



FALSAFA I. PRE-ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY

Pre-Islamic philosophy, which may be called Mazdean philosophy, is a syncretic system incorporating various Greek thought, predominantly Peripatetic and Neo-Platonic. Historical evidence traces its origin to Parthian times. Bardesanes (154-222 C.E.; q.v.), a mystic thinker of Parthian origin has frequently employed Mazdean doctrines in his work. However, the unequivocal evidence in regard to the inception of Mazdean philosophy may be drawn from the contents of the *Dēnkard*, book 4. On the historical edict of Sasanian Šāpūr I (r. 240-70 C.E.) the secular (*az dēn bē*) Greek writings that were dispersed throughout India, Byzantium, and other lands, were brought together and deposited in the royal treasury (*ganj ī šāhīgān*; *Dēnkard*, ed. Madan, p. 412; Shaki, 1981, p. 119). The tenor of the decree suggests that the king must have been acquainted with the books he was seeking, a fact that necessarily implies their prevalence, albeit dispersedly, in the country under the Parthians. The *Dēnkard*(bk. 4) reports that these works dealt with medicine (*bizešgīh*), astronomy (*star-gōwišnīh*), movement (*čandišn*), time (*zamān*), space (*gyāg*), substance (*gōhr*), accident (*jahišn*), becoming (*bawišn*), decay (*wināhišn*), transformation (*jadag-wihīrīh*), logic (*gōwāgīh*), and other arts (*kirrōgīh*), an index that covers almost all philosophical disciplines of antiquity. Of great interest is the latter part of the *Dēnkard* (bk. 4), that follows this cultural instruction of the monarch. This section, which contains manifold Greek philosophical notions, seems to be a compilation of the above-mentioned philosophical themes; it would therefore not be an overstatement



to consider them as part of Mazdean scholastic study of philosophy already in the Parthian period, which were brought together under the edict of Šāpūr I. In contrast to these texts, the philosophical passages of the third book of the *Dēnkard* are in part syncretized with theological doctrines. Evidently during its long and critical study in Sasanian times it had absorbed contrary and paradoxical speculations by various Mazdean thinkers to the detriment of its methodological and philosophical consistency. Although the works sought after by Šāpūr I had been denoted by him as non-religious, secular knowledge, it seems that in view of the prevailing bigotry and dogmatic theology, the teachings and traditions (*gōwišn ud kardag*) of the fathers of the faith (*pōryōtkēšān*), not every philosophical principle could have been sustained without asserting the fundamental theological dogma that considers Ōhrmazd and his essence, the infinite light (*anagr-rošnīh*), the prime cause.

All in all Mazdean philosophy treats almost all relevant themes, i.e., the general laws of being (*stī*), human thinking, and the process of knowledge, which are subdivided in the present article into the doctrines of Being, Time, Space, Movement, Nature, Man, the Prime Cause, Cosmogony, Epistemology, Logic, Ethics, and Aesthetics.

The Mazdeans called the Greek philosophers *filāsōfā*, the Indian sages *dānāg ī hindōg*, and the native thinkers variously *dānāg šnāsag* (lit. wise sage; *Dēnkard*, p. 429), *šnāsag*, *gōhr šnāsag*, *čīhr-ænāsag* (natural philosopher; Bailey, p. 84), from Greek *phusikē epistēmē* (knowledge of nature), *uskārgar* (thinker; *Dēnkard*, p. 414). The philosophical terminology employed by the Mazdeans is by itself indicative of their methodological classification: *az den bē* (secular; lit. distinct from religion), *dēnīg* (religious), *abestāgīg* (theological), *pad ēwāz ī mardōm* (in common parlance), *pad ēwāz ī gēhān* (in universal language, i.e., Greek, or of foreign origin).

