

# Ardaa-Veeraaf Naameh : By Behzaad

Ardaa - Veeraaf Naameh is a book written in the Pahlavi language belonging to that class of Pahlavi literature which is entirely of a religious character. It was composed at the early period of the newly-founded Saasaanian rule over Iran. It contains an account of the mysterious experiences which a Saint-Dastoor, Ardaa Veeraaf by name, had in the regions above and beyond the sky, viz., the regions of Bahesta (Heaven) and Dozakh (Hell).

The glorious Saasaanian Empire had just been founded. The founder was Shah Ardasheer-i Paapakaan. He was a righteous ruler and a devout Mazdayasni-Zarathoshti. His wish, will and pleasure lay in reviving the lost glory of the Mazdayasni-Zarathoshti Deen. He wanted his people who by then discarded the Mazdayasni Articles of faith to come back into the Deen preached by Asho Zarathushtra.

One day, Shah Ardasheer sent for the holy Dastoors residing in his Kingdom to his court. Some forty thousand Dastoors honoured the royal proclamation to grace the occasion. They were all well-versed in the Mazdayasni-Zaratho-

shti lore. They were well known for their piety too.

The Shah addressed them. He said, 'O Asho Dastoors ! I hold you all in great esteem. Hark to what I say. Five centuries ago, the Grecian invaders under the leadership of Alexander invaded our country and destroyed all the valuable religious books. Some of them were very valuable. This is a historical fact and no one can deny it. I, therefore, desire to revive the lost Mazdayasni glory. I appeal to you all for aid. Choose amongst you the most pious Dastoors and submit their names to me as soon as possible.

The Dastoors left the court promising the Shah to return back soon. They retired into a secluded place and discussed the subject carefully. They prepared a list of four thousand Dastoors and submitted to the Shah. The Shah read the names carefully but he was not ready to meet it with his approval. It seemed to him to be a long list. He ordered that a new list be made which contained the names of those who were both learned and pious.

Once again, the Dast oors sat

down to prepare a new list. After going through various recommendations and propositions, they gave the Shah a list of four hundred Dastoors, well-known for their piety. Again Shah Ardasheer did not hesitate for a moment to show his displeasure. He re-ordered for a fresh list. This time they selected forty Dastoors.

The founder of the Saasaanian Empire kept on rejecting the list, till, the list of seven Dastoors was presented to him. Shah Ardasheer was overjoyed. He accepted the list of the names of the seven Dastoors. He sent a royal invitation to the seven Dastoors to grace his presence.

The seven Dastoors went to the court where they were welcomed with great dignity. Shah Ardasheer was present himself to welcome them. He said, "You seven are most welcome to my Court, O Asho Dastoors! I had and still have one and only one desire in life. It is to establish the lost glory of Iran once again. Its presence and hegemony should be felt in all the countries of the world. It is my desire to declare the lofty Mazdayasni, Zarathoshti Deen as the state Religion. This Religion as we practise at present is not in its pristine form and it is now up to

you that I and my people look forward for the right guidance. Choose any one from you to perform a miracle worthy of respect and remembrance so that those who are gone astray may find faith and hope in the Religion once again. I am certain my people shall find some means to retrace their steps on the right track again."

The seven Dastoors heard the message of the Shah. Then, six of them said, "Eternal Glory to you, O Shah Ardasheer! May your reign ever prosper." They pointed their finger to the seventh Dastoor who sat silently near them, and said, "This is the Dastoor you are looking for. This is the Dastoor who will fulfil your desire. He is Ardaa-Veeraaf. He will perform a miracle that shall lend great prestige to our ancient Deen. We assure you, O Shah, that in your kingdom a more holy person than this saint Dastoor is never to be found. From his tender age of seven, he has renounced all the earthly joys and passions and has remained fully engrossed in the Divine Ecstasy. He has within him all the intricate knowledge pertaining to our Deen. We assure you, Shah Ardasheer and all the courtiers and the people around here that this Asho Dastoor Ardaa-Veeraaf is capable of

projecting his urvan (soul) out of his physical framework and conduct it into the next world. There he shall gather all the facts and return back into his body on this earth."

The whole court was taken by surprise at these words. There was a sudden shocking silence. Every eye seemed rivetted at the Asho Dastoor. Every one looked at him with reverence. Slowly and gracefully, Dastoor Ardaa-Veeraaf rose from his seat and in a soft, sweet and gentle tone said, "O Shah Ardasheer! May you ever be a recipient of the Blessings of Asho Ahura Mazda. The Divinity of the Creator is outside the compass of the human mind. I am prepared to take upon this responsibility to project my Urvan out of me: and thus bring back the lost faith of the people in our 'Deen.'"

The joy of the Shah knew no bounds. He, along with his courtiers, led the procession of the Dastoor and the people to an Aatash-Behraam where Asho Dastoor Ardaa-Veeraaf was to perform the astral projection. Every one wished good to the Asho Dastoor and dispersed.

The news of the astral projection by Asho Dastoor Ardaa-Veeraaf spread with lightning speed in the capital and the suburbs surrounding it. The Urvan of the

Dastoor was to undergo the process of astral projection and would remain out of his physical body for seven days and seven nights. The wise whispered about the success, the courtiers and noble men dug their nose into it and the common men were wowed about it. They all guessed and guessed on the outcome.

The news reached further. Dastoor Ardaa Veeraaf had seven sisters. They were greatly perturbed. They rushed to the royal court. They all knelt before the founder of the Saasaanian Empire and poured forth their wail of woe. Their eyes were filled with tears which ran down their cheeks. The one who seemed the eldest begged, "O Shah! may you achieve glory and fame throughout the world. We are seven sisters of Ardaa-Veeraaf, we have no parents and he is the only one who looks after us. We indeed esteem his piety, but, Ahura Mazda forbid, if the miracle were to fail and our brother not to return back to earth, we will lose our bread-giver. We implore you, O Shah, to have pity on us. Give a second thought to this venture of yours and change your mind."

Hearing this, Shah Ardasheer-i-Paapakaaan consoled them. He said,

"Girls, do not have the slightest doubt about the piety of your brother. He is indeed a saintly person. He has led a thoroughly righteous life and he shall, therefore, be under the direct guidance of our Creator, Asho Ahuramazda and His Yazatas (angels). Cold shoulder all the fear you have within you girls, I appeal to you to shun all fear for the sake of the glory of the Mazdayasni-Zarathushti Deen. You should not have any doubts about your saintly brother when everyone, including myself, have full confidence in him. Your brother shall perform the astral projection as by now scheduled and he shall return safe back into his body. Have no doubt about it."

