

## Iranians and Turanians in the Avesta

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Talk of the Iranians and Turanians, and one automatically recalls the vengeful combats and holy wars between generations of the two races, one supposed to be the Mazdayasni Zoroastrians and the other Daevayasni polytheists. The oldest source of our information: The extant Avesta. The major source of our days: The Shahnameh of Ferdowsi. The Shahnameh has more details. Let us look into it.

With Zohak imprisoned in a cave on Mount Demavand, Fareidun ascended the throne of Iran on the day of Mehr and the month Mehr (2<sup>nd</sup> October), on the feast of *Mehregân*, held at the beginning of autumn. There was peace and prosperity throughout the land. He had three grown-up sons. He had not given them any names. He thought to get them married. He ordered a search for three full-sisters, who had not been given any names by their parents. A search found the three princesses in Yemen. He sent his sons to the Yemenite court. Eventually, the triple-marriage ceremony was performed at a grand feast. The newly wed set off with their brides for Iran.

But before they arrived, Fareidun changed himself into a dragon to test his sons. The eldest fled, the second shot an arrow, missed and fled, and the third warned the dragon that being sons of Fareidun, they would break his magic and pound his head with their maces, and prepared to counterattack. Fareidun was pleased to discover the true nature of his sons. It was time to give them their names. The eldest he called *Salm* because he was clever enough to seek safety (*salâmat* in Arabic). The second was named *Tûr* because he had the courage to shoot and then when he found that his shot had missed, he fled to save himself. The youngest showed courage and wisdom and therefore he was named *Iraj*. He named Salm's wife as *Ârezu* (desire), Tur's as *Mâh* (moon), and Iraj's as *Sahi* (tall, erect).

Fareidun thought to divide his kingdom in his lifetime. He gave Anatolia (Asia Minor) and the west to Salm, China and Turkestan (Central Asia) to Tur, and Iran, the best part of the kingdom, to Iraj. Salm and Tur became jealous of the discrimination shown by their father. They murdered Iraj. The father became so frustrated that he wanted to see the other two killed also.

Meanwhile, Iraj's wife was pregnant. She gave birth to a daughter. Fareidun waited for the girl to grow into a young lady. She was married to his nephew. The couple had a son. Fareidun named him *Manûchehr*. The baby grew to a stalwart young man. The great-grandfather abdicated the throne in his favor. Fareidun had ruled for five hundred years.

As soon as Salm and Tur came to know that Manucehr had ascended the throne, they were frightened and asked their father for amnesty. The old man refused and warned them that their grandnephew was coming to avenge his grandfather. The two brothers thought it better to give the first blow. They crossed the Oxus, the border between Iran and Turan, with their armies. Manucehr met them with his army. The battle then began in an all-out attack. The Turanians

lost many of their warriors during the day. The armies retired in the evening. The two brothers then considered making a night raid on Manuchehr. He, somehow, came to know about the move and ambushed them. He succeeded in killing his fleeing granduncle Tur and in beheading him. The head was sent to Fareidun to see the revenge. Salm now thought to take refuge in a castle. But Manuchehr had already taken it. Salm had no other way but to face Manuchehr, who had spotted him. A combat commenced and Salm was also beheaded. His head was sent to Fareidun. Iraj's murder was fully avenged. The Turanians and the Anatolians surrendered to Manuchehr.

With Salm and Tur gone, Manuchehr returned triumphant to his great-grandfather. Fareidun prayed to God to take him away after witnessing three of his sons beheaded in a sad fratricide.

### **Fighting Renewed**

With Manuchehr gone, *Pashang*, grandson of Tur, rose to avenge his grandfather's death. His son *Afrâsyâb* had grown into a great warrior and was bent on the revenge. The fighting was renewed. However, down the history to this day, the people of western part of the world, the Salm territory are forgotten. and the Chinese have also been ignored but the revengeful enmity lasts between Iranian and the Turanians. Iranians we know but the Turanians are considered to be the Turks. So, we have Iranians facing the Turks, and the two continue to look at each other through an inner feeling of enmity.