Being (stī, bawīšn). Being is a sequential (*pad paywand*) emanation from the essence of the unique creator, the infinite light (*anagr rošnīh*). It is interconnected in all its manifestations, a unity in plurality (*yak kardagīh ī gēhān*, lit. unification, unity of the universe; *Dēnkard*, p. 372, tr., p. 350). The material world (*stī, gētīg*) is conceived as the object of the sense-world, real, tangible (*gīrišnīg*) and visible (*wēnišnīg*; *Dēnkard*, p. 120, tr., p. 125), a combination of substance (*mādag, tōhmag*), form (*dēsag*), and accident (*jahišn*; *Dēnkard*, p. 202-3, tr. p. 198). Theologically, it is the combination of the Ideal (*mēnōg*) and material form (*dēsag*; *Dēnkard*; p. 398, tr., p. 372; Shaki, 1973, p. 145), the origin of material existence. The ultimate nature of matter consists of



the four atomic elements: fire (*ādur*), water (*āb*), air (*wād*), and earth (*gil*; see ELEMENTS), which are subject to transmutation (*wardišn*) on account of radical dualism (*dō-buništagīh*) of Being: water may transmute into air, or earth. . . (*āb hast ka ō čīhr ī wād ud hast ka ō čīhr ī zamīg wardēd*. . .; *Dēnkard*, p. 114, tr., p. 120). Matter has ever been and will ever be (*būd ud bawēd*; *Dēnkard*, p. 421) eternally and permanently in motion (*hamāg-rawišnīh ud amarg-rawišnīh ī gōhr*; *Dēnkard*, p. 416). In a most interesting chapter the *Dēnkard* (pp. 345-46, tr., p. 327) propounds a thoroughly materialistic world outlook by maintaining the doctrine of uncreatability, indestructibility, and impossibility of self-generation of Being (*ēč ēwēnag az nēst bawēnīdan ud abāz ō nēst burdan šāyēd, čēōn nē-iz šāyēd xwadīhā bawēnīdan ī čīš*), and no wise creator or producer can by any means annihilate his production. Light and darkness are fundamental elements of Being, the former is perceived through open sight, and the latter through its closure (*Dēnkard*, p. 324, tr., p. 308).

The principle of dualism (q.v.) of Being as a synthesis of antithetic elements is the heart of the Mazdean ontology. No object has come into being by itself or from like substances, but manifestly from the union of unlike substances (*dahišn wihān nē az xwēš bē jud jud gōhr čēōn čegām-iz hīr*. . . *nē az xwad ud xwēšīgān bē az hamīh ī jud gōhr paydāg*; *Dēnkard*, pp. 345-46, tr., pp. 326-27). Thus the principle of contradiction/duality (*dō-buništagīh*) expresses the inner source of all vitality and development (Shaki, 1973, pp. 142-43). The mutual interaction of all-pervading opposites is set forth as the motive power of existence; once set in motion, it does not stand in need of a transcendental mover. Theologically, the world is so disposed as to move towards eternal bliss, driven by its own natural impulsion (*Dēnkard*, p. 202; tr., p. 198; Shaki, 1973, pp. 133-34).

Movement. Matter moves in space (*wāy, gyāg*) but is controlled by the firmament (*rah, spīhr, spās*; *Dēnkard*, p. 207, tr., p. 201). The movement of matter in space, the course of luminaries, the blowing of wind, the growing of grass all occur within the limited time (*zamān ī brīd*), motivated by the long self-subsisting (*dagrand xwadāy*, generally misinterpreted as “of long dominion”) firmament (*Dēnkard*, p. 207, tr., p. 201). Movement (*jumbišn, čandišn*) is motivated either by natural necessity (*pad awizīn čīhr*) or by choice (*pad wizīn kām*; *Dēnkard*, p. 63, tr. p. 78). Natural process is either intermittent/partial (*brīdagīhā*) or continuous (*abrīdagīhā*). Being in composite state is throughout subject to transformation, the correlation of all existence (*bawišn hamāg ham-bawišnīh jadag-wihīrīh ast paywandišn ī stī o ham*;



Dēnkard, p. 352, tr., p. 332; Shaki, 1973, p. 151), which recalls the Heracleitan doctrine of the bond of all (*desmos ápánton*), or the continuous state of flux, of becoming (*bawišn*) and decay (*wināhišn*). Movement takes the form of transformation, such as the change of species of genus (*dēs ēwēnag*) to shape of species (*ēwēnag kerb*), to a concrete shape (*kerb*; *Dēnkard*, p. 352, tr., p. 332; Shaki, 1970, p. 293). Transformation is inherent in every process (*jadag-wihīrīh har kīrrōgīh andar*; *Dēnkard*, p. 420). In the exposition of causality (*čīmīgīh, wihān-kārīh*), causal relations are set forth in examples denoting the kind of cause: through force (*pad nērōgīh*), as suppression (*awištābišn*) from the combination of cold (*sard*) and hot (*garm*); through transmutation (*pad wardag*), as material light, beam (*bām*) from brilliance (*payrōg*); through action (*pad kunišn*), as house from man (*xānag az mardōm*); through creation (*pad āfurišn*); by reproduction (*mardōm azištīh*), as man from man; through natural disposition (*pad axw*), as generosity from the generous man. Transformation occurs either by necessity, natural causes (*čīhrīg*), or by the free will (*kāmīg*), or by the combination of both (*Dēnkard*, p. 347, tr., p. 328). The motive power of movement is specified as that which actualizes processes (*nērōg hastrāyenišnān rawāgīh*; *Dēnkard*, p. 399).

