

## An Anthropological Study of Melmedas in Iran and Siren in Greece

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**ABSTRACT** Myths and legends, both are an important part of cultural, historical and literary heritage of all nations which are transferred chest to chest through generations. Thus, myth and legend are discussed in many fields such as literature, psychology, linguistics, folklore, etc. The present study is an attempt to come out with a comparative study of two mythical characters from two different cultures: *Melmedas* in *Hormozgan* culture and *Siren* in the culture of ancient Greece. The methodology adopted for this research focuses on past researches and relevant data collected from library materials including field research. The findings suggest that these two characters, besides having a lot of similarities, represent the thoughts of the two separate too; all of which indicates that myths have same origins. In other words, it is the common demands and aspirations of the people of various communities that raise similar mythical and legendary characters.

### INTRODUCTION

Tragedies can be found in different nations and cultures. Although these tragedies are native, but different versions can also be found in other nations. "Myths are full of identities and contradictions" (Zabihniya and Akbari 2014). The first thing that is being left anonymous, as far as its creators and its history is concerned, is popular culture. Culture consists of "ideology, psychology, philosophy, religion, science, social institutions, and rituals, and it also includes ceremonies, poems, songs, legends, myths, and all folk arts" (Bayhaqi 1977). "Structures of popular culture are created based on the will of the people, the place and the system in which they live" (Mohammadi 1998). Another factor that, along with political, economic, and social issues in the cultural growth, may slow or accelerate the development to the culture and traditions of a community is to step in the direction of the unknown issues towards which man has always had a fear or doubt to walk. "Elderly people of our time and era have also done every ritual by pertaining the same ritual and tradition as their ancestors did; they have been enjoying a traditional culture. Man who is endowed with a traditional culture, and familiar with the cultural rituals follows the same heavenly archetypes throughout the consecutive ages and has been following the same models consistently" (Bahar 1994).

*Melmedas* and *Siren* who both have considered mythic figures are from two different cultures. These figures have common features in-

dicating the human collective consciousness; they represent the cultures of Iran and Greece, respectively. Comparing these two figures, may light the contents of the collective unconsciousness of human being, and helps illuminating vague and dark corners of the old social and cultural structures, and understanding the ideas and beliefs of ancient people.

### Comparative Literature

Comparative literature is one of the branches of literary criticism that deals with the evaluation of works, elements, types, styles, eras, literary movements and figures; it deals with a comparison between different cultures and languages. Anoosheh believes:

*This genre mostly talks about literature and literary relationship between different nations; it points out the similarities and differences persisting the literature of a country. Development and prosperity of comparative literature results from expansion of literary links between various nations, and popularity and publication of their books, especially in the twentieth century. Comparative literature, not only completes the world literature and is a great base for literary criticism, but also is the most important factor in sociological researches and their proper understanding. It can lead human societies to create a spirit of understanding and cooperation among people (Anoosheh 1997).*

Comparative literature is significant historically; it focuses on the connection between lit-

eratures in the past and present, provides a different role for literature (Ghanimifard 1994).

### Oral Literature

As part of an oral tradition, the oral literature during different periods and in different countries represents various ethnic groups. Since the time man has used writing to record his words, thoughts, and feelings, oral literature has turned into written literature; “these words have been inscribed on clay tablets, stone, wood, bone and so on” (Mirhadi and Jahanshahi 1997).

### Theoretical Foundations

“Anthropology has helped the development of man’s knowledge in analyzing different in Iran, India and Greece” (Daniel 2013). For over a century, the thinkers of the world have offered different theories about the concept of myth. Among social sciences, Anthropology, more than other sciences, focuses on understanding the mythology of various ethnic groups throughout the world; it analyzes the social and cultural structure of myth and its role and functional importance in the community, especially in primitive societies. Followers Evolutionism, Functionalism, and Structuralism have offered a variety of definitions and analyses of myths or sacred stories, but none of them has presented a comprehensive explanation on the concept of myth.

James Frazer (1854-1941), representing the school of Evolutionism in anthropology, considered myth as an explanation of the basic rituals, and stated that: “at the beginning, the myths were often mixed with rituals and rites, and were held for the fertility of land” (Brockett 2007).

“Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942), the founder of the School of Functionalism in anthropology, considered myth as a direct expression of the functionalism, and the theme and rehabilitation of a narrative of an initial fact, expressed to meet deep religious needs, ethical quests, social constraints, emphasis on practices, and even practical requirements” (Brockett 2007).

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and followers, interpreted myth as “a symbol of the internal biome of conscious mind that rooted in psycho-

sexual quests of human and a justification for unconscious dreams, fear, and sexual desires” (Brockett 2007).

Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961), the Swiss psychologist and psychiatrist, and his followers assumed that:

*Myths represent the themes connected with the collective unconscious that are presented as samples of mother, child, hero, trickster and giant. These are all simple mental figurative forms and individual life experiences determining how the former can be explained. This suggests that all the world’s myths have similar themes which reflect a single and shared collective unconscious. Myths, in their manner of performance, demonstrate the impact of the physical, social, economic and political environment of every culture in the form of typical examples* (Brockett 2007).

Mircea Eliade (1907-1986), the anthropologist and historian, considered myths as the essence of religion that emerged from the genuine religious experiences. He considered myth as “a divine story discussing realities and expressing the origin and genesis of the world, animals, plants, human beings and all the primary and main events” of the world” (Alan Segal 2010).

Sacred religious experience gives mythology a useful structure and function. Reviewing several religious subjects such as, the nature of the Gods, myths of creation, sacrifices, ethics, death, and heaven, reveals several resemblances and differences between cultures.

Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009), the founder of the structuralism, considers myths as abstract structures in contrast to the narrative stories and symbols of human experiences in life. He believes that “all human minds are alike and this resemblance is clearly visible in the ways they deal with their problems. Therefore, myths are similar products of similar minds and they all have a single shared structure” (Shahroodi 2002).

Although myth has various definitions and interpretations in different perspectives, but in short it can be defined as:

*A narrative or symbolic expression about gods and angels that people use to express their interpretation of existence; myth is a true and sacred history occurred in a primordial time and in a symbolic, fictitious and illusionary way discusses how something was created, ex-*

ists, or will disappear, and finally, myths probe existence in an analogous manner (Ismailpoor 2012).

In fact, "myth" is man's report of his world as he sees and finds it; "mythology serves as a response of primitive man to his fundamental questions about the world" (Emami 2001).

From the modern man's point of view, myth is just a lie; but a critic who believes in myth considers myth "a true story that is sacred and has exalted dignity, and should not be quoted everywhere, and its narration is only authorized in certain times with certain rituals" (Dumezil and Roger 2007). "Primitive man's mind doesn't create myth, but experiences it" (Propp 2007).

### The Necessity and Significance of the Research

Given the fact that no research has been done in this area, and especially the fact that mythical character *Melmedas*, continues to be quoted verbally in *Hormozgan*, this research could be the first step in introducing this character through writing. Furthermore, this study will give us the answer to the question whether the mythical characters, divided between the old and rich civilization, play same role too; can they have common meanings in the terms of the collective unconscious?

### Research Background

There have been separate researches on Greek myth, such as *The Greek Mythology* by Pinsaint (2001) translated by Bajlan Farokhi; but *Melmedas* myth continues to be quoted verbally in the province, and except a brief reference in the book *Persian Mythology* by John Hinnells (2009) translated by Jaleh Amoozgar and Ahmad Tafazzoli, no research has been done in the area.

### METHODOLOGY

In this paper, due to shortage of authentic literature about *Melmedas*, field research was conducted in the *Hormozgan* province. Then by studying Greek mythology, a similar character of *Siren*, has been selected and examined. Finally, these two characters were evaluated and compared in the collective unconscious of people in Iran and Greece.

## OBSERVATION AND DISCUSSION

### Types of Myths

"Myths can be divided into the following categories:

1. Myth of origins
2. Myth of the creation of the world
3. Myth of the creation of first man, plant, cow, mountain, etc.
4. Myth of reward and punishment
5. Myth of the savior and liberator
6. Myth of character
7. Myth of Renaissance
8. Myth of the formation of tribes and their settlement in ancient times
9. Myth of the foundation of every phenomenon
10. Myth of eternity and immortality" (Haji Nasrullah 2011)

### Subject and Theme

"In mythology, we can find any subject that has been sacred for man, such as, the creation of the universe, the creation of the world, the creation of mankind, plants, animals, minerals, rivers, waters, mountains, and everything that has been old in the field of man's cognition; these include the origin of death and the end of the world, hope for arrival the promised savior and the new world, man's redemption, eternity, man's fate, and a new generation" (Muezzin and Mohammadi 2000).