Is it true to the core? Let us first take a second look at the Shahnameh again and then turn to the Avesta:

1. Fareidun ruled the world. He divided his realm into three parts.
2. It fits the map of the much, much later Sassanian times: (a) Asia Minor and the west, the part of the world under the Christian domination; (b) Turkestan and China under the Buddhists; and (c) the Iranian Plateau under the Zoroastrians.
3. Salm, Tur and Iraj were not the parents of the peoples of the regions. They were simply the appointed rulers.
4. The peoples of these three regions were living in peace. It was the fratricide of the ruling family, which forced them to fight each other.

This shows that the peoples of these regions were neighbors, and although the conditions have drastically changed, they continue to be so. The fratricide is not their heritage and yet it has caused them tremendous harm. But let us keep in mind that the Avesta is one of the indirect sources of the Shahnameh. Let us look into it.

Avestan *Airyâ*, Old Persian and Sanskrit *Ârya*, and Middle Persian *Er* means 'straight going, noble'. *Erân* or Iran is the plural. *Tura* means 'strong, powerful'. *Turan* is the plural. We are using Iranian and Turanian for the two. *Sairima* stands for Salm, and it means 'safe, sheltered' in Indo-Iranian. The meanings given by the Shahnameh as 'noble and wise' for Iraj, 'fast and brave' for Tur, and 'safe' for Salm are quite close.

Iranian (*Airyâ*) has been used for 23 times, the Iranian Glory (*Airyana Khvarenah*) five times, the Iranian ancestral home (*Airyêna-vaeja*) five times, and the Iranian habitat (*Airyô Shayana*)

once, a total 34 times. Tur (*Tûra*) and Turanian (*Tûirya*) are mentioned for 20 times. The Gathas have it once, the non-Gathic Yasna once, and the “epical” Yasht have it 19 times, of which it relates, for 10 times, to one person, *Franghrasyan* (Afrâsiyâb).

## **The Avestan Legend**

The first good land created by Ahura Mazda was *Airyenâ-vaēja*. It had ten months of winter and two months of summer, a clue that it was close to the North Pole. *Gaya-Maretan* (Kayumars) was the first person who organized the people as Iranians and gave them the racial status. The Shahnameh is close to it. He is the first ruler of cave dwellers. He is the First Human being of the Pahlavi Bundaheshn of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, most likely a copy of the Biblical Adam.

Next, we see *Yima Khshaeta* (Jamshed, Jamshid) who lived happily with his people, cattle and dogs. Suddenly, he and his chiefs were called by Ahura Mazda and Yazatas to a meeting in Airyena-vaēja and were informed of the approach of an ice age. Guided by Ahura Mazda, Yima led one thousand and nine hundred able-bodied men and women along with the cattle, dogs, plant seeds, and “fire” into a self-illuminated and well-watered cave. A birth control of twins per family once every forty years saved them from over crowding the cave. They came out at the end of the ice age. Science has shown that the ice age began more than 8,000 years ago and that the cave shelter and fire heat saved humans from a frozen finish.

Once out, the people began to multiply fast. The land was overcrowded within 300 years. Ahura Mazda guided Yima to migrate towards southern lands. Six hundred years and the entire area was overcrowded again. Another southward move. Nine hundred years and overcrowdedness. Since each move was to occupy a larger piece of land, the Aryans extended and expanded their land to four and half of its size in 1500 years.

Although a legend ascribed to one person, it provides good historical evidence of the slow southward expansion of the Iranians by migration waves into Central Asia and the Iranian Plateau. Archeology shows that the Plateau and its eastern and western lands of the Indus and the Mesopotamian valleys were inhabited by well-advanced citizens who lived in towns in cultural and economic communications with one another. Except for the warring westerners, the people of the central and eastern part of the Plateau and the Indus Valley lived in peace.