Nature. Nature is devised of composition, actualization, and corruption of contradictory elements (*ham-bawišnīh ud astišnīh ud wināhišn ī ham-bedīgān ī pad čīhr*). Nature is in a perpetual state of becoming and decay of quiddity (*čēōnīh bawišn ud wināhišn*), of quaking (*čandišn*), and movement (*jumbišn*; *Dēnkard* p. 420). The organic correlation between nature, the macrocosm (*gēhān ī wuzurg*), and man, the microcosm (*gēhān ī kōdag*), discloses the intrinsic harmony and universal unity of existence (*yak-kardagīh ī gēhān*). The elements of nature: fire (*ādur*), water (*āb*), earth (*gil*), metal (*ayōxšust*), plant (*urwar*), cattle (*gōspand*), and man (*mardōm*), correspond to the constituents of the human body (*čēōn mardōmtan*): blood (*xōn*), vein (*rag*), marrow (*mazg*), sinew (*pay*), bone (*ast*), flesh (*pid*), and hair (*mōy*). The components of the world's corpus: fire, water, earth, and air correspond to humors (*ristagān*) of human body: blood (*xōn*), red bile (*wiš ī suxr*), black bile (*wiš ī sīā*; text corrected), and phlegm (*blagm*; *Dēnkard*, p. 278, tr., p. 267; Shaki, 1973, p. 138). In regard to animal and natural forces, it is specified that the earth derives its force from the power of water and air (*gētīg nērōg pad āb ud wād ōj*); air derives its force from the spiritual power of the sky (*wād pad āsmān mēnōg nērōgīh*); the animal power derives from the humors of the constitution of the body (*āmēzišn ī tan passāzišn*); and the force of the *mēnōg* (the Ideal) derives from the vitality of the soul (*pad ruwān zīndagīh*; *Dēnkard*, p. 399).



The transcendental force of *waxš*, as the power of the soul and the motive power of natural growth and becoming, constitutes the agent of voluntary action, whereas the *frawahr*, the everlasting spiritual tutelary and nature (*čīhr*) represent the agents of natural necessity (*Dēnkard*, p. 122, tr., p. 126). The whole Universe, all luminaries and existence on earth, are endowed with intelligence (*Dēnkard*, p. 273, tr., p. 260).

The genealogical development of species, the congeneric (*ham-kerb*) natural development, is determined by the original stock inherited from progenitors (*az zwēš baxtiḡ tōhmag bunīh*, i.e., genetically determined), as horses from the first horse (*asb*), cucumbers (*bādrangān*) from the first cucumber; as analogous transmission and perpetuation of congeners through development of forms, specially of quiddities (*drust abespārišnīhā winārdan ī ham-tōhmag pad dēsag paydāḡīh nāmčīštīḡtar pad čēōnīh*). To them species is form (*ēwēnag*) and descent substance, as sight is to the eye (*Dēnkard*, pp. 420-21).

Following the Greek and Babylonian astrological teachings, it was believed that the fate of man was decided by the seven planets (*abāxtarān*), characterized as malefic gods (*gayōgān* “robbers”), and the twelve signs of the zodiac (*axtarān*), considered benefic gods (*bayān*; *Denkard*, p. 278, tr. 267) although, paradoxically, of the seven planets, generally, the sun and the moon, and, sporadically, also Jupiter (*Ōhrmazd*) and Venus (*Anāhīd*), were regarded as auspicious stars (*Greater Bundahišn* 3.7); nonetheless, the traditionally ingrained obsession continued in the belief that “every adversary or beneficence that befalls men and other creatures is owing to the workings of the seven and the twelve” (*Mēnōg ī xrad* 7.16).