### The Role of Imagination in Mythology

Ancient imaginative pictures stem from numerous phenomena that have no artistic or literary nature. Imagination in myths is collective.

*In every myth-believing society, each image is a reflection of its people's beliefs. Imaginative pictures, more than anything else, express the relationship between human beings and natural phenomena and supernatural creatures. Myths and legends are more influenced by the collective imagination. This is why despite thousands of legends, fantasy images are schematic (Mohammadi 1998).*

In ancient times, many images were unknown, fearful and painful to people. At this suffering, primitive man started to create; he created imaginative characters, actions, signs, transition ritual and etc. Along with the ritual imagination and the collective power of his people,

“he created a bond between the real and supernatural worlds. Time lost its objectivity and became subjective” (Haji Nasrullah 2011).

### Plot in Mythology

In mythology, the struggle between gods and anti-gods shapes the plot, but a cause and effect relationship does not exist. In myth, the events come one after another because they should be so. There is a “complete system of interrelation in each myth that is beyond the narrative and temporal systems” (Vaheddoost 2002).

### Point of View

The narrator of myth is usually a third person. This might be due to the fact that “the sacred beliefs of the people used to be narrated orally when they were popular” (Haji Nasrullah 2011).

### Language of Mythology

“The language of myth is symbolic and the language of symbols is somehow the language of signs” (Vaheddoost 2002). The language of myth has become symbolic through time, since primitive man never thought of speaking inconspicuously; he has expressed his sacred beliefs in a simple language. Primitive thinking ended through time and with changes in the structure of human life in social evolution. Thus myths became mystified and cryptic” (Haji Nasrullah 2011).

Symbol enlightens the unconscious libido by giving a conscious meaning to it, and it strengthens consciousness by pouring the psychic power of image in it. Therefore symbol represents a perfect balance. Moreover “symbol, as a mediator and buffer, is the creator of man in the unification process too” (Lofler Delasho 2007).

### Scene in Myth

Time is eternal in myth. The beginning and the end of time are two special mythological era, and the after death events and man’s fate can then be used alongside these two major mythical issues.

Gods and anti-gods play important roles in supernatural in myth; these supernatural beings perform specific actions such as creation, eternity, and so on. Myth has a sacred and wonderful place and is beyond earth. In “mythic narra-

tives, the normal world is a duplication of its divine pattern and many places on earth, such as temples remain sacred” (Haji Nasrullah 2011).

### Character

The main characters in myths are “gods, goddesses and angels who are endowed with goodness, and the devil and demons who are endowed with evil and darkness” (Bahar 1994).

Most of the mythological characters in the stories include:

Imaginary characters such as *Fairies*, *Jinns*<sup>1</sup>, *King of fairies*, *Incubus*<sup>2</sup>, *Gog and Magog*<sup>3</sup>, *Monster*, *Demon*, *Al*, *Donkey of Dajjal*<sup>4</sup>, *Simurgh*, *Dragon*, *Phoenix*; and natural entities like the sun, stars, mountains, caves, rock, wells, springs, trees, water, forests, and rocks” (Anjavi Shirazi 1992).

### *The Formation of Character in Myth and Legend*

Generally, in the creation of these imaginary creatures, man’s imagination has been subject to the following three basic modes:

- A. Creating a creature that is smaller than human beings, like a dwarf, or larger creator, like a giant or monster; however, sometimes these creatures were presented with horns and tail.
- B. Creating entities that have faces similar to men, like the angels that have wings, or sea fairies that are half-man and half-fish. *Melmedas* and *Siren* are in this category.
- C. Creating fantasy creatures that look like animals such as, *Dragon*, *Phoenix* and the like.

Linking the appearance of these creatures with good or evil and/or ugliness and beauty, is inspired by a mythical and absolute thinking that essentially embodies its emotions. Embodiment of evil becomes demon and dragon, and embodiment of good becomes phoenix and fairy (Mohammadi 1998).

