

## OUR OWN RELIGION IN ANCIENT PERSIA.<sup>1</sup>

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IN speaking of our religion as having existed at an early date in Middle Asia, I do not mean to antedate the *Annus-um Domini*. Our religion at its then state of growth at the period to which I refer is naturally meant. Nor do I desire to assert that the *catena* of its external and more adventitious circumstances, whether antecedent or sequent, was extended there, in ancient Persia, for Christianity undoubtedly belongs, as regards most of its external details, to Judea, Jesus the Christ having been born in Bethlehem and having suffered at Jerusalem. What I mean is that everything which makes up the *real value* of our Christianity was there, in ancient Persia.

Indeed, we may say that everything which constitutes the elements of its actual existence as a *sincere religion* was to be found under the Achæmenian and Parthian dynasties, even to the details of its constitutive hopes and fears, and this with a completeness which filled up every crevice of receptivity in copious abundance. And I am quite confident that a large section of the Christian public is with me in not merely calling attention to this fact, but in sol-

<sup>1</sup>The first instalment of this article appeared in the July *Open Court*. This one has been reprinted with the author's revision from the *East and West* of Bombay for October, 1908. The author hopes that his readers will see that they may yet with him, if only professionally, in accepting these views, *utterly deny* that the Persians ever had anything to do with the Jews before the Jews had accepted this Exilic eschatology. That the Jews did not originally acquire these ideas from the Persians. The indisputable and unanswerable fact which I am endeavoring to make clear is that the two systems *existed in the two nations*—and that they were approximately identical and this *totally aside from all question as to reciprocal influence*. It is the more necessary to make this point because some writers will endeavor to shuffle up the issues, if they have not already done so.

In their eagerness to disprove all Persian influence whatsoever upon the Exilic Jews, early or late, they will stop at nothing to muffle up the facts.

It is then at first solely a question of the *existence* of the two systems in their approximate identity, and aside from all actual external connection,—and this no honest expert can deny.

emply appealing to all men to consider it as a part of our own spiritual history—for it bears upon the future of our present religion as well as upon our present study of the past. All that section of the baptized millions who are more passionately devoted to the truth are keen to recognize pre-Christian godliness, or even less early ex-Christian rectitude, wherever it can be discovered to have prevailed; and this as well as post-Christian superiority even up to the present day, and among peoples who had not (and who have not) yet outwardly embraced the tenets of the Church; for they hold that godliness *is* Christianity in its essence. Unquestionably, for the aims, objects and tasks of our active pietism, the *present* is more important than the past (though this present instantly becomes a part of an ever-consummating posteriority) and the near future is more vital to us in our efforts to rescue human souls—that is, to save human character—than the nearest past—in our earnest efforts. But then it is a part of our own salvation *now* for us to know what has happened with men's spiritual being! that is, with their manhood, in times gone by, as well as in times now present, for the present may well depend upon this knowledge, somewhat, as well as the future, while the far distance of that past might at times rather enhance than diminish the value of the issues, because the farther back in the matter of time any force existed, the wider is the circle of its present incidence. It has touched everything, and that is the reason why we so much value remote history; all the future was there in embryonic power. To ignore the past because it is old is to ignore the source of our intellectual existence, and of the existence of all who surround us,—for a thing is *one with its source*.

We have no right at all then to continue to exist in ignorance of any good thing which has ever transpired, or of any good men who have ever existed; for their examples should influence us, as they have, in matter of fact, helped to make us what we are. We may be prepared to die perhaps without this knowledge, allowance being made for us upon the score of "invincible ignorance," but we certainly are not so well prepared to *live* without it. A human being is perforce under obligations to admit those rays of information which reveal to him what God is doing now, and also as well what He has done in the past and even in the remote past—for Righteousness is not a thing of time or place; "God is at every now the same,"<sup>2</sup>—the future depends upon Him as it does also so plainly upon ourselves. So precisely here—even pragmatically—the existence of our religion in ancient Persia may, if indeed we cannot

<sup>2</sup> Yasna xxxi.

say that it *must*, have exerted some influence perhaps even upon that signal policy of *restoration toward Israel* which the Persian Government doubtless regarded as a trivial item in the working of its vast political machinery ever in full activity—but which was to be of such extreme interest, not only to the scanty Jews, but through them to later Europe, with one-third of the human race.