The stage for the miracle was set. Asho Dastoor Ardaa-Veeraaf, with his colleagues was very busy with the performances of the religio-liturgical Kriyaas (ceremonies). They were busy in making all the necessary preparations. At first, the Haomatoi kriyaa was performed and the Haoma juice was extracted. After the consecration of the Haoma juice it was kept in readiness to be drunk by Asho Dastoor Ardaa-Veeraaf.

The appointed hour approached. Dastoor Ardaa-Veeraaf, who

was engrossed in the chanting of the Avesta Maanthra, rose from his place and slowly walked towards a silver couch specially prepared for the occasion. He gently laid himself down on it. The other six Dastoors, chanting the sacred Maanthra were slowly walking towards the silver couch too. One who led, held the cup of the Haoma juice in his hand. Everyone who was present there watched the scene in fascination, and with bated breath.

The leading Dastoor handed the cup to Dastoor Ardaa-Veeraaf. He sipped the juice in three draughts. Some moments later, it became evident, that he was losing his physical consciousness very fast. At once, the six Dastoors cordoned off the silver couch. The Urvan of Dastoor Ardaa-Veeraaf had left the body. For seven days and seven nights, they chanted the Avesta Maanthraa for the safe return of their pious colleague.

The end of the seventh night was gradually approaching. The Shah, the courtiers, the noble men, the Dastoors and all others who had assembled became apprehensive and nervy. They were all expecting for the return of the Asho Dastoor with their heart in their mouth. Their thoughts centred round the

oft-repeated question : "Would Asho Dastoor Ardaa-Veeraaf who lay as still as a dead man for seven nights regain his physical consciousness ?"

The first bright rays of the rising sun lit the sky. It was dawn. The whole assembly waited anxiously for the revival. At last, there was a slight stirring motion—a sure indication of the Urvan of the Asho Dastoor entering the body. This was soon followed by the movements of the other limbs. Few moments later, Asho Ardaa-Veeraaf opened his eyes, rose and sat on the couch.

Shah Ardasheer was the first to greet him. He was followed by other dignitaries. A great feast was given Thereupon. Asho Dastoor-Ardaa-Veeraaf began his tale.

"The moment, O Shah Ardasheer, I completed drinking the Haoma juice, I experienced the rapturous and ecstatic process of astral projection working swiftly within me. My Urvan was gradually leaving my physical body. Soon, I found myself soaring up and I soared high up into the region beyond the earthly plane.

I soared up all alone and through regions blissful and paradisaical which my tongue fails to

describe. I did so for sometime when I caught sight of a Yazad (angel). He was sarosh Yazad. He beckoned me by certain gestures towards him. I obeyed and went up to him, I bowed most respectfully before him.

'O Asho Ardaa-Veeraaf !' he said gently 'I am happy to see you. But what can be the reason to desert your earthly abode before the span of your life is over.'

'O Asho Sarosh !' I replied 'Shah Ardasheer desires to revive the glory of the Mazdayasni-Zarathoshti Deen. He has sent me to experience the state of Behesht and Dozakh, so that his subjects may hear about it and return back to their Religion.'

"Asho Sarosh smiled. Then, he caught my hand and said, 'Ardaa-Veeraaf if your Manashni (Righteous thought) be pious, take a step upwards.' I did so. He said again, 'If your Gavashni (Righteous speech) be pious take a step upwards.' I did so again. Again, he said, 'If your Kuaashni (Righteous acts) be pious, take a step upwards.' I did so.

Soon we both were before the Chinvat Pool.

( To Be Continued )

# Ardaa-Veeraaf Naameh (2)

By BEHZAAD

'Sarosh Yazad commanded me to take a close and searching look below the Chinvat Pool. I saw a soul rising up speedily towards the Bridge. It had just departed from his earthly dwelling. He stopped at the Bridge, then looked at us and spoke softly, "Ah! What a sight! My Chinvat Pool standeth broadened before me. I commiteth no wrong on earth. My thoughts, words and deeds were righteous. Throughout my life on earth I kept myself on the path of Righteousness and away from the path of Evil Joy is unto me."

'Just then a sweet-scented gentle breeze from the southern direction blew past us. Attracted by such a sweet scent, I looked all around me. Suddenly, a young girl of exceptional beauty, brilliance and grace made herself visible and stood before the departed soul. She too came from the southern direction.'

'She took up her position by the side of the soul and taking his hand in hers, she smiled gaily. The soul stared at her in utter confusion. He said, "Who art thou, fair damsel. Whence forth dost thou come. Such a beauty and such a grace was never to be seen on earth." The girl stood silent for a moment. Then, with face beaming with joy, replied, "I am thy Kerdaar. I am what thou hath made me. Thy righteous thoughts, thy righteous words and thy righteous deeds hath given me this indescribable grace and beauty. Thank thy stars that on earth thou hath chosen to trail the Deen-i Mazdayasni-Zarathoshti." Hearing this, the soul was overjoyed. He and his kerdaar soared high up hand in hand and were soon out of sight.

'From there, O noble Shah, I and Sarosh Yazad reached another place near Chinvat Pool. This side — the north — was completely dark I heard a frightening howling — something

similar to the barks of a wild dog. We stepped nearer to the place. There was a big dog of fierce looks and long sharp pointed teeth. He was securely bound with a thick chain that shone like gold. His barkings were so terrible that it was more than enough to stop the beatings of the heart of the strongest man.

'Said Asho Sarosh Yazad unto me, "O Veeraaf! Thou shouldst not fear this dog for the Divine Grace of Asho Ahura Mazda is over thee. We Yazads — myself, Daham, Aashtaad, Raam, Rashnu, Din and Aadar — are thy guides." No sooner did this last phrase was completed than all the above-mentioned Yazads manifested them selves around me. But my thoughts were all absorbed in that terrifying dog. Thereupon I asked Sarosh Yazad. "Asho Sarosh! I prithee thee to tell me who this dog is. Why is he here so securely tethered in the dark region?"

'Sarosh Yazad replied. "This dog is known as Zaryung Gosh. His horrible barkings are enough to make even the Ahiriman of Evil ways shudder cold with fright. Thou shouldst not fear, for I assure thee that he is harmless to pious men. His function is to stop the souls" — who might have harrassed or inflicted injury to the dogs on earth — from progressing any further. So, when thou return'st back to earth remember to convey to thy country folks this message of mine not to harras or harm dogs needlessly." So saying, Asho Sarosh caught hold of my hand again and led me to the other side of this region.

'There, believe me O shah, I saw a sparkling object. It was a bejewelled throne of Meher Yazad — At that moment, Meher Yazad was seated on the throne. Beside him stood Asho Rashnu Yazad with a pair of glittering scales

in his right hand. Around these two Asho Yazads there were other pious souls numbering five thousands. All were busy and active helping Asho Meher and Rashnu in their work.