### **The Mythology of Iran and Hormozgan**

Ancient Iranian myths have a great place in the mysterious world of mythology, and knowing them helps us in understanding the rich culture of Iran. Iranian mythology can be accessed by studying the Middle Persian or Pahlavi sur-

living texts such as, *the Vandidad*<sup>5</sup>, *the Gathas*<sup>6</sup>, *the Bundahishn*<sup>7</sup>, the *Dçnkart*<sup>8</sup>, the Excerpts of *Zadasparam*<sup>9</sup> (a religious encyclopedia), the *Book of Jamasb*<sup>10</sup>, the *Book of Arda Viraf*<sup>11</sup> (Inspiration and predictions), the Advices of a Divine Wisdom, and ancient artifacts such as, inscriptions, coins, high reliefs, the historical context of the Islamic era, the surviving customs, *Ferdowsi's Shahnameh*, and finally ancient Indian sources like the Vedas, especially the Rig Veda poems.

Iranian myths and legends have constantly changed over time, as this nation has been placed on the crossroads of culture and commerce. Considering the most prominent cultures that have come to Iran, the following valuable information is achieved:

- ♦ *The first influence on Iranian myths and legends began in prehistoric era with the arrival of the Aryans who brought with themselves their myths and legends to Iran; later, the blend of these myths with native myths and legends, established the essential and central line of Iranian myths and legends.*
- ♦ *In the second period, the Medes, who captured Southwestern Iranian territories like the Assyrians territory, took some elements of Iranian mythology and legends there and brought some elements of their Myths and legends to Iran.*
- ♦ *In the third period, domination of Greek army started with the arrival of Alexander into Iran. Greeks scattered their army in different parts of Iran and started Hellenizing the Iranian culture, and added several elements of their myth and legends to the culture of Iran.*
- ♦ *In the fourth era, the Parthian era, pure Iranian culture resurrected. The Parthians defeated the Seleucids, and tried to remove the signs of the Greek culture by reviving the Persian myths and legends.*
- ♦ *The Sassanid era was marked by significant cultural prosperity. This period should be named cultural connection era as the most outstanding Indian literary and cultural texts that rooted in the Aryan culture came to Iran through translation and influenced the Iranian myths and legends. (Mohammadi 1998)*

When Arabs conquered Iran, a Sami-Arabic cultural wave emerged. Arab myths and legends

were much simple and primitive as compared to Iranian myths and legends. With the incursions of Mongols, who were nomadic and wild people, Iranian culture damaged again. It was during this era that by burning Iranian libraries and genocide, tragic event of cultural destruction was repeated.

Among provinces of Iran, *Hormozgan* province, which is one of the country's historic regions, has many legends and myths due to racial and ethnic diversity, some of which continues to be quoted orally and have not been written yet.

Some of the myths and legends of *Hormozgan* are very similar to the myths of other countries, because this province is located on a trade route and different races used to be present there. One of these mythical characters is *Melmedas* who is considered one of the most important myths in the province.

### Mythology in Ancient Greek

One issue which has been bothering the Greeks, is the issue of the creation of the world. The world was believed to be a creation of god, in the same way that a carpenter shapes a wooden tool" (Pinsent 2001).

As a result, many works have been written, the oldest of which are as follows:

1. *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are the oldest Greek literary works and everlasting great epics by Homer; both narrate about an ancient social organization that operates primarily in Anatolia, about 800 B.C., and its final form emerges during the reign of Peisistratos in Athens.
2. *Works and Days* by Hesiod, who had a fight with his brother for inheritance of his father. Hesiod's father came back from Anatolia and settled in Beotia, the home of epic poems. It is said that *The Theogony Poems* are by Hesiod, but it seems that the work belongs to one of his descendants, who was initially influenced by his poetry in the sixth century B.C. and Hesiod has polished the latter's work.
3. Another largest collection of lyrical poetry is *Victory odes* by Pindar, that is about Olympians, and includes mythological content. Pindar, in the mid-fifth century B.C., was a collector of works of Homer and older poets. He was a poet that adapted an early myth with his accepted ethical principles.