“*Our own Religion*,” then, beyond all things, asserts to itself this right to be called “spiritual,” by which many of us understand that it is a religion of unfettered principles as of loyal truth, and of these certain external facts were but the outcome and expression. But principles are intellectual forces following laws within the human cerebral tissues which are themselves as objectively real as the seas and the rivers; they are in fact themselves, and as of course, a part of nature, and much more difficult to encounter than most of her other powers. You cannot arrest their activity, nor restrict them, granted that they now exist, or once existed—being also inevitably future, as contained in beings now existing in the present, having themselves also issued from an unbroken past. Time and space have no application to them—these principles—for they depend upon the everlasting laws of “balance,” i. e., on the evenness of gravitation, thus intellectually, spiritually, upon truth. Periods, duration and locality have only reference to the human cerebral and cardiac fibres within which their subjects lodge. So long then as there have been human beings anywhere in whose consciousness those principles exist under a law even in germ, they—those principles—will in due course one day come to birth and to maturity; they are as well eternal as immutable.

Our religion, therefore, in all that makes up its real existence, has been ever alive and effective wherever there has been an honest heart earnestly desiring to do right, however near to Israel or distant from our own spiritual forebears its time and place may have been. The Church itself seemed to acknowledge this when she half canonized some of the early Greeks. Recall what Justin Martyr (?) said of Socrates and Herakleitos. And *this* we are forced to look at—if we are honest men—for the reasons given. In fact we may plainly say that, at all phases of them, every religion has needed to be at times reformed, and our own is no exception at this moment. And no sane reformation of a religion can take place without the study of its past as well as of its present facts, and, as we may add, also of its forecasted future.

In ancient Persia then, as in less ancient Israel, these same pervading principles worked themselves into realistic systematized doc-

trines of expectation, out of which arose subordinate quasi-historical narrative, of alleged true, or imaginary circumstances, as a matter of course. These latter may, in large part, as is now agreed, be relegated to the domain of myth, and that in both branches of the religion. What concerns us chiefly is the doctrines of these laws in their regard to future destiny in view of them—and even here we are chiefly interested in them on account of their *systematized grouping in detail*. For, as man, with his soul, is *one*—or at least is so supposed to be—all moral laws become to some extent of universal recognition, and, in full accordance with this view, the main features of our common Christian orthodoxy, as embodying universal hopes, are detailed in the Zend Avesta in a manner more full perhaps, when closely analyzed, than anywhere in our own earlier Bible.

Of course, the detail of our early Christian annals was predated both by the Exilic Bible and the Zend Avesta, so that no records of real, or supposed, Christian facts appear in either, though they are much anticipated in both. Specimens only of the chief passages which portray these doctrines of the Avesta, and of the Exilic Bible, were printed by me in an essay which had been previously or subsequently twice delivered as a lecture in Oxford, and before audiences distinguished for their fairness and sympathetic response. This discourse in its form of a magazine article was well known among the Parsis in Bombay, where it was translated into Gujarati by the orders of the trustees of the Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy Translation Fund and published by them in a large edition; it had already previously appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* of January, 1894.<sup>3</sup> To this article the reader is referred for the extracts, which were fairly copious. They fully expressed the faith of the North Persians of pre-Exilic times as to the chief constitutive articles of their creed, and ours: to wit, as to the nature and person of God, that He was one; His name was superior in depth to that used by the Christians; He had an Holy Spirit, with six other attributes which were one with Him as with each other (they might well have been, and be now, reduced to “three”); He had angels and archangels, originally the personification of the attributes, and never really losing their first significance; He was the Universal Creator, and Sovereign, theologically; He was omniscient, just and merciful; He was a law-giver and a judge; He was theocratic; His kingdom was for the poor; He was a protector, strengthener and unchangeable. There was a Devil in antithesis to Him, the most pronounced concept of the kind extant. He is, in fact, independent in origin, one of “the

<sup>3</sup> See this article as re-edited in the July number of this periodical.

two first Spirits," a very "God of this world,"—a deep, if disguised, philosophical suggestion. He has his attributes like the other, he created the evil elements of the world, he has evil servants, the chief one a feminine concept, the Lie-Druj.

There are Edens after creation in a succession. Man has a conscience; he is to be judged by it; he is fallible. There is a temptation of Zarathushtra, as there was one of Hercules, of Buddha, and of Christ, each doubtless as representing his fellow-saints. There is an Immortality, and a Resurrection—a judgment both individual and general; it is to be just,—the soul is to judge itself. There is to be a Restoration and a Millennium, a Heaven, and a Hell,—the last, as the first, being chiefly made up of thoughts, words and deeds. This is perhaps the most astonishing feature in the whole system, though it is hard to choose between the items. Like the "attributes," this proves the absolutely unlimited penetration and exhaustiveness of the ideas. The main word for "righteousness," *asha*, equaling the Vedic *rita*, cannot possibly be restricted to the sphere of external ceremonies, though no authorized ceremony could be slighted. The soul is met by its own conscience on the Judge's Bridge. The very first step it takes into Heaven enters the Good Thought, the next, the Good Word, and the third, the Good Deed; and so, if its damnation results, Hell is the soul's evil thoughts primarily, with its evil words and deeds, other torments supervening, as do other blessings for the righteous. The very primal distinction of the Godheads, Good and Evil, is "as to thought and word and deed," where all consideration of ceremonies is necessarily shut out.<sup>4</sup> These future states are to be *eternal*, as is the *soul*. There is, as said, a *propaganda* of these particulars, and a future agent of the Restoration is expected. He is to be born of a virgin, but of the seed of Zoroaster, absorbed from the waters of a lake. He is, under God, to raise the dead, and bring on the beatific restoration which is to supervene. These points, as we see, embrace all the principal expectations of our religion; they are a *Christianity before Christ*—and nothing else can approach them in their claims in this respect. The expectations, supreme as they are in interest, are here necessarily bereft of all that attraction which attaches to detailed narrative, so that I must refer the reader to the former article<sup>5</sup> where they first appeared in their graphic display. But if he follows them I must beg of him