The Aryan immigration of the Indo-Iranian lands, my research shows, coincided with the decline of the native town-dwelling civilization. The reason: deforestation due to large scale baked brick construction, poor cultivation methods, poor cattle raising, and increasing consumer population.

Scholars speak of the Aryan invasion of these lands, but neither archeology nor Aryan legends have any evidence to prove it happening. Archeology does not show the cities destroyed or the inhabitants massacred, and the Avesta and the Rig Veda do not have any legends to describe their “glories” of slaughtering non-Aryan natives of the lands.

The Aryans were simple cattle raisers, fast horse-riders, great charioteers, and armed with plough, were far better farmers than the natives. They had plenty of green pastures to settle

without molesting the citizens of the clustered houses who were, in the beginning, of no practical use for them. The Aryans soon outnumbered the town-dwellers and slowly and amicably assimilated them. And they learned a lot from them by learning to settle and enjoy a prosperous static living.

The Avesta tells us of the earlier ruling dynasty, what the later histories call, the Pishdadians (Avestan *Paradhâta*, meaning ‘Primitive Establishment’). The next are the Kayanians, the *Kavi* dynasty. In Avesta and Sanskrit, *Kavi* means ‘sage, intelligent, eloquent’. The rule by a “Kavi” king was a great departure from the rule of a sheer warrior of a king. It shows the founding of a royal court full of sages and poets. Iran has all along been famous for its sagacious courts. Kavi Vishtaspa (Kei Goshtasb) was the Chief Ruler of the Iranian Federation. Zarathushtra had, according to the tradition, two years of discussions at the court of this ‘Kavi’ and had him and his wise courtiers convinced of his Good Religion.

And now let us take the Turanians. The first time we see a Turanian mentioned is in the Zamyad Yasht. The ‘Mighty Mazda-given Kayanian Glory’, the Glory, with which Ahura Mazda created the universe very good, beautiful, splendid, fresh, and shining, shines over the head of every king and hero as well as Zarathushtra. Frangrasyana, the Turanian, or to take his Persian name Afrâsiyâb, tries three times to get it but fails. Yet he is remembered a little later as possessing it.

The second time we see Haoma praying to Drvâspâ, deity of cattle health, to give him the boon of chaining Afrasiyab, the deadly Turanian, and taking him bound to Kavi Husravah (Keikhosrow). Keikhosrow also sacrificed 100 horses, 1000 bulls, and 10,000 rams and asked the same boon. Afrasiyab had murdered his own brother Aghraeratha and son-in-law Siyavash, Keikhosrow’s father. Keikhosrow killed his grandfather only avenge his father and granduncle.

Here we see that there was no enmity or war between two people or races but a bloody family feud between two closely related persons. In the Aban Yasht we see that Tus, the brave charioteer, asking the Water deity for a boon of victory over sons of Vis (Vaesaka, Afrasiyab’s cousin) so that he kills down the people of Turanian lands in fifties, hundreds, hundred thousands, thousand thousands, in fact innumerable. The same grand sacrifice of 11,100 animals is made by the three “swift” sons of Vis to *Apâm-napât*, the Lightning deity. They are refused. A little later we see find Ashavazdangha, son of Porurudhakshti, and Ashavandangha and Thritha, sons of Sayuzhdri, offer *Apâm-napât* a sacrifice of 100 horses, 1000 bulls and 10,000 rams to win the battle against the Turanians of the Danu tribe, and they are granted their wish. Fravashis, the Guardian Spirits, help in killing ten thousand Dânu chiefs.

We leave the legend with its family feud behind and arrive at the Zarathushtrian era. Zarathushtra is forced by the Kavi princes and Karapan priests to leave his homeland towards an unseen future. Turanians are the first to come to his help. Here is how he describes them:

Since through righteousness,  
the powerful children and grandchildren of the Turanian Fryana  
have risen to promote their world through serenity with zeal,  
Wise God has united them with good mind,

in order to teach them what concerns their help.  
(Gathas: Song 11.12)

Zarathushtra has his first major breakthrough. The Turanian tribe of Frayana joins the Zarathushtrian Fellowship. They, a warrior people, become ardent followers of the Good Religion for promoting the world through peace and stability. Using their good mind, they learn how to help the mission.