4. The works of tragedy writers of the fifth century B.C. such as works of Achilles, Sophocles and Euripides are influenced by the afore-said Greek poets. These works reflect their attitudes about the nature of the gods and the world. Some of these stories represent etiology myth and a special ritual.
5. Setting myths and legends in the form of a pedigree began from the beginning of the sixth century B.C. in Anatolia, and it was introduced by scholars in Alexandria.
6. *Description of Greece* by Pausanias written in 170 A.D. In this book, Pausanias discusses the mythical history of the lands he saw, and uses the Athenian and Alexandrian geographical studies as his sources. This book contains local and mythical ceremonies that are associated with people's beliefs.
7. *The Legendary Pedigree of Apollodorus*, is the only complete book that contains great mythical information. However, some of the narratives are influenced by the Alexandrian tragic works and traditions. (Pinsent 2001)

#### **Melmedas or Menmendas in Hormozgan**

*Melmedas* is a mermaid-like creature. She has a very beautiful and attractive upper body. But in the lower part of her body she has two large, sharp and very dangerous sickles. In some areas of the province, it is believed that her hands looked like sickles (Hinnells 2009).

*Melmedas* would appear to the youth and invite them to sleep with her, but while sleeping, her legs would cut the young victim into pieces.

On the edge of the Persian Gulf this mythical character is called *Menmendas*. *Melmedas* has other names including *MomDas*, *Ommoldas*, and *Mildas*. There are also different beliefs about where *Melmedas*.

#### **The Hormoz Islanders**

They believe that there used to be a huge lotus tree next to the valley of salt. A beautiful woman used to sit under the tree around sunset. The woman who was called *Melmedasm* used to take her long hair with one hand and comb it with

the other. Men who saw her, were trapped with her enchanting look. They would go to her side and sleep with her. Then *Melmedas* would lose her beautiful face, turn into an old woman and with her hands cut the man in pieces.

#### **Siren in Greece**

Cooper described the *Siren* in his encyclopedia as "a bird with the head of a woman who deceived the sailors. The *Siren* symbolizes the musical instrument, the flute, which represents the deceptive forces of senses and domain of illusions" (Cope 2005).

*Sirens* were considered as the daughters of Phorcys, god of sea, although in the other versions of the myth, Achelous the god of rivers is considered their father. They sang very nice and charmingly, misleading the sailors with their songs and pulling them toward the deadly cliffs where they sang. "Odysseus, the hero of Greek mythology, could safely pass their island, as on the advice of Circe the witch, he had all of his sailors plug their ears with beeswax and tie him to the mast of his ship so not to mislead the ship by *Sirens'* lure and be able to hear their voice with no danger" (Minabi 1967).

#### **An Analysis of the Collective Unconscious in the Two Mythical Characters *Melmedas* and *Siren***

These two mythical characters can be categorized as sea fairies. "Fairies are characters that being influenced by mythical beliefs, have found their way into legends. These beautiful creatures, have magical powers, and they seduce the young princes" (Mohammadi 1998). Fairy was originally "the wife of deity of procreation, fertility and abundance, and therefore has been associated with water and rain. In fact she was involved in producing a good product and has been giving abundance and profusion to people" (Sarkaraty 2006). Fairies can be further described those creatures who

*Can turn into any shape that they want, so they're commonly hidden to human eye. They have shells and are often in their shell, and won't come out unless necessary. Mostly in the fairy tales the place they live in is a very beautiful garden, sometimes underground, sometimes located under the sea. Fairies are often*

*good natured and kind and helpful to humans; but these very fairies are at times so villainous, violent and brutal that their actions are similar to demons in the stories* (Aspargham 2011).

Since these two mythic characters are women, a survey on the presence of women in the myths and legends seems to be necessary, too. Presence of women in myths and legends are divided into three categories:

- A. *The main and active character who helps the protagonist achieve his wealth and mammon. This role is subordinate to the main protagonist and acts as a guide and mentor.*
- B. *The second female role is a negative role, such as the witch.*
- C. *The third group of characters are secondary and passive. Here the women are presented as reward for the protagonists. Fairies in legends and myths are in this group* (Jahazi 2009).