I gazed at the two Yazads with wonder. Unexpectedly, Asho Meher Yazad asked me. "Holy Ardaa-Veeraaf! Thy span of life on earth hast not yet come to an end. How is it that thou hast left the earth? What can be the purpose of thy coming here?" I replied. "My obeisance unto thee, O Meher Yazad! By the Divine Grace of Asho Ahura Mazda, I am able to compass these regions of Heaven and hell. My visit hath a purpose. My Shah-i-Iran Ardasheer-i Paapakaan desireth to re-establish the Glory of the Mazdayasni — Zarathoshti Din. He chose me in consultations with the other Dastoor to traverse the regions of Heaven and Hell. When I return back to earth I shall relate to the people my experiences and thereby instil in their minds and hearts the urge to follow the path of Righteousness. I rest assured, Asho Meher, that they will certainly leave their present path of irreligiosity and wickedness."

Some moments flew past. All of a sudden my sight fell on the same soul which I had seen at the Chinvat Pool some time ago. There were many other souls, some were of my kith and kin, too. The place was brilliantly lit with silvery white shine. The soul whom I saw at the Pool approached me and stood smilingly before me. "Hast thou, too, shed thy mortal form which aboundeth in pain and sorrow," he said. "Verily, this region is a place of perpetual Joy. It's Bliss and Bliss every where."

Before I could make some gestures or speak something, an Angel of brilliant Glory intervened. I was told that he was Bahman Ameshaaspand. He took my hand and in a gentle but firm tone bade me to follow him. He said, "Holy Veeraaf! Follow me to the region yonder." I was highly enthralled by this higher dignitary, so I immediately obeyed. We soared

up swiftly and soon arrived at a brilliantly lit region.

"This region was full of glittering radiance such a radiance, O Shah, I had never seen any where and at any time on earth. Amshaaspand Behman looked at me for a moment, then said, "This is the throne known as Arsh-Kursi." I gazed and gazed in sheer wonder. I stood blank and went on blinking at it dumb-foundedly. Just then, Asho Sarosh leaned a little on my shoulder and said, "Veeraaf, bow to this Arsh-kursi, the throne of Asho Ahura Mazda." I did as I was told with great reverence, murmuring, "May'st thou be rejoiced, O Asho Ahura Mazda!"

At this moment I turned around to look at Behman Ameshaaspand; but, the Holy Archangel was nowhere to be seen. Sarosh Yazad brought me back to the Chinvat Pool again. On one side of this Bridge, I saw a multitude of souls. The region was devoid of any marked brilliance. I asked, "O Sarosh Yazad! whose souls art these? What region is this?" Asho Sarosh spake unto me. "This region is the Region of Hameshtagaan (Purgatory). These souls that thou seest belong to the group who during their life-time hath committed both the good and bad deeds in exactly equal proportions. Here, they doth experience neither joy nor sorrow. They lead a quiet type of life. Hath they done some more good, Veeraaf, than their bad deeds they wouldst have been in a little better region than they art at present."

We left the region and Asho Sarosh led me into another one I saw a large crowd of souls who shone like the twinkling stars. They had all assembled in a disciplined manner there. I asked Asho Sarosh whose those souls were and how was the region called. Sarosh Yazad informed me that the region was called "Satarpaayaa Behesht." He added further that the souls I saw were of the people who were very rich on earth. Unfortunately, their good and charitable acts in comparison to what more they

could have done were quite nominal as well as negligible. They would have received a better region had they not been negligent in their duty towards their fellowmen due to their sloth. It was for this reason that they were there. Asho Sarosh has commanded me to bring this to the notice of all people.

'O Shah! After the visit to this region, I along with Asho Sarosh Yazad soared high upwards. Just then I came across quite a large group of souls in another plane. Each of the souls was beaming with joy and its countenance resembled the bright face of the Full Moon. All of them were busy in their work. On my inquiry, Sarosh Yazad gave an explanation regarding the joyous state of these souls. He said, "this is the Region of Third Heaven, O Veeraaf! It is called Maah Paayaa Behesht. All these souls have a radiant and blithesome expression on their face because they had practised Ashoi (Righteousness) throughout their life. Unfortunately, their only fault was that each one of them hath committed certain errors — of course, they were unaware of their mistakes. There were some inaccuracies in the practice of Ashoi. These inaccuracies called a halt from soaring further higher into still better regions. They seem busy because all these souls are deeply engrossed in such thoughts that had they been more cautious in their practice of Ashoi they would be in a better region.

'The Fourth Heaven known as the "Khorshad Paayaa Behesht. This region was more radiant than the three Beheshts visited by me. All the souls who assembled there were beautifully clad more prettily than all the souls of the other regions we already traversed. Each of them was seated on a throne of gold studded with precious stones. I asked Asho Sarosh, in my usual note of interrogation thus, "Asho Yazad! I prithee thee, who art these souls? Why art they beaming with so super-radiant lustre in equally lustrous region as this?" Asho Sarosh responded, "Ardaa Veeraaf! This region

is the "Khorshad Paayaa Behesht". These souls here had led their life virtuously on earth. Fortunately, they committed no wrong whatsoever. Their thoughts, their speech and their deeds were not only righteous and pure but all these three were in perfect harmony with Nature. They had performed and observed all the necessary religious Kriyaa and Tareekat till the last breath of their life. Furthermore, they gave away all they had to the needy and deserving persons on earth. This realm therefore comes to them as a reward they richly deserve from Asho Ahura Mazda.

'From there Asho Sarosh bade me follow to a region I fail to describe. I stood bewildered as I gazed and gasped at the awesome radiance. O Shah! I had never seen such a fabulous and fantastic place anywhere on earth. In fact, I was struck both dumb and mute. Suddenly, the low, soft voice of the Holy Angel broke the stillness around. He said, "Quick, O Ardaa! Join thy palms in supplication and raise them in honour of our Creator, Ahura Mazda. Be alert; for this is the Divine Abode of Ahura Mazda. Stoop down, quick, in obeisance." I stooped, as was required of me.

'For some moments, I gazed at the place, I stood still speechless as if some one had taken my tongue away. But, this state, fortunately and mysteriously did not last too long. A delightful, pleasing voice fell upon my ears. It seemed to me that I was under the influence of Divine Elixir. It was the voice of our Almighty creator, Ahura Mazda. Then, Asho Ahura Mazda thus spoke unto Sarosh Yazad, "O Sarosh! show unto Veeraaf all the regions of the Behesht and and Doozakh and tell him about the reward and punishment of the deeds committed on earth by mankind." These words brought me back into my usual self once again. I regained my consciousness. I was then asked to partake of some spiritual food by Asho Sarosh which I did after reciting the Baaj prayers.

