



DASĀTĪR

DASĀTĪR, the most important tract of the Āḍar Kayvānī sect, almost certainly the work of its founder, Āḍar Kayvān (see [ĀḌAR KAYVĀN](#)). The book, written in an invented language, is about supposedly ancient Iranian prophets and includes accounts of events that have no historical basis. It is divided into two parts, the first of which comprises sixteen chapters, or *nāmas* (books), each attributed to a so-called “ancient” prophet, from Mahābād and Jī-Afrām, who supposedly predated Kayūmart, to Sāsān V, whom the author designated as a contemporary of the Sasanian ruler Ƙosrow II Parvēz (r. 590-628). Also included in the list of prophets are certain mythical and historical figures, including Jamšīd, Ferēdūn, Kay Ƙosrow, Zoroaster, and [Alexander](#). The second part is a Persian “translation” of the first with commentary, containing many fabricated words; it is ascribed to the sixteenth prophet, Sāsān V.

The author of *Dabestān-e maḍāheb* (Malek, I, p. 10) called the language of the *nāmas* “heavenly language” (*āsmānī zabān*); it has no fundamental connection or resemblance to any living or dead language. The vocabulary is for the most part fabricated. Some words were, however, taken from Persian, Hindi, Avestan, Sanskrit, and Arabic and used in corrupt and distorted forms, sometimes with Persian prefixes or suffixes. The following terms were based on Persian: *jahākò* (< *jahān* “world”), *časār* (< *čahār* “four”), *farāsīm* (< *farāzīn* “high”), *forūsīm* (< *forūdīn* “low”), *tanānī* (corporeal), *ravānestān* (the realm of the spirits), *pāsong* (< *pāsokò* “reply”), and so on. Words derived from Hindi include *tīm* (< *tīn* “three”) and *čahīdan* (< *čāhnā* “to wish”). Among borrowings from Sanskrit are *aham* (I), *sarvah* (all), and *tapas* (mortification). Some terms



simulate the structure of Persian, for example, *āhangīdan* (to intend), *pākeš* (sanctification), *čašmīda* (object in view). Others are completely contrived and have no linguistic basis: *samrād* (imagination), *safrang* (interpretation, elucidation), *farnūd* (reason, justification).

Knowledge of the subject matter of *Dasātīr* is possible only through the “translation” and commentary, supposedly by Sāsān V but almost certainly the work of the author of the text. The identity of Sāsān V must itself be the creation of the author, as no one other than he understood the language of the text; supporting this conclusion is the fact that the Persian of the translation and commentary belongs to the 16th-17th centuries. The inclusion of Hindi and Sanskrit words suggests India as the place of composition, even though Mollā Kāvūs Pārsī (father of Mollā Fīrūz; see below), bought the copy of the book in Isfahan in 1192/1778.

On the basis of a description of *Dasātīr* that he noticed in *Dabestān-e maḍāheb*, the 18th-century English orientalist Sir William Jones praised the book and called it a sacred text, equal in importance to the *Avesta* and *Zand*. Jonathan Duncan, at that time governor of Bombay, intended to translate the work into English but died before he could launch the undertaking. His successor as governor, John Malcolm, encouraged Mollā Fīrūz to publish the book and appointed William Erskine to assist him in the English translation. The text and translation were published in two volumes in Bombay in 1818-19 under the title *The Desātīr, or the Sacred Writings of the Ancient Persian Prophets, Together with the Commentary of the Fifth Sāsān*. The text was reprinted in 1888, and in the same year Dhunjeebhoy Jamshetjee Medhora published a reprint of the translation and commentary in Bombay.

Some of the fabricated words of the *Dasātīr* found acceptance as genuine Persian vocabulary. From 1062/1652, when *Borhān-e qāṭe'* was compiled, until very recently they were included in Persian dictionaries published in both Persia and India. Only after critical reassessment was the language, as well as the contents, of the *Dasātīr* recognized as a forgery (Mojtabā'ī).

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