith Theosophy unto you--it is *the Devil's Own*.

Lucifer, March, 1891

¹ Though this deity is the "First-born," yet metaphysically and logically Ormuzd comes in order as a fourth emanation (compare with *Parabrahm-Mulaprakriti* and the three *Logoi*, in the *Secret Doctrine*). He is the Deity of the manifested plane. In the esoteric interpretation of the Avestian sacred allegories, AHURA or ASURA is a generic name for the *sevenfold* Deity, the Ruler of the Seven Worlds; and *Hvaniratha* (our earth) is the fourth, in plane and number. We have to distinguish between such names as *Ahura Mazdâo*, *Varana*, the "Supreme" deity and the synthesis of the *Ameshâspends*, etc. The real order would be: the Supreme or the One Light, called the Eternal; then

Zeruana Akarana (compare Vishnu in his abstract sense as the Boundless pervading All and *Kâla*, Time), the *Fravashi* or the *Ferouer* of Ormuzd (that eternal Double or Image which precedes and survives every god, man and animal), and finally *Ahura Mazda* Himself.

² *Zeruana Akarana* means, at the same time, Infinite Light, Boundless Time, Infinite Space and Fate (*Karma*). See *Vendidad*, Farg. xix. 9.

³ The Parsis, the last relic of the ancient Magi, or Fire-worshippers of the noble Zoroastrian system, do not degrade their Deity by making him the creator of the evil spirits as well as of the pure angels. They do not believe in Satan or the Devil, and therefore, their religious system cannot in truth be termed *dualistic*. A good proof of this was afforded about half a century ago, at Bombay, when the Rev. Dr. Wilson, the Orientalist, debated the subject with the Parsi high-priests, the *Dasturs*. The latter very philosophically denied his imputation, and demonstrated to him that far from accepting the texts of their Sacred Books literally, they regarded them as allegorical as far as Ahriman was concerned. For them he is a symbolical representation of the disturbing elements in Kosmos and of the evil passions and animal instincts in man (*Vendidad*).

⁴ *Vendidad*, trans. by J. Darmsteter, "*Introduction*" p. lvi.

⁵ Ahura Mazda stands here no longer as the supreme One God of eternal *Good* and *Light* but as its own Ray, the divine EGO which informs man--under whatever name.

⁶ The gods of light, the "immortal seven," of whom Ahura Mazda is the seventh. They are deified abstractions.

⁷ Or *devils*.

⁸ In verse 16th of *Yast XIX*, we read: "I invoke the glory of the Ameshâspends, who all seven. have one and the same thinking, one and the same speaking, one and the same doing, one and the same lord, Ahura Mazda." As an occult teaching says: During each of the seven periods (Races) the chief ruling *Light* is given a new name; *i.e.*, one of the seven *hidden* names, the initials of which compose the *mystery name* of the Septenary Host, viewed as one.

⁹ *Nork* ii. 176. Compare *Rev.* xix., 11-14, "I saw heaven opened, and behold, a *white horse*, and he that sat upon him . . . and the armies followed him *upon white horses*."

¹⁰ *Yast XIX.* 89 et *seq.*

¹¹ The Yezidis, or "Devil Worshippers," some of whom inhabit the plains of ancient Babylonia, to this day worship Melek Taus, the peacock, as the messenger of Satan and the mediator between the Arch-fiend and men.