But these two mythical characters described in the paper play negative roles; they seek to destroy the main character and protagonist. The main character of mythic stories are always the men; if we consider this definition that: "In mythology woman are at the center of everything that is man's favorite," (Delkor 1999), then it may be concluded that one of the steps that every mythical character should take is putting away his sweet dreams, or else, if he is distracted by these desires and beauties, he will be out of the main route and drawn into the destruction. In addition, choosing women as bait to destroy the protagonist has been an important issue here

Jung views the archetypes as "permanent and eternal paradigms of human understanding and perception. These paradigms do not have any appearances, but they show up in terms of archetypal images. These are general motifs that come from the collective unconscious and are the basic content of religions and myths. These motifs appear to people through dreams and visions" (Cope 2005).

The *Melmedas* and the *Siren* constitute parts of a mythical story. Both are creatures with flawless beautiful appearances, but villainous and evil characters; these could be considered as a symbol of characters with charming appearances that draw people into destruction, or worldly things that seduce men. In some stories and

poems, the same concept is applied to the world too, they liken it to a beautiful but evil woman who draws people to herself and then destroys them. It also can be a symbol of all earthly and baseless desires of man that look glamorous yet end ominously.

If we interpret these characters based on the beliefs in our present society, they could be symbols of social problems or modern amenities and necessities that has overwhelmed everyone. Besides, human beings are sometimes so obsessed with modern facilities that they forget the basis of their lives.

The similarities between these two mythical characters are so much as if they were created by same author. Many psychologists, and on top of them Jung, consider the common heritage of the human psyche (the collective unconscious) the reason to these similarities and common myths in different nations. Though, it should be noted that another group put the "archetype aside and believe that the human collective unconscious is nothing but a symbol that is repeated sufficiently in the literature" (Frye 1998).

Even if we look at these characters as symbols, they only differ in appearance where *the Melmedas* is a very beautiful creature with upper body of a woman that seduces men while combing her hair and showing off her body, and *the Siren* is a beautiful winged woman that draws men to her side by playing music; and both of them are symbols of seduction.

## CONCLUSION

Although myths differ in details, but the more we explore and explain them, the better we realize their similarities in structure and infrastructure and notice that they follow a global pattern.

Comparing and contrasting these two figures, we find some common aspects that indicate exemplary images in the mental collective unconscious of both authors. From sociological point of view, it can be inferred that although myths have no single common superstructure, but certain archetypes have influenced the minds of the writers.

When a man cannot understand some of the world's problems, he turns to imagination and draws old myths further into the mystery, so that his wonder of the phenomenon turns into the beginning of his efforts for understanding.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the common structures, signs and concepts among oral and written literature of different nations, it is suggested that attempts should be made for more and better recognition of cultural and intellectual foundations. Such a firm foundation can be considered as a factor to make world cultures closer to each other.