(To be continued)



## ARDAAVEERAAF NAAMEH (3): BY BEHZAAD

'Once again, we soared high, high up to the regions new and amazing. At a certain region, Asho Sarosh stopped me from moving further. It was the region named Asar-i Roshni — the sixth Heaven of the Celestial Realm. Here, Ardibehesht Ameshaaspad joined us. We three entered a region full of splendour. The souls who occupied this region were clad from top to bottom in gold and silver cloaks and jackets. Each had on his head a crown full of precious jewels. O shah Ardasheer! Words fail me to describe the joy I felt within to thee. I was highly delighted to see them in such attire. I asked, out of curiosity, to my two angelic companions, "Who art these souls? Why art they here?" "These souls deserveth this splendour, Veeraaf, for they art those who had given all their belongings in aiding the poor and needy. They aided the hapless innocent orphans and treated them with love and compassion. They reared them on the path of piety and these once helpless art now helping others on earth in the spiritual progress. These souls aided also the unfortunate widows-young and old-without ever allowing a lusty thought to creep into their mind. All these good deeds they performed brought this majestic state to them. All they did O veeraaf, they did it for the sake of spreading righteousness nay never for any earthly gain, fame and honour."

"Wouldst not it be a good place for me?" thought I deepleg and at length. Asho Sarosh read my thoughts and smiled a little.

Then we visited some more regions. In one of them, I saw many souls who had

a beaming face full of radiance. I asked as usual and Asho Sarosh replied, "These are good souls. They had led a righteous life. They occupy this region after their mortal frame-work are shed on earth. They had never done anything so as to pollute Fire and Water. They threw no filthy things in them. They practised throughout their earthly existence all the religious rules and regulations as laid down by our Asho Spitama Zarathushtra in his Mazdayasni-Zarathushti Deen. They recited the Maantras in each of the five cseh of the day as enjoined in the Deen. Furthermore, they had their five physical Geh of the day as enjoined in the Deen. thought, no wrong word and no wrong deed did they perform as long as they lived on earth. They kept themselves completely aloof from evil. It is, therefore, called the region of good soul's Heaven.

The next region we visited is called the Just King's Heaven. It is the region where all those kings who were holy, good and just to their people on earth live after they depart from the earth. Asho Sarosh said to me that all these good kinds were not only just and merciful but during the entire rule they thought of nothing but for the physical prosperity and spiritual progress of their people. They were absolutely impartial in their regal duties. They were the kinds on earth who made no distinction between the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the noble and the common and the relatives or friends and the strangers. They respected and loved Asho Ahura Mazda as their overlord and protected the Mazdayasni-Zarathashti faith. They are now in this region enjoy-

ing the majestic glorey — the fruit of their good deeds:

We traversed further right across a wide area for some time. Suddenly, Asho Sarosh caught hold of my hand and stopped me proceeding any further. This region was set aside for the pious Dastoors and Mobeds. The souls here moved about in saintly manner. Many angelic beings were also moving along with them. I asked Yazad Sarosh, O "Asho Sarosh! whose art these souls? Why art they so sacrosanct and haloed in their appearance." Asho Sarosh spake thus unto me, O "Arda! These haloed souls art of the pious Dastoors and Mobeds. When they were on earth, they led a very pious life they performed all the religious kriyaa with accuracy. They were all devoted to their Almighty Creator, Ahura Mazda and thought of with great reverence. At no time and at no where did they commit any wrong. Their entire life was faultless. They observed all the religious codes and canons even at the time of trials and tribulations that swept through their life. They practised them with faith and fervour. Remember thou, Veeraaf! I am the Guardian Angel over all righteous men on earth. I guard these Dastoors and Mobeds always down on earth as well as here up. But I do not guard a wicked man nor do I protect an unrighteous Dastoor. When thou goest back on earth, pious Veeraaf, convey this message of mine to the people and specially the Dastoors. Tell them that those who deceive the faithfuls in the name of religion turn religion into a devil's workshop." So saying, he led me further high up.

There is a special region for the virtuous women too. They deserved the place because they had been righteous all

their life. Their thoughts, their speech and their deeds were pure. They were all holy and chaste as long as the span of their life allowed them to dwell, on earth. They respected and obeyed implicitly their parents during their unmarried period of life. They remained faithful to their husband the whole married life. They practised all the Tarikat and observed all the codes and canons as prescribed in the Mazdayasni-Zarathoshti Deen. When they departed from the corporeal world they were all judged as virtuous souls and blessed by Ahura Mazda. They are perfectly fit to dwell here.

From there, we again soared up some distance further. We approached to another region wherein, I perceived some souls, robust and sinewy in body. Their warrior-like stateus was more than enough to indicate that they all belonged to a particular band of human beings when they dwelt on earth. All around them were scattered innumerable weapons, such as swords, spears, armours, lances, clubs, bows and arrows, war-hammers, battle-axe, daggers, sabres, cannons, powder and shot and many other things. I could make out that they were of the Ratheshtaar class. Still I became curious to know about them. on my inquiry, Asho Sarosh Yazad said, "Veeraaf! These souls are of the warriors. They were well-known for their deeds of Right heroism and gallantry. Although they killed many, yet they did so for the right cause. They are therefore not murderers. But, O Veeraaf, they do not deserve this place because of their heroism. They killed those who were on the evil side or when their fatherland was attacked by some foreign invaders. They did not harm the infirms, helpless women and children. On the contraray if they sur-

rendered they protected them and looked after their welfare. Asho Ahura Mazda was pleased with them and as a reward for their good gave them this region."

Our visit to the next region was rather amazing; for, it was very peculiar and distinct from the regions we already traversed. The region was full of orchards and gardens. The sweet scent of the colourful fruits and flowers was very exotic. Moreover, a strange melodious music reverberated unceasingly. On my asking, Asho Sarosh replied that this region was reserved for those souls who had exterminated harmful reptiles and insects, such as poisonous snakes, scorpions, disease-spreading insects, etc. these poisonous creatures caused death and disease — the function of the Ahiriman and his cult. They do not only cause untimely death, but, by doing so, they prevent mankind from attaining their salvation."

The next two regions we visited were the dwelling place of the righteous farmers and the righteous shepherds respectively. The farmers deserved the reward because they had led a righteous life along with their duties as farmers, they were honest in their dealings and were generous towards the poor and the needy they toiled hard to grow more crop not for their selfish gain, but to supply enough food for the sustenance of humanity. Here, O. Shah, I met Asho Aspandarmard Ameshaspand who blessed me.

The next one was for the good shepherds. They deserved this region as their reward for being gentle and kind to their domestic animals. They looked after their animals not only when they were useful but also when they grew old and were rendered incapable of doing work any more.