Time(zamān). Time and space are objectively recognized as the basic forms of Being. The existence of all has need of time, but time has need of none. Time is the motive power of the processes of the material world (*zamān padīš hast kardārīh nērōḡ ī stī*; *Dēnkard*, p. 207, tr. p. 201). Everything is inherent in time, but time itself is inherited in none. It directs all but itself is directed by none. Everything, whether it is limited or unlimited, is dependent on time for its function and existence (*ān ī har andar xwad andar ēč; ān ī abar har rāyēnidārīh xwad az ēč bē nē rāyēnišnīḡ; abun ud bunōmand pad kār ud hastīh-iz pad zamān niyāz*. *Dēnkard*, p. 128, tr. p. 132). Mazdean theology recognizes two categories of time: the unlimited (*akanārag*), and the limited (*kanāragōmand*), or determined (*brīn*), with the epithet *daḡrand xwadāy* (lit. long self-subsisting/self-existing, i.e., 12,000 years persisting on its own law; generally misapprehended as of long dominion; Shaki, 1987, p. 423). The



limited time of 12,000 years was created by Ōhrmazd from the unlimited time for the duration of the cosmic combat with the Evil spirit, Ahriman (q.v.; *Greater Bundahišn* 1.39-42; Boyce, p. 47). The essence of unlimited time is defined as eternal duration (*drang ī hamāyīg*) unlimited by past and future, and that of the limited time as limited duration of past and future (*Dēnkard*, p. 293, tr., p. 280). Movement is developed through its limitation. Time in itself is eternal (*xwad hamīh*), and its selfhood/essence duration (*xwadīh drang*) and eternity (*hamāyīg*). The uncreated time is the creator's eternity (*Dēnkard*, p. 132, tr., p. 135) that existed before the act of creation (*Dēnkard*, p. 290, tr., p. 276). The infinite time, as time in the abstract, is not subject to division or measurement (*Škand Gumānīk* 16, ed. de Menasce, pp. 86-88). The measure of time (i.e., the limited time) is action, and that of action is time (*Dēnkard*, p. 228, tr., p. 218). The corruption of everything that has been or will be is brought about through the transience (*sazišn*) of the limited time (*Dēnkard*, p. 416), because it is the limited time that is involved in worldly events (*Dēnkard*, p. 128, tr., p. 132; see *dahr*). The limited time after passing its course, rejoins its origin (*pad gardišn abāz ō bun paywand*; *Dēnkard*, p. 282, tr., p. 270).

Space (wāy, gyāg). Space is one of the five eternal: Ōhrmazd, the Creator; *Dēn* (q.v.), the creator's innate wisdom; space, the maintainer of the material world; time, the Creator's eternity (*Dēnkard*, p. 133, tr., p. 135); and substance (*gōhr*). *Wāy* (Av. *vayu-*, air, atmosphere) is associated with *wād* (air, wind), the substance of the breath-soul (*gyān*), thus, intrinsically, is possessed of vital power. Space, in association with time, is a basic form of being. There is no object without its proper space (*nē čišān bē gyāg ī čišān*; *Dēnkard*, p. 417). Space comprehends all, and itself is not comprehended (*ān ī har gōhr andar xwad andar ēč gyāg*). Space is from void, and void is like space infinite (*gyāg-iz hamāg az tuhīgīh mānāg gyāgīh akanārag*; *Dēnkard*, p. 128, tr., p. 132).

Man (mardom). Man is the epitome (microcosm) of the Universe (macrocosm; *mardōm ī hast gēhān hangirdīgīh*; *Dēnkard*, p. 140, tr., p. 142). He is epitomized from the Creator's creation (*az dādār dahišn hangirdīgēnīdag*) and is the foremost of all material creations (*mardōm pahlom gētīg dahišnān*; *Dēnkard*, p. 431; Shaki, 1973, p. 163). Man is endowed with all spiritual and material prerequisites contained in creation in order to rule over all creations (*Dēnkard*, p. 245, tr., p. 233). In the cosmic combat (*gēhān razm*) in which the antithetic constituents (*jud-gōhr*) in the mixed state (*gāh ī gumēxtag*) are in constant struggle, man is the commander-in-chief (*razm-sālār*) of the combat (*Dēnkard*, p. 321, tr., p. 305). All creations are reflected in man as the material



form (*gētīg dēsag*) of the Creator (*Dēnkard*, p. 321, tr., p. 305). Man is created as his own lord, the guardian over his own person (i.e., endowed with free will) and of all creations with the faculty of discernment (*mardōm hēnd xwadāyēnīdag abar xwēš tan pad sālārīh, abārīg gētīg dahišnān pad wizīngarīh nērōgēnīd ēstēd*; *Dēnkard*, p. 363, tr., p. 343). Man and god are of the same essence, the soul (*ruwān*; *Dēnkard*, p. 102, tr., p. 109).