## NOTES

1. *Jinn*: It is a kind of supernatural creature. It is believed that they are made of smokeless fire (Holy Quran 55:15; *Ar-Rahman*, "And He created the jinn from a smokeless flame of fire") which lives both apparent and hidden. Several parts of Quran refer to it and seventy second chapter of Quran is named Al-Jinn. Arab culture researchers believe that the root of this word is Jenna, but it might have a foreign root. Old Persian resources use the Persian word *Pari* (fairy) and the Arabic word jinn equally.
2. *Incubus*: It is a state of strangulation and weight that sometimes man feels at sleep, it is a terrible dream coupled with feeling suffocation and weight on body that awakens you. In Arabic it is called *Kaboos* (nightmare).
3. *Gog and Magog*: The holy Quran refers to Gog and Magog in two chapters, first in chapter *Kahf* verses 93 to 98, and second in chapter *Anbia* (Prophets) verse 96. Quran verses clearly indicate that these two names belong to two wild bloodthirsty tribes that disturbed people living near their residence area.
4. *Dajal's Donkey*: It is a donkey that the liar *Dajal* will ride on at the time of the emergence of Imam Mahdi (AJ), and each hair of it will have a witching tune. The dung of this donkey will look like date to the people. They will run behind it and collect and eat its dung, but then they find out that it's not date. Whoever follows this animal will end up in hell.
5. The *Vandidad*: The *Vandidad* is a collection of texts within the greater compendium of the Avesta and mostly deals with jurisprudence (including sanitary and ritual issues). However, *Vandidad* is a worthy treasure of the most entrenched and fundamental motifs of myths and Iranian culture. In Sassanid Avesta that had 21 *nasks* (books) *Vandidad* was the nineteenth *nask*. Some believe that the *Vandidad* themes reflect the rituals of Median Magus, and from this perspective it defers from other sections of Avesta. Many of Zoroastrians today say that *Vandidad* content is in conflict with Gathas, and though they acknowledge a historic-myth of cognitive importance for it, they don't consider it valuable for religious citation. *Vandidad* has 22 fargards (chapters).
6. The Gathas: *Gatas* (Avestan) plural of *Gata* means hymn which has changed to *Gatha* in Pahlavi language and it is called *Gah* in Persian language. A trace of this word is still visible in the present Iranian music systems like *Se gah* and *Chahar gah*. The *Gathas* are different from other sections of Avesta in regard to grammar, syntax, language, expression method, presentation method, thoughts, poetry style and other features. Therefore all Avesta experts and scholars believe that they have been composed by *Zarathushtra* himself. Gathas are poetic and rhythmic like ancient Iran religious poems that were very concise and are an exception in terms of grammar.
7. The *Bundahishn*: *Bundahishn* is a book in Pahlavi language that was last edited in the third century A.H. In Persian It is also called *bundahish*. Its writer (final editor) was "*Farnabagh*". "*Bundahishn*" means "the primary creation" or "fundamental creation". The book was probably originally named "*Zand-Âkâsîh*", meaning "*Zand-knowing*" as it is mentioned at the beginning of the book. These show that the author has based his work on the interpretations of Avesta. *Bundahish* is written in 36 chapters. The book content has tree man axis: Primary Creations, Description of Creatures, and *Kayanids* Family Tree.
8. *The Dçnkard or Dçnkart* is a great book in Middle Persian (Pahlavi) language, which is properly named "Encyclopedia of *Mazdaism*" or "Textbook of *Mazdai* (Zoroastrian) Religion". The term "*denkard*" (*dçnkart* in Middle Persian) can be translated to "Acts of Religion" or "Religious literature".
9. *The Zadasparam*: *Zadasparam* or *Zatasparam* was son of *Gashan Jam*, one of Zoroastrian leaders during Abbasids era and ruler of Kerman and *Sirjan*. He lived in third century A.H. and his father *Gashan Jam Shapuram* was also a well-known Zoroastrian priest of the era. His fame was due to writing a book on Zoroastrian jurisprudence that was known as The Excerpts of *Zadasparam*. *Zadasparam* tried to simplify Zoroastrianism provisions. These innovations raised objection of some the Zoroastrian priests and authors to the extent that his brother *Manoochehr*, compiled a book called the letters of *Manoochehr* in rejection of his innovation
10. *The book of Jamasb*: *The book of Jamasb* (Middle Persian: *Jamasap Namag*) or *Zhamsap Namak*, is a book in Middle Persian (Pahlavi) language and its author is *Jamasb the Sage*, from Hugo family who are praised in Avesta. In this book, *Jamasb* has made some predictions in reply to the questions of King *Vishtaspa*.
11. *The Book of Arda Viraf*: the famous book of Arda Viraf offers a comprehensive image of hell in Zoroastrianism. The book that apparently was written in the third century A.H. is one of important resources in oral history of ancient Zoroastrian faith. The book content indicates that its main Pahlavi text belongs to the late Sassanid era. The book is story of a Zoroastrian priest that in order to remove the doubt of people about religion, resurrection, heaven and hell, puts himself in a seven day sleep with the help of other priests, and his soul sees the good deeds of the righteous in the heaven and *padafrah* (punishment) of the wicked in the hell; after he wakes up he retells those stories. This man is named *Viraf* that is titled *Arda*, which means saint. The Zoroastrian priests give



Arda Viraf a narcotic and holy syrup that under its effect he sleeps for three nights and days and after waking up, he tells the stories of his spiritual journey for others. Although the story of Arda Viraf's spiritual journey is imaginary and clearly raised from the effect of hemp or an opioid like that, nonetheless, it gives us a unique source of Zoroastrian interpretations of heaven and hell.

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