<sup>4</sup> The Deities are indeed responsible for the existence of the ceremonies, good and evil, which they permit; but merit in view of judgment consists in obedience. The Deities do not obey. Their good, or evil, thought, word and deed could not have concerned itself with ritual.

<sup>5</sup> See the July number of this periodical.

likewise to remember that he has here spread out before him the then "future" aspirations of many millions of his once living fellow-creatures—with convictions, hopes and fears which, like his own, cannot possibly have failed to have moulded vast throngs of human lives to better things—and this, not only as regards "sentiment" of itself considered, for the sentiment inflamed by these considerations became beyond all question a spring *to action*, as well as a *curb of restraint*, turning multitudes throughout generations from murder, rapine and arson to sober industry; and that this is something solemn to contemplate, all agree.

Such then are the patent and obtrusive facts of vital interest, which no sane writer has ever yet proposed even to bring into question; for these documents are here before us, and the texts are practically uncontested as to these particulars among capable experts who have given their attention to the subject. No less, then, than this are we here called upon to contemplate, namely, the fact that the essential elements of what we most passionately hold dear as the very primal concepts of revelation,—not even excepting the future coming of a Deliverer,—while long totally unnoticed in pre-Exilic Israel, upon its strip of sea-side territory, had been household law for ages in Iran over vast regions.

*The religions were the same*—this is what we are called to fix our attention upon. And let us pointedly recognize it, though they, these religions, appear in such widely separated places, and in such distantly successive periods—the Israelitish form of it being new, while the Iranian had been established in a system almost ecclesiastical before a Jew ever seriously hoped for rewards beyond the grave—either subjective, or as if by compact; while as to this last subjective principle itself, by which I mean that of interior recompense, it stood long prior in Iran (see above), having had nothing early Semitic of the kind as a mate to it, or even as a successor; while each of these two twin systems was *of independent origin*. And this all should be most solemnly considered by every person born a Christian, whose mind is still at all religiously inclined, for the reasons stated, above and below. Mark that I here say nothing whatsoever as regards any *later* effect of this widespread Iranian creed upon the settled or scattered Jewish tribes who were afterwards indeed re-gathered to their homes in Canaan, under this same Iranian influence, that of its adherents, Cyrus and Darius, and—as I say below—this influence must have been later overpowering; but I do not mention it here for an *especial reason*. I desire even to keep it forcibly, as it were, out of sight for a moment—if I might be

allowed so to express myself—for the sake of putting into focus the fact of the *independent first development* of the Israelitish creed, in spite of the later great influence of the Persian; because, for a certain valued purpose, it is of the utmost importance that we should regard these two identical faiths, if only for an instant, as being things originally *totally apart as regards their external history*, without contact. That purpose is this, namely, that by so separating these two as to their origins, we can the more certainly recognize one still further instance of that truly wonderful thing called "*parallel development from only remotely connected origins*,"—and also the impressive fact that these faiths, with others like them, are still running their sublime course upon these parallel lines, these two also presenting the most striking and touching instance of this co-ordinate but independent growth which the world had till then, or which it has indeed since then, ever seen. And let us clearly understand this in every relation in which it stands to other elements. For it is in the interests of all *scientific psychology*, first of all—and let me emphasize this—that I make this vital point of the separate self-growth of each of the two identities, and not that I wish to base any especial authority for the Hebrew "immortality" upon it. And indeed, in a higher sense of it, and as regards the exhaustive study of the interior nature of the human soul, and of its individual idiosyncrasies, in their outfoldings—these latter being understood in the sense of the saner characteristics—all is, as it were, marred, if not indeed quite *spoilt*, the *moment* we trace all these identities in points of religious doctrine to one and the self-same actual and particular external historical or tactual source, the onè set of ideas having *merely migrated*, so to speak, and with some suddenness, from Babylonian Persia to Babylonian Israel. We should, therefore, on the contrary, leave no device of any kind unattempted wherewith to convince ourselves, and others with us, of the totally *separate* and independent *original* growth of such views in the feeble Semitic exiled tribes as well as in the great nation which was the earlier scene of their origin. To lose our case here is to lose one paramount proof the more of the separate and severally individual and exclusive personality of the human consciousness in the wide flood course of the great identities; and this, though it be not everything, is yet much. To hold that all the later Jewish Immortality, Angelology, Soteriology, Resurrection, Judgment, Millennium, Heaven and Hell were merely transferred bodily, as it were "mechanically borrowed," from the Persian theology in the Persian province of Babylon—this, I say, would be for us just in so far to transfer this instance of a great coincidence found