## ARDAAVEERAAF NAAMEH (6); BY BEHZAAD

O Shah Ardasheer. I and Sarosh regard were sqaring higher up on our journey to the Seventh Heaven. Asho Sarosh said, "Rise, rise O Veeraaf. Raise thy holy thoughts towards Asho Ahura Mazda. Take three steps, quick. I obeyed the command and stepped forward thrice.

We came to a region, which according to my opinion was the best of all the regions I had so far come across. The entire atmosphere was cool and full of exotic fragrance. It was like a vast garden full of exquisite flowers, golden trees and colourful birds. I paced some more steps further and saw a grand palace built of precious gems and stones. Inside the palace I saw seated on Vaxoore-Vaxooraan spitmaan Zarathushtra whose dazzling radiance lit the whole palace. By the side of him were seated his sons — Isatvaastar, Urvatatanar and Hvare chithra. There were many other great souls such as Gayo-mard and Jamsheed and Fredoon and so on.

I looked at them in reverence, bowed at them humbly and in this stooped position, uttered unknowingly, "O thou Sarosh Yazad! Bless me that I mayst live with these holy souls. I desire not to return back to earth. I prithee thee, O Blessed one, to get me permitted to live here". Thereupon, Asho Sarosh replied, "Veeraaf! Thy piety is indeed high. Asho Ahura Mazda, the All-knowing is aware of thy burning desire. Thou shall have a place here. But, O Veeraaf, thou so beloved of Ahura Mazda! Thou hast yet to complete the remaining span of life and thy mission. Thou hast to go back on earth and apprise the doubting Iranians and bring them back

on the path of the Mazdayasni-Zarathushti Deen".

No sooner did Asho Sarosh complete his statement, a Divine Voice was heard, "Sarosh! Now lead Ardaaveeraaf through the dreary regions of the Dozkh. Guard him well from the harm level. Let him see these regions so that when he goeth back to earth he may be able to tell the Shah-e-Iran and his people about the horrors and agonies of those regions too".

I was led by Asho Sarosh towards another region. On the way, he counselled me in the good way of life and cautioned me against the bad. He said, "Nowhere in the world, a person can acquire anything without perseverance and industry. Even a labourer has to toil physically and the officer mentally. Analogically, these regions are not offered without industry. The one who wins it as a reward has to work hard for it in his earthly life. Mind well, that the span of life on earth is brief. If a man hath passed fifty summers in prosperity and joy, he findeth himself being plunged headlong into the sea of sorrow and disease. He loses his temper and opening wide his mouth he waileth to the Creator, Asho Ahura, is unjust and cruel to him. He forgeteth that all these years he was happy because of His Blessings. He did not make good use of his happy days and therefore he is sorrowful.

So mind well, O Veeraaf, that the best thing on earth that shall last till the last breath of life is righteousness. Practise it with faith, enthuse the others to follow it. Store this in thy mind and be righteous throughout thy life. The physical body of

the earthly beings is merely dust and therefore it is mortal. The soul which is a luminous spirit is immortal. Care not for the body; care for the soul.

"There are many remedies on earth, in case the physical body is diseased; but there is not a single remedy on earth to cure a diseased soul. O holy Ardaa! When a person decideth to go on a journey, he make all the preparations necessary viz., clothes, food, water, money, etc.; but doth a man keep the preparation ready for his journey in the above regions after his departure from the earth. No one is sure of the moment of his death. So it is wise to do so and be prepared".

Asho Sarosh Yazad continued further, "If any friend were to remain faithful to thee then remember well, the one can be none other than Ahura Mazda. To befriend him and trust him is in thy interest and thy good. To acquire this most trustworthy friendship, thou shall have to tread the path of Ashoi (righteousness). Without the acquisition of Ashoi friendship with him is not nay, never possible. So be determined to follow with blind faith the path of Ashoi no matter whatever the cost may be whatever hardships thou hast to encounter. Store in thy memory with utmost care this advice of mine, physical body is not significant, the soul is. If thou takest thy body to be a horse, thy soul shall be the rider. Think, Veeraaf, what wouldst be the result if the horse goeth vile and rider remaineth feeble? See that thy soul hath perfect control on the body, thy physical passions fully quelled and subjugated. So, when thou goest back to earth, tell thy brethren that Asho Ahura Mazda hast sent these commandments: (1) Thou shouldst not commit any sin; Thou shouldst submit to His Will. O Veeraaf! Alienate all

earthly joys, abjure senseless pride and keep aloof from all lusty passions. Enjoy not these for they shall defile thy soul.

"Remember that on earth nothing is thine for ever; not even thy physical body, riches, properties and home. What is eternally thine are these two: (1) Thy virtue and reward. (2) Thy Sin and punishment. Thou and only thou art responsible for any one of these. If thou hast done good, Heavens lies in wait for thee; if thou sinnest Hell shall be thy punishment.

"After death all shall be equal, no matter he be a beggar or an emperor. Death shall level them to the same status. If thou hast health and if thou hast power in thy arms and if thou hast properties and land and wealth and riches yet pride not since, I assure thee, it is likely that all these may vanish like a drop of dew before the rising sun and plunge thee in grief.

"O Veeraaf! Teach thy brethren that he who is born is destined to die. Take a flower for instance, it bloometh and blossometh. But to what result? Obviously, to wither away. This is the same in the case of all living beings. No one liveth on earth for ever. The physical framework is a mortal framework. Practise humility and temperance for thy own good. Too much food and drink shall cause disease. Too much of anger, avarice, envy and greed shall bring thy downfall. Control thy passions for if thou givest any liberty, they shall soon wrench thy spiritual Bliss. Those sons who committeth robbery and murder and those daughters who committeth adultery bring dreary darkness in the lives of their parents.

"So take this message to thy fellow-men that vice of any sort and any degree shall

rob them of their peaceful slumber. Look at the fate of Shah Kai-kaa-oos. He was filled with foolish pride because of his mighty power and wanted to rule over the sky too. He who is not content is not blessed by Asho Ahura Mazda. Tell all these to thy fellow-men. Tell them to be truthful to all and to worship Ahura Mazda”.

So saying Asho Sarosh led me to a region where the souls had delightful mirth on their countenance. I saw among them few Yazads too. Asho Sarosh explained that they had built many irrigational works and canals and dug many wells for the good of hunamity. That is why Amardaad Ameshaaspad along with Aavaan and Aadar Yazat were in the company of these souls.

The next region was for the good social workers and philanthropists. On earth, they had worked diligently for the good of the poor people, hapless orphans and helpless widows.

From this region, I was led no further. Asho Sarosh spake unto me, “Veeraaf! Thou hast seen all the good regions” I bowed and thanked a lot. I said, O Asho Sarosh! Be thou pleased. I thank thee and Asho Ahura Mazda a myriad times. I promise thee that I shall lead the rest of my life on earth in piety”.