This shows that it was through the Turanian help that Zarathushtra reached the court of Kavi Vishtaspa safe and sound.

The Farvardin Yasht mentions 261 men and women by name who were the foremost convert promoters of the Good Religion. One of them is Yoisht Frayana, a member of the above Turanian tribe. He is, in the later tradition, noted for his profound knowledge of the Religion and his victory in debate with an Old Cult High Priest. It has grown into a legend. We see Yoisht Frayana in the Aban Yasht as sacrificing 11,100 cattle to the Water deity to be able to answer the 99 questions Akhtya would ask him. The later tradition says that had he not answered the questions, the sorcerer would have killed all the Zoroastrians.

The story shows that how much a Turanian knew of the Good Religion. The Farvardin Yasht gives two more names of the foremost converts with “Tura” following their names.

The above was a perusal of the relations between the Iranians and the Turanians in the Avesta. It provides the following points:

1. The legend in Persian presents Iranians and Turanians as of one stock.
2. The Avesta shows them as the people living close to one another.
3. It also shows that the two belong to the same creed and worshipped the same gods and goddesses.
4. The legend and the Avesta show that there were a number of battles between Iranians and Turanians over a family feud.
5. The feud belongs only to the pre-Zarathushtrian times.
6. The Good Religion was accepted, chosen, practiced, promoted, propagated, and spread by Iranians, Turanians, and other neighboring people. These were the *paourya-tkaêsha*, meaning ‘Foremost-in-Doctrine’ and *Nabânazdishta*, the ‘Nearest-kin’ of the Farvardin Yasht.
7. This shows the universality of the first Monotheistic order in history. It stands for all people without any discrimination. It is equitable and unbiased towards race, color, nationality and/or community. The Good Religion joined all the people into a united Fellowship that created a new progressive world, a progressive world that formed the first federation of nations of the civilized part of the world under the benevolent and tolerant Achaemenians followed by the Parthians.

The time has returned to serve and spread the universal religion to the entire world to create a new refreshing, renovating, move of progress toward radiating happiness and prosperity on the path to wholeness and eternity.

Let us join the foremost promoters of the Good Religion who stood hand in hand and chanted:

*airyanām dakhyunām narām ashaonō fravashayō yazamaide airyanām dakhyunām  
nâirinām ashaoninām fravashayō yazamaide, tûiryanām dakhyunām narām ashaonō  
fravashayō yazamaide tûiryanām dakhyunām nâirinām ashaoninām fravashayō  
yazamaide, sairimanām dakhyunām narām ashaonām fravashayō yazamaide sairimanām  
dakhyunām nâirinām ashaoninām fravashayō yazamaide.*

*sâininām dakhyunām narām ashaonām fravashayō yazamaide sâininām dakhyunām  
nâirinām ashaoninām fravashayō yazamaide, dâhînām dakhyunām narām ashaonām  
fravashayō yazamaide dâhînām dakhyunām nâirinām ashaoninām fravashayō  
yazamaide.*

*vîspanām dakhyunām narām ashaonām fravashayō yazamaide vîspanām dakhyunām  
nâirinām ashaoninām fravashayō yazamaide. vîspâ ashâunām vanguhîsh sûrâ speñtâ  
fravashayō yazamaide, ýâ haca gayât marethnat â-saoshyañtât verethrakhnat.*

We venerate the Fravashis of the righteous men of the Iranian lands. We venerate the Fravashis of the righteous women of the Iranian lands. We venerate the Fravashis of the righteous men of the Turanian lands. We venerate the Fravashis of the righteous women of the Turanian lands. We venerate the Fravashis of the righteous men of the Sairimian lands. We venerate the Fravashis of the righteous women of the Sairimian lands. We venerate the Fravashis of the righteous men of the Sainian lands. We venerate the Fravashis of the righteous women of the Sainian lands. We venerate the Fravashis of the righteous men of the Dahian lands. We venerate the Fravashis of the righteous women of the Dahian lands. We venerate the Fravashis of the righteous men of all the lands. We venerate the Fravashis of the righteous women of all the lands.