Human beings are all the members of the selfsame family. They are of the same genus (*ham-sardag*), of the same parentage (*nabānazdištān*) of the same family ties (*nazd paywand*), connected with three kinds of family union (*xwēdōdah*, i.e., father and daughter, son and mother, brother and sister; *Dēnkard*, p. 73, tr., p. 86).

The spiritual faculties active (*kārīgar*) in the body of man are essentially (*mādagwarīhā*) four: the soul (*ruwān*), the breath-soul (*gyān*), *frawahr*, the tutelary genius, the immortal and deified spirit, and perception (*bōy*). The soul is the lord of mind (*axw xwadāy*); the breath-soul, *frawahr*, and perception are all instruments of the soul, collectively forming *waxš*, the power of the soul (*Dēnkard*, p. 241, tr., p. 320). The intellectual faculties of man primarily are: the power of intelligence (*wīr nērōg*), the strength of memory (*oš ōj*), and the force of wisdom (*xrad zōr*). To these Aristotelian faculties of mind the Mazdeans have added a fourth power, perception (*bōy*; *Dēnkard*, p. 48, tr., p. 66; Bailey, p. 100). The three kinds of powers: *nērōg*, *ōj*, and *zōr* are assiduously differentiated. As against *zōr* and *ōj*, *nērōg* is considered as the power of the Ideal (*mēnōg*), a hypostasis endowed with creative power (*Dēnkard*, p. 122, tr. p. 126).

The Prime cause. In the syncretic philosophical system of the *Dēnkard*, Book 3, the prime mover is the Creator Ōhrmazd, and in the Book 4, under the influence of Peripateticism, the Supreme Cause (*čimānāg*), a novel formation distinct from *čimīg* (causative). He is defined as a being of unique principle, which is of necessity the supreme cause, not merely causative (*yak buništ-iz xwad čimānāg hast ne čimīg*; *Dēnkard*, p. 409). Ōhrmazd in his omniscience and will power is determined in action by the bounds of time, and in time by the bounds of action (*Ōhrmazd pad harwis-p-āgāh xrad kāmīg handāzišn brīd pad kār zamān kanārag pad zamān kār kanārag*; *Dēnkard*, p. 228, tr., p. 218). Ōhrmazd's power and wisdom are not infinite (Mardān-Farrox, tr., pp. 96, 103), they are confined to what is possible. Before creation he was not lord (*Greater Bundahišn* 1.19). He is spiritual as well as material (*stī*); his essence is the soul, the infinite light (*anagr rošnīh*), the quiddity of which is the hot-moist



(*garm-xwēd*); and his form/garment is the material light (*gētīg rošnīh*), i.e., *brāh* (brilliance) and *bām* (beam), emanated from the infinite light (*Dēnkard*, p. 43, tr., p. 62).

Cosmogony. All philosophical versions of Mazdean cosmogony are syntheses of two distinct theological and philosophical sections. The first section dealing with the emergence of Being from the prime mover, asserts the Creator's act of creation, the fashioning of the substratum from his essence, the infinite light. The latter section, an account of the emanation of being from primal substance or substantial form, the hot-moist (*garm-xwēd*), is generally Aristotelian in conception, including his idealistic postulate adopted from Plato regarding the hot-moist as the substratum par excellence of the material world. Below will be discussed three typical cosmogonical accounts.

1. According to the *Dēnkard* (p. 120, tr., p. 125; Shaki, 1970, pp. 278-81) the primal substance (*tōhmagān tōhmag*, lit. seed of seeds), the hot-moist, is developed directly through the creative activity of the Creator (*dādār*) in association with the power and instrumentality of the firmament (*pad rah ōj ud abzārīh*). The hot-moist, which is also called substratum (*mādag*), is the first stage of emanation called Being (*bawīšn*). It is not potential but actual, the Aristotelian substantial form (*adēsīdag stī* or *dēsag mādag*). The participation of the firmament (*rah*, lit. wheel) in cosmogonical process, and its supposed influence on natural phenomena, presupposes the creative power of the cosmic intermediaries. From Being develops the first form called the Movement of Being (*bawīšn rawīšnīh*), which is characterized by the four elements (*zahagān* "lit. generators"; see ELEMENTS), proclaimed to be the last pure (i.e., ahuric) substances (*abdom mādag pālūdag*) in cosmogonical hierarchy. From the Movement of Being, the four elements, develops the second form called Actualization of Being (*bawīšn astīšnīh*) characterized by the four complexions (*ristagān*; Shaki, 1973, pp. 136-40; idem, 1975, pp. 52-4), i.e., hot-dry, hot-moist, cold-dry, cold-moist. Thus the complexions are, of necessity, the first mixed principles of the material world and, according to the *Dēnkard* (p. 121), also those of the living creatures (*4 ristagān amēzišn ī zindagān*; see BŪDAG; Shaki, 1973, p. 138). The third form, the congeneric *frawahr* and soul, were dispensed through the marvelous act of the Creator, integrating the material existence (*hamēnīdār ī stī*), specifically man, cattle, and other good living creatures that have been dispensed in individual bodies, endowed with form (*dēsagōmand ī abdom baxt estēnd ō kerbān kerbān*). In this text the theological concept, in regard to the creative impulse of the Creator, is



stressed throughout the cosmogonical process.

In Mazdean cosmogonical systems the substratum, the hot-moist, in association with the firmament, accounts for the vital power of physical necessity (*awizīn čīhr zōr*; *Dēnkard*, p. 63, tr., p. 78). Therefore, once set in motion, the cosmogonical process does not stand in need of a transcendental power. It would have been noticed that the elements are considered to be the last pure (*pālūdāg*; i.e., ahuric) substances, although they contain the impure (i.e., daevic), antithetical cold (*sard*) and dry (*hušk*) in their complexions. Furthermore, the hot-moist, the arche of Being, paradoxically enough once more emerges as the complexion of air, its own supposed first form. However, in view of elemental contrarities between Mazdean and Greek philosophical doctrines, such fallacious statements do not seem to have concerned the Mazdean thinkers.

All philosophical cosmogonical accounts, analogous to the passage considered above, are founded on the sequence of Being, the Movement of Being, and Actualization of Being (see BŪDAG). The third form, the vital principles (*zindagān*), designating the *frawahr* and soul, are not emanated from the substantial form and the firmament, but dispensed (*baxt ēstēnd*) directly in consequence of the miraculous act of the Creator, a purely dogmatic assertion.

2. In the following cosmogonical passage concerning the prime creative impulse, the *Dēnkard* (p. 124, tr. p. 128) postulates a series of successive emanation of lights, with descending degrees of sublimity and transcendence, from the infinite light (*asar rošnīh*): from the infinite light a splendor (*brāh*), from the splendor a blaze (*payrōg*), and from the blaze a beam (*bām*) emanates, whence results the firmament (*tā-iz ō rah*), and from the firmament through the Creator's creative activity proceeds the hot-moist, Being, the substratum of material creations (*ud az rah pad dādār āfurišn rasīdag ō bawīšn, garm-xwēd, gētīg-dahišnān fradom bun*). The last three emanated lights, that have material associations, are called material light (*gētīg rošnīh*), that constitute the material form of Ōhrmazd (*Dēnkard*, p. 43, tr., p. 62). In this version the intermediary instruments of creation are the infinite light, its transmitted forms (*brāh, payrōg, bām*), the firmament and the hot-moist. In order that the supernal infinite light should pass into material principle a gradual transformation of its divine essence into material being was postulated. Of interest is the striking similarity between the emanatistic doctrine of Plotinus, metaphorically described as light from the sun, and his god assimilated to light above light, with the light hierarchy of our account.



The development of material existence (*stī*), from the hot-moist, in successive stages, is much the same as in the previous text.