O Shah Ardasheer! On the completion of my heavenly journey, Asho Sarosh and I embarked upon the regions of dreary darkness and filth. Aadar Yazad accompanied us too. They spake unto me, thus, “O Ardaa-Veeraaf, now thou shalt see the fate of all those sinful souls who have committed sins. Each of the Yazads caught each of my hand and along with them I swooped down very swiftly, and we three of us — stopped near a region which seemed to me as a sort of a dungeon. It was about

nine “Nezaa” in height. The foul and fetid smell almost suffocated me. A river flowed by this dungeon. The souls were running here and there in haste and confusion. They were screaming and uttering shrill shrieks which made my hair stand on their roots. They were saying, “O Daadgar Daadaar, be merciful. Please pardon our sins.” A cyclonic storm was blowing fiercely and all their wailings were drowned in it. I could not bear this horrible sight, So I asked my Guardian Angels, “O Yazads! I pray thee to tell me who art these souls and what sins hath they committed?”

To this Asho Sarosh responded coolly, “Know, O Veeraaf! Thou seest this turbid and foul-smelling river. Well, it is formed out of the tears shed by the family members, relatives and friends. They were shed over the death of their dear ones. To weep a lot over the dead is a grave sin and this is their punishment. Birth and death are natural phenomena. Mind well, that the right thing to do on such occasion is to resign to the Will of Asho Ahura Mazda and keep on reciting the sacred Maantra.’

Once again my Guardian Yazads brought me back to the Chinvat Fool. At the side of its base I saw a horrifying and fearsome cell. In it sat a soul in intense sorrow. I asked the Angels, “Whose soul is it?” Asho Sarosh replied, O holy Ardaa! This is the soul of a sinner who hath just departed from the earth three days back. He hath borne such severe pain that none can describe. The pain is so great that the sum total of all his pains felt on earth is negligible when compared to it. He is thinking that he is confused. He doth not know where to go and who shall be his guide.”

Just then a foul-smelling wind blew past us. It came from the direction which

I had not traversed yet. All of a sudden, an ugly, old woman came rushing towards that soul. She was terrible to look at. She had dark and very long pointed nails on her fingers and toes. Her hair were long and white. Her eyes were red and wide-opened and looked fearful on her coal-black face. Her long, round teeth were jutting out in a manner that made her look fearful. O What a terrifying creature. I thought unto myself. Any one who may happen to see her shall be filled with the feelings of hatredness for her.

The sinful soul was, at first, horror-struck. He was about to take to his heels when that ugly hag thundered, "Mind thou, else I shall pursue thee." The soul trembled and cried, "who art thou, O frightfully ugly one? Never in my earthly life I came across thee." To this the ugly old vicious woman replied, "I am thy Kerdaar, O wicked man! Thou givest me this form and shape. Only if thou were to be good and holy I wouldst have been so beautiful. But, do not forget thy life of sin. Thou didst not lead a righteous life on earth. Thou didst not chant the holy Maanthra. Thy life was an exact replica of the devil's way. Thou didst not look after thy kith and kin and the poor. Moreover, didst not thou boast arrogantly that no one keepeth the account of thy black deeds and that no one shall judge thee after death? That was thy ignorance. Hast thou the wealth thou hath when thou were on earth? Nothing. That hast all passed to others and no one remembereth thee. Now thou hast nothing but empty hands."

Saying thus the ugly kerdaar gripped the sinful soul by his neck and dragged him to a dreary region below the chinvat pool. The soul struggled hard, wept a lot and begged her to leave him but it

all fell on her deaf ears. Soon we saw the ugly kerdaar and the sinful soul disappear from our sight.

I became restless and wished not to see any region further. But Sarosh and Aadar Yazads led me to a place which was dark, foul-smelling, and dreary. Verily, O shah Ardasheer, the place was too horrible. It was so dark that if there was none to lead by hand, no one wouldst be able to take even a step forward.

The smell was very suffocating. One peculiarity of this region was that there were many souls in the region and each one thought that he was all alone. They all were wailing aloud saying, "Oh. how unfortunate am I! I am in this dark and dreary dungeon all alone." These souls were all covered up with frightfully black worms biting them. There were fierce Scorpions and serpents who were stinging them.'

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'I asked my Guardian Angels the reason of their condition. Replied Asho Sarosh thus, "O Veeraaf! Let this be made known to thee, so that thou may inform the human beings on earth. Each soul hath committeth sinful and unnatural deeds. Such a deed is an 'Azeem-Gunaah' and he deserveth such pain:"

'Saying this, Asho Sarosh along with Aadar Yazad brought me to a palce where I saw a female soul surrounded by many satans. They were flogging her mercilessly. Their lashes could be heard at far distances. One of the Satan was

forcing her to drink from a cup containing a fluid of foul-smelling blood, pus and decayed tissues. The soul was wailing aloud and struggling to be free. But all in vain. She could not escape from their clutches. She said, "How can I drink this dirty fluid."

'I asked Sarosh Yazad and Aadar Yazad, "what was her sin that she is forced to drink such dirt?" "This soul," replied Asho Sarosh, "had not observed the canons laid down in the religion during her menstrual period. She hath polluted the Good Creation by her free touch. Hence, she hath to drink this dirty fluid which contains her menses too."



## ARDAA-E-VEERAAF NAAMEH (5) : BEHZAAD

Further on, we came across a soul being hung by one of his leg from a very tall tree. Around him were the ugly, wretched demons. Who were skinning him off the way we peel potatoes. The soul lamented aloud praying for mercy. It screamed in agony, "O ye demons! Harass me not. O yazdaan, pardon me my sins. Do, oh do show mercy on me."

I inquired about this mode of punishment. Asho Sarosh replied. "O Veeraaf! This soul had inflicted pain on the pious people and had also murdered some of them." Truly, O Shah, I discovered that Ahura Mazda is just and exact in his Judgement.

We stepped further down. There I saw a soul lying on his back while the wicked devils were upon him. They were compelling it to open its mouth and eat some foul-smelling dirt which lay piled up there. The soul struggled hard hoping to get free from their clutches. It screamed and begged for mercy. The heartless devils paid no heed to them. They were intent to make it eat. This soul was punished because he had led an irreligious and unrighteous life on earth.

O Shah! I spied another unfortunate soul at another place. It was wailing aloud. "O, give me some food to eat and water to drink. I am dying of hunger and thirst. Pray, some one give me a piece of loaf and a draught of water." Thus it went on biting and tearing its own flesh. Asho Sarosh explained, "This soul was ungrateful to every one. When on earth it never thanked Asho Ahura Mazda for all the things that He gave from His Bounty. Whatever it received it spent it for its selfish gains only. It gave nothing to the poor and the needy. Holy Khordaad Ame-

shaaspad and Holy Amardaad Ameshaaspad who preside over the food and drink were very disappointed at such a behaviour. So this soul was suffering this punishment."