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## NOTES

1. Shahrnaz and Arnavaz are *Sañhavâchi* and *Arenavâchi* in the Avesta. There they are Azhi Dahâka's wives and are not mentioned as Yima Khshaeta's sisters. Their names mean "Instructive-Word" and "Obliging-Word," unusual names. (see Note 3 also)
2. Damâvand, the highest peak of the Alborz (Elburz) range is 18,934 feet (5,771 meters) above the sea level. The peak is always snow-covered and is only 33 miles (53 kilometers) ENE of Tehran and presents a tall, beautiful cone on clear days. The word should be *Dûmavant* in Avesta and *dhûmavant* in Sanskrit, meaning 'smoking', because the peak is nothing but a huge dormant volcanic crater.
3. Fareidun is *Thraetaona*, son of *Athwya* in the Avesta. He appears as *Trita* or *Traitana* (meaning 'third' or 'Belonging to the Third') with *Aptya* (Watery ) as his epithet. Keeping the Vedic form and legend, the Avestan form should be *Apthya* and not *Athwya*. The Persian form of *Âbtîn* supports this conclusion. Thraetaona was born in

the “four-cornered” Varena, the fourteen land in the Aryan abode, perhaps close to and north of the Vedic Indus valley. When grown, he succeeded in obtaining *Khvarenah*, the Royal Glory, described as an eagle, which had left Yima. He killed Azhi Dahaka and took his two wives, Sanhavachi and Arenavachi, “whose most beautiful bodies were highly suited for reproduction”. The Avesta alludes to a strange feat of Thraetaona. He turned a skilled navigator, Paurva, into a vulture and made him fly. The amateurish flying seaman flew three days and three nights but could not locate his home to alight. He turned to the Water Deity Aredvi Sura Anahita and asked her for help. She caught him by his arms and lowered him safely on the ground near his house. We have no other source to elaborate on the feat. Thritha is shown as an herbal healer, a nutritionist, and a surgeon in the Avesta, who used 99,999 herbs to heal as many diseases, and so is Traitana in the Vedas. He is considered the father of the Aryan medicine.

4. Alborz is *Harâ Berezaiti* (Sanskrit \**Sarâ Brhati*), meaning the “lofty lake”, perhaps from the lakes formed by melting glaciers. The Avestan name of Hara Berezaiti could be applied to several mountains: modern Alborz south of the Caspian Sea, evidently the southern-most corner of the Aryan lands, the Hindukush in modern Afghanistan and the Pamirs. Usually, migrating people of the same stock keep the memories of their old settlements alive by giving their new settlements the same old names. Therefore, one encounters identical names as one moves from place to place. European geographical names abound in the Americas, only to remind the immigrants of their old homes. It is, therefore, understandable that we see more than one identical names of places on the Iranian Plateau, the home of the migrating and then settling Aryans. The same holds true of Vedic names in the Indus valley.
5. Kondrow is *Gandarewa* (almost with the same letters in modern Persian script) who is a pirate in the Avesta.
6. Fareidun has no sons in the Avesta. Iraj, *Airyavah* (Aryan-help), is an ancestor of *Manushchithra* or Manuchehr. However, the Avesta mentions several people, evidently akin to one another in race and language. They are: *Airyâ*, Aryans or later Iranians; *Tuirya*, Turanians; *Sairima*, Sarmatians; *Sâini* (?); and *Dâhi*, Dahae. We can distinguish the first three in the later tradition as the children of Iraj, Tur, and Salm. While the Avestan names show the Aryans and their akin or neighboring peoples, in the eastern half of the Iranian Plateau and borders, the later tradition enlarges it enough to include Anatolia and the lands west of it and the Mongolian-Chinese regions in the east.

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