3. The following cosmogonical scheme discussed below is one of the most abstruse and scholarly presentations of the subject, evidently contrived by some erudite natural philosopher. At the outset there is given a description and functions of the intermediaries, whereby the prime mover, Ōhrmazd, fashions the material world. First he creates the Form of Fire (*āsrō kerpa*, Mid. Pers. transcription of Av. *āθrō kəhrpa*; see ELEMENTS), an all embracing creative hypostasis which suggests itself as a counterpart to the Neo-Platonic world of forms or Ideas (*Dēnkard*, p. 349; Shaki, 1970, pp. 283 ff.). In the *Greater Bundahišn* (1.44) it appears as *ataxš kerb*, depicted as a fire glowing, white, round, conspicuous from afar (*ātaxš kerb ī rošn ī spēd ud gird frāz paydāg*); and the *Dādestān ī dēnīg* (chap. 63, q.v.) considers it as a glowing form whose *xwarrah* (*GDH*) derives from Ōhrmazd and its brilliance from fire. This hypostasis is itself composed of two instruments with remarkably unequal creative powers: the Spirit of the Power of *Waxš* (*mēnōg ī waxš nērōg*), and the Spirit of the Power of Nature (*mēnōg ī čīhr nērōg*). The first instrument, a deity comprehending all spiritual creations, participates in all stages of material emanation, and is indispensably responsible for the function of material creation (*kār ī pad dahišn andar ān abzār abāyišnīg*). Two phases in the manifestation of material world are philosophically distinguished. First by joint instrumentality of the two spiritual powers there arises the most subtle very self of matter (*dāramagtom gētīg grīw*; see ELEMENTS), which in the learned terminology (*abestāgīg nām*) it is called dust (**gard*, miswritten *krt*), and in the universal language (*pad ēwāz ī gēhān*, i.e., Greek.) **chaos* (miswritten *hs<*háws*), or primal essence (*srištag*, leaven; Shaki, 1984, pp. 100-1). The text follows with the development of *stūnak* (small rod) perhaps a corruption of Gk. *stoicheion* (element), from which develops the stage of formation (*dēsagōmandīh*). The Spirit of the Power of *Waxš* once more mediates in the emanation of the first cosmic body, the firmament within which the cognate (*hambun*) luminaries, the sun, moon, and stars, as deities ordain and guide the material phenomena beneath them. The firmament once born, in union with the Spirit of the Power of *Waxš* gives rise to Being, the hot-moist, the substantial form, from which ensues the Movement and Actualization of Being.

Epistemology. Knowledge is not confined to man. Nature is also endowed with intelligence, and intelligence also has natural associations (*dānišnōmandīh ī*



čih *ud čihrōmandih ī dānišn*; *Dēnkard*, p. 273, tr., p. 260). Human knowledge of past, present, and future is limited (*sāmānōmand*), and every feasibility of its progress is also limited (*kanāragōmand*) – hence the restriction of the faculty of comprehension (*Dēnkard*, p. 283, tr., p. 280). Time revolves to its origin, whereas knowledge from the origin attains its apex (*Dēnkard*, p. 282, tr., p. 354). No one is possessed of supreme Wahumanian (see BAHMAN) knowledge, immune from ignorance and evil thought; neither is any evil person deprived of Wahumanian sagacity (*Dēnkard*, p. 51, tr., p. 69). The best faculty of man is innate wisdom (*āsn-xrad*) from which originates insight (*wēnāgīg*); next to which is acquired knowledge (*gošōsrūd xrad*; *Dēnkard*, p. 281, tr., p. 354). Every consciously acquired knowledge (*kāmagōmand dānišn*) is of necessity associated with the faculty of logic (*gōwāgīh nērōg*; *Dēnkard*, p. 149, tr., p. 150). The necessity of knowledge (*abāyišnīg ī dānišn*) is owing to its benefit, with which it is akin (*ō sūd xwēšāwand*; *Dēnkard*, p. 421). Excess and deficiency (*frēh-būd ud abē-būd*) are respectively detrimental to pleasure (*rāmišn*) and knowledge (*Dēnkard*, p. 52, tr., p. 70). Knowledge and pleasure are spiritual powers, the former develops through the natural urge of disposition/vitality (*axw*), and the latter from the urge to satisfy human desires (*kāmag-kardārīh*; *Dēnkard*, p. 51, tr., p. 68). With Aristotle it has been observed that it is through the faculties of sight (*wēnišn*), touch (*pahrmānišn*), taste (*čāšišn*), smell (*bōyišn*, *hanbōyišn*), hearing (*āšnawišn*) that, in association with the organs of the body, principally the tongue (*mādayān uzwān*), man conveys his thoughts (*mēnišn*) in the form of language (*Dēnkard*, p. 48, tr., p. 66).