I went further down and came before another soul. It was of a female. She was hung on a tree by her breasts. She was wailing in agony. Moreover, her body was bitten by the innumerable scorpions and serpents around her. What a horrible sight it was, O Shah! Asho Sarosh said unto me. "This woman in her life-time had been unfaithful to her husband and had committed adultery more than once. For this reason she bears this painful punishment."

From here, I shifted to another place of this Infernal Region. I saw a large crowd of souls wraping at each other in sorrow. Scorpions and serpents were stinging them. I asked, "O Asho Sarosh Yazad! Who are these souls and why are they here?" Asho Sarosh explained, "O Ardaa! These souls you see are of those beings who did not lead their life as indicated in the Mazdayasni Zarathushtri Deen. It is compulsory that a Mazdayasni Zarathushtri should wear Sudreh-Kushti throughout his life. He should not move about bare-headed and bare-footed. These souls did not pay heed to this. They moved about, ate, and drank without the Sudreh and Kushti on. They also moved about bare-headed and bare-footed. They paid no heed to other religious injunctions too. O pious being, when you go back to the physical world tell the people not to be heedless towards any writ of the religion. If they do so they too shall meet this fate."

Some distance away, we saw a soul of a female. She was hung on a pole by her ankles of her feet. The torture she had to

undergo was very distressing. She was weeping. Her tongue got stuck-up deep, deep in her throat. She thought to herself that no one had undergone such a punishment. Yazad Sarosh said by way of explanation "Veeraaf, this woman is thus condemned because she did not respect her husband. She forgot that after Ahura Mazda and Zarathushtra, it was her duty to honour her husband. She did not care for him nor she heeded his words. It is important that this duty be performed by all married females; otherwise such punishment awaits them.

Then I came across a soul of a crafty business man, the evil spirits were forcing him to swallow some filth and feculence. He was so punished because he cheated his customers. His pair of scales were faulty and thus gained more profits than what was legitimately due to him.

I saw yet another soul who was tortured by about seventy cruel creatures of the Satanic tribe. They were mercilessly whipping it with a whip as thick as a full grown snake. It was groaning with pain and agony. "Whose soul is this?" Asked I to Sarosh Yazad. The Holy Yazad replied, "It is the soul of an oppressive ruler. It had inflicted pain on its subjects and felt happy in doing so. It had punished its people cruelly even for the trifle wrongs. It showed no compassion nor love for its people. The poor and the down-trodden got no justice. The people had to pay heavy taxes.

Moving further, I came upon a soul of a back-biter. Its tongue hung out of his mouth. It was dangling causing it great distress. The harmful centipedes and scorpions were giving it great pain. Asho Sarosh informed me that it was the only fate of a back-biter, slanderer and character-assassinationators.

I carried on. After some distance, a very dark and dreary region seemed to unfold in front of me. I heard some groaning sounds from it. I turned around in the direction of the sound. Believe me, O Shah, what a horrible sight I beheld! I spied a soul whose limbs were cut off by the devils. It was in great pain. It yelled and yelled aloud, "O Daadgar Daadaar Hormazd! Pardon me, O do pardon my sins." On my inquiry, Sarosh Yazad said, "Veeraaf! This soul had committed a very wrongful deed. It slaughtered aimlessly a large number of cattle not for food but merely to appease itself.

In another region, I came across another soul whose hands and legs were bound in thick iron chains. A thousand devils were torturing it. I asked the reason of this punishment to Asho Sarosh. The Asho Yazad explained, "This soul is of a merciless miser. It had a huge fortune yet it never gave away anything in charity. He went on hoarding. More it received, the more it hoarded it. It derived no satisfaction from what it had. In its life-time, it neither married nor kept friends. O Holy Veeraaf! The Mazdayasni-Zarathushtri Deen teaches that every person of whatever class he belongs should give away something in charity. Tell the people that on death they all have to leave their belongings on earth and come over here. Now, the inheritors uses it levishly and wrongfully.

In another region, I found a soul in a very peculiar condition. It was tormented all over the body except its one leg. It was free from any pain. I was much puzzled at such a sight. I asked Asho Sarosh to explain about this peculiar punishment. The Yazad replied, "This soul is of an idle, good for nothing man. It did no work. The whole life it did nothing. If some one asked it to do something, it fretted and

frowned furiously. But, Veeraaf, you see one of his leg free from pain. The reason is that once in its life it performed a good act. A hungry ox was straining his neck very hard to reach for the hay lying away before him. This soul most surprisingly took pity on the dumb creature and lazily pushed the hay by this leg near to him. See, Veeraaf, the Justice of the Divine Hormazd is always unfailingly just and accurate.

We left this region and entered another. There was a soul of a liar, a soul of a woman who performed abortion and a soul of a false witness. I saw the devils pulling their tongue out. The souls of the liar and the false witness were wriggling in pain. This was their punishment. But, the soul of the woman was in a very pitiable state. Its breasts were crushed beneath the weight of a huge boulder. She was wailing aloud but the punishment had to be carried out. Sarosh Yazad said, "This female soul led an immoral life. When she found herself pregnant she performed abortion to conceal the guilt. It is a sin to do so." On the soul of the false witness, I saw innumerable insects. They were eating it up. The soul was screaming. "Why for this punishment into me?" I asked the reason. "This soul in his life-time gave a false witness." Said Asho Sarosh. "This robbed off the legitimate right of the widows and orphans. No doubt this soul became very wealthy on earth and derived great joy out of it; but now it has to repent for the wrongs it committed. Let this be known to the people that it is wrong to give false evidences. No one should do so."

Further on, I came to a region where a soul was forced to swallow the decaying intestines and flesh. I asked Asho Sarosh about it. The Holy Yazad was ready in his response, "This soul practised unfair

means in its business dealings. It even cheated many of his customers who had given their belongings as mortgage to purchase goods on credit. Thus, it flaced many of its customer. Here, look at the punishment. It amassed wealth on earth and punishment here. It cared not for the life after death. Sow good or bad acts and reap accordingly is the Law of Mother Nature."

We stepped down further into the infernal region. I look around. There was a region. When I saw many souls, I wondered who they were. Their body were decaying. There was foul and fetid smell all around. They all look-ugly and terrible. The souls there, were of persons who tempted and tantalised good people of common means. They led them away from the path of Righteousness. Now the souls were begging for mercy. Let this be known that it is wrong to lure good and common folk away from the path of virtue.