in our historical investigation in the psychic science, from the closer sphere of interior human mental vitality and universal individual spontaneity to that of mere exterior contact, and this in one of its most conspicuous, if not, in fact in one of its most splendid manifestations—an enormous loss indeed to historical mental search would such a conclusion be. And it is therefore in the name of the higher intelligence and in the search for the elements of the pure psychic nature,—let me repeat it,—that I make this point of *independent origin*, and to such a degree incisively endeavor to put it into the closest focus.<sup>6</sup>—and this *not*, as I fervently hope, in the interests of any superstitious anxiety as regards any loss of originality on the part of Israel. For indeed, even the question of the individuality of the psychical constitution, and of the spontaneity of the cerebral functions in the human body seems to be somewhat distantly or proximately involved, as also their unity of origin; the actually distinct and finer lines of demarcation between the bodily and psychic life in their essential elements seeming to be ever the more difficult for us to trace.

So far then from wishing to prove that all the God-unity, Angelology, Immortality, Resurrection, Judgment, Millennium, Heaven and Hell were merely the Persian eschatology taken over bodily in its actual form by the Jews of the great empire, together, with their Persian citizenship, I would, on the contrary, heartily desire to avoid this as the explanation of the original existence of these concepts among the Jews. The so-called and the really individual and *separate*, but *parallel*, development is far too wonderful and too valuable an asset to be so lightly given up in such a conspicuous instance of it. Our contention indeed elsewhere, and in the other widely divergent sphere of science, is for the corporeal and psychic unity of the entire human race, but not for such a unity as obliterates all distinctive and separate individuality, with personality. To regard these two different branches of the Asiatic religious nations, so contrasted as they were in their origin—as in their magnitude, or littleness,—being Aryan and Semitic, as affording, each of them, if the facts be such, so marvelous an instance of separate psychic growth, reaching also, in each of them, the very acme of all detailed spiritualistic conviction in the main points of our beliefs

<sup>6</sup> I acknowledge again that in the former edition of this lecture I *seemed* to take the other ground; this was however through a well-meant endeavor to make the point of doctrinal identity more distinct: see my remark about the Zoroastrian system as "*determining belief*," that is to say, I held that it so encouraged belief till that belief reached a degree of influence equal, or superior in volume, to that attained by the Sadducaic school; see the July *Open Court*.



and hopes, seizes—if such a recognition truly represents the actual condition of the things—the *one leading manifestation of the individuality in unity* of all the human psychic powers which has as yet come to light as being active in regard to these paramount convictions and conclusions in two previously widely separated nations. And this is also, to each of us, as it seems to me, a matter of great interior moment, entailing the most solemn and pointed of all obligations; for, as said before, by way of preface, our own spiritual growth and soundness are to some degree dependent upon it.

We should, each one of us, personally think out, measure, and digest the lessons from it, if we still continue to be at all religiously susceptible; for the completeness of our own personal and individual spiritual structure and equipment may well demand that we should endeavor individually and personally to appreciate such interior capacity of self-development in each human nature, also in its individual responsibilities and with immediate *application to our lives*. If this particular monumental structure of evidence in the matter of psychic individuality with general identities, as shown in these startling co-equalities in sentiment and theory (see the citations), be then veritably real, as regards these essential matters, this obviously tends to prove that this individuality within general identity may prevail as to *other similar distinctions* equally, or even more, important, and it also tends to prove more.

If human souls, owing to the quasi-identity in individuality of their psychic structure and continuous essential existence, reach the same religious conclusions even extending to details, through these subtle psychic forces; and, if, though they may be seemingly so widely divided, far apart, as to place and time, they thus here reach identity, then we must consider this to be an approximating corroboration of those views themselves, and not merely as adventitious proofs of the psychic unity of man in individuality. For here are large masses of human beings distributed into groups, provinces, nations or races, far distant to the one from the other, and who may never have had the slightest external means of intercommunication, having never even heard of one another's existence—and yet they are found to have come upon the very same detailed spiritual expectations as regards another world; and this, as I affirm, most certainly tends to prove that these formulas in opinion must have had some *common origin* which even the separate individuality of each such person or such people has not enabled him or it to avoid or to ignore,—and this presumably adds to our convictions that *these doc-*

*trines themselves must be the more indisputably true, at least in their interior significance.*