Cognition of a subject may be achieved in four modes (*dānišn ī čiš pad 4 ēwēnag*): 1. apodictically (*pad čār dānišnīh*); 2. through analogy (*pad hangōšīdagšnāsīh*); 3. through probability (*šnāsīh pad šayēd sazēd būdan*); 4. by reductio ad absurdum (*pad zēfān ud drōb ud nē šayēd* “through absurdity, falsity/falacy, and improbability”; Mardān-Farrox, p. 63).

Logic. A few chapters of the *Dēnkard* treat of some axioms of Aristotelian formal logic (*čim-gōwāgīh*, cf. Gk. *logikē technē* “art of reasoning/speaking”). It is described as “that which investigates proper inference of problems [things], is known, in particular by the name of rational speaking” (*ān ī wizōyišnīg* [for corrupt *wizāyisnig*] *ō hu-āšnāgīh ī čišān pad nām ī hast nāmčīšnīgtom čim gōwāgīh*; *Dēnkard*, p. 417), which is the classical definition of the subject. Syllogistic figures are formulated as: *bun az bar* (induction, lit. major premise from minor premise), and *bar az bun* (deduction). Induction is defined as “inference of major premise/cause (*bun*) from the characteristics and features



of the minor premise/effect (*bar*)” (*bun az bar paydāgīn abar čeōnīh ud ēdōnīh ī bar*; *Dēnkard*, p. 185, tr. p. 182). The Aristotelian law of contradiction is formulated: two qualities mutually contrary cannot be natures of the selfsame object (*2 ī āginēn hambedīg čīhrīg ī yak gētīg būd nē šāyēd*; *Dēnkard* p. 144, tr., p. 146). Aristotle has: Proposition A cannot be simultaneously false and true. But it is possible that many opposing qualities which are not antagonistic to be the nature of the selfsame object (*bē was jud ēwēnag ī nē hambedīg čīhrīg ī yak gētīg būd šāyēd*; *ibid.*). It is not possible that a thing be and not be at the same time and at the same place (*yak čiš andar ham gyāg pad ham zamān ham hast ham nēst būd nē šāyēd kardan-iz*; *Dēnkard*, p. 346, tr., p. 327). Nothing may be made of nothing (*ex nihilo nihil fit*), and nothing may be reduced to nothing (*nē ēč ēwēnag az nēst bawēnīdan ud abāz ō nēst burdan šāyēd*; *Dēnkard*, p. 345, tr., p. 326). Stating non-being is being is self-contradictory statement (antilogy; *abāz-būd saxwanīha nēstīh hastīh guft bawēd*; *Dēnkard* p. 346, tr., p. 327; Shaki, 1973, pp. 147-52). The Indian logic (*tark*) represented as daevic chatter (*drāyišn ī dēwān*), was nonetheless, preserved and in case of need advised (*Dēnkard*, p. 429).

Ethics and Aesthetics. The Mazdeans must have been quite alive to the relativity of ethical and aesthetic values. Upholding family union (*xwēdōdah*), they argued that “beauty and ugliness (*hučīhrīh ud duščīhrīh*) are not absolute [values] in themselves, but relative to one’s apprehension (*griftan*), appreciation (*sahišn*), belief (*wurrahwišn*), and individual disposition (*xōg ī kas*), which themselves vary in accordance with time and place” (*Dēnkard*, p. 78, tr., p. 89; Shaki, 1978, p. 304). Theologically, beauty is all divine, and ugliness is all diabolic (*Dēnkard*, p. 315, tr., p. 300).

In Mazdean normative ethics the gist of goodness (*wēhīh*) is the Mean (*paymān*), whose offspring (*zahag*) is law (*dād*, q.v.), and its integrants are wisdom (*xrad*), character (*xēm*), modesty (*šarm*), love (*mīhr*), generosity (*rādīh*), veracity (*rāstīh*), and gratitude (*spās-dārīh*; *Dēnkard*, p. 22, tr., p. 214). The cardinal concept of the Mean ranking in pre-eminence with Av. *aša*—“truth, law,” is, against its ascription to Aristotle, claimed to be of Iranian origin. The *Dēnkard* (p. 429) states: Iranians have always commended the Mean and reprobated excess and deficiency (*ērān hamē paymān stāyēd frēh-būd ud abē-būd nikōhēd*).

See also COSMOGONY AND COSMOLOGY.



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