Moving further, we arrived at yet another horrible region. The place was completely gloomy and foul smelling. I perceived a soul in a very piteous state. Some thousand dogs were tearing its flesh. It was writhing with pain. I asked Sarosh the reason of this punishment. He said, "This soul had harassed the dogs on earth without any reason. Such needless harassments do not go unpunished. These animals are not friendly and useful, but they are faithful, too."

I proceeded further. I came across a region full of huge lumps of ice. In it was a soul of a female. It was almost frozen. This was its punishment for being careless in taking care of Fire. It did not care to burn many dirty things in it. Thus, the Aatash got polluted. When you go back to earth, teach the people to take care of

the Aatash. Polluting Aatash is a very grave sin. Aatash keeps the atmosphere free from disease.

Later, I paced down further. My attention was drawn towards a curious sight. I saw a soul of an evil sorceress. It was chewing its own flesh. Said Sarosh, "This soul was a sorceress on earth. It had a good talent in Black art of the Satan. It used this art to harass good as well as the holy persons on earth. O holy Ardaa! See what can be the fruits of Black magic. It pleased the evil Anghra-Ma-inysh on earth and worked for him against Asho Ahura Mazda; here, it suffers pain and sorrow. Tell your listeners that it is not good to go against the One who created them."

There was a region wherein a poor, unfortunate soul dwelt. Some devils were thrusting dirt into its mouth. It was foul-smelling flesh covered with pus. The smell was so terrible that it was impossible to breathe. The poor soul shook all over in disgust. It lamented aloud and pleaded to them for mercy. But the devils turned a deaf ear to it. The reason for this punishment was that the soul did not take care to remain aloof from the "Nasu" (contagion), such as the clipped off nails, hair, dead corpses and carcasses, throwing dirt in water and fire and on land. "Keeping the surroundings unclean is not a simple sin but a grave one."

Some distance away from this region were many souls who were screaming and shrieking in utter despair. They possessed the habit of uncleanness when they were clean. They lived in filth and used dirty water to clean themselves. In other matters too they were not clean. Asfandaarmard Ame-shaaspand, Adar Yazad and Aavaan Yazad were very displeased at their behaviour.

We went down still further and came across a soul on whose shoulder a huge mountain was placed. The soul was being almost crushed by its weight. On my inquiry, Asho Sarosh said, "In its life-time, this soul had been a lecherous libertine. It had raped many females. It did not control its lustful passions. Those females who were raped either committed suicide or took to evil ways. Hence, this punishment." A little away, I saw another soul suffering the same punishment. It too had a mountain on its shoulders and was being crushed by the weight. This soul had inflicted great pain on the poor people and exploited them for its own good. It went on doing this wrong till it departed from earth. Poverty is better than riches acquired by foul means. Moreover, O Shah, a poor man lives in contentment: the rich become greedy and therefore do not. A contented poor man is loved by Asho Ahura Mazda. Again a contented poor man is humble and humility is the chosen virtue of yazdaan. On your going back to the earth tell every one not to exploit the poor and the down-trodden."

Then after a while I spied a soul of a person who had broken its given pledge. The demons were poking big pointed forks into its body. It seemed as if they were piercing the body through. The soul entreated for mercy. The demons pay no heed to it. This soul had not only broken the given promise but also committed a breach of trust on number of occasions. This is the punishment for those who are untrustworthy. No matter to whom is a pledge given be he friend or foe — always keep it. I saw still many souls suffering the same punishment. They were all pierced with sharp pointed forks. All of them were promise breakers who gave promises to people of other religions and failed to keep it.

From there we left the dark Infernal region. We came once again to a brilliantly lit region. We soared upwards and reached to the Heaven of Garothamaan. This place was so brilliantly lit that I desired to recite my prayers. But, I found I was tongue tied. The brilliance confused me and I was afraid. My Guardian Yazads comforted me. They said, "Fear not O holy Veeraaf! We see no reason for you to do so. Take courage. We can easily see from your trembling lips you are afraid of something." At that moment, a very brilliant flash of light blinded me for a while. A voice was heard which came from where I knew not I was soon lost in Divine ecstasy.

Said Ahura Mazda unto me thus: "It is time that you should go back to earth of My creation. Your kith and kin, O veeraaf, are worried about you. So are the Shah and the holy Dastours. For seven days and seven nights they are all praying for your safe return. They are all eager to know what you have seen in the regions above. So return back. Let all that you saw and heard be known to them. Preach them the Mazdayasni-Zarathushtri Deen and ask the people to follow it faithfully. He who does so shall receive the brilliantly lit regions of the Heaven. Who do not do so shall receive not these regions. For them the dark and dreary regions of Hell await." I heard this. I was overjoyed.

Again the Voice continued, "O Veeraaf! Impress upon the people that the Path of Ashoi (Righteousness) is the only path worthy enough to be followed. All other paths are of no use. Ask the rich and the abled to love the poor and take care of them. Warn them not to fall an easy prey to pride and prejudice during your fortunate periods. This is true that the good and the holy shall receive bliss here. Tell the people not to commit wrong deeds so that they have not to suffer sorrow and pain after death. If

you repent truly before death you shall be forgiven. Do not think that it is of no use to repent, I sent Asho zarathushtra as My Messenger, let the people follow My Message. The Message is full Righteousness. Let this Message be carved in the mind and the heart of the people. Live the life according to it. Mind well, My Law is "Good unto Good and Evil unto Evil".

I said unto myself, O Shah, "How glorified the Lord is. He spoke unto me. He chose me to propagate the Mazdayasni-Zarathushtra Deen to the people. I am truly happy and feel greatly elated. I am ready to work for the Deen and carry out the task entrusted to me.

I heard the same voice again. "Take care of these five foes: false hood, pride, wrath, envy and lust."

Just then, Asho Sarosh yazad caught my hand and said. "whatever you heard bear it in mind. Make it known to the people the words of Ahura Mazda. Give clear impressions of all that you have seen and heard. Remove the lurking doubts of the people."

I thanked the yazads for the Company and guidance around the regions. I promised them to be their humble servant.

My journey was coming at its end. So we flew to Mahaapaayaa and setaarpaayaa Beheshts. On the way, Asho Sarosh said, "When you go back to the earth, Veeraaf, speak of the Justice of Ahura Mazda. Ask them to follow Ashoi, tell them that the earth is a mortal existence."

I came across many regions — the same ones that I visited first. This time they spoke to me. They all said, "Tell our relations to follow Ashoi." I promised them to do so.

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We came back to the Chinvat Pool again. Here I saw some souls who could not proceed further. I ask them about their fate. Some said that they had no sons and cared not to adopt one.

And back I am, O Shah, on this very earth I was seven days and night ago. I have related to you all that I saw and heard.

Shah Ardasheer heard this with great patience. He ordered that the Ardaa-e-Veeraaf Nameh be written in gold and kept in the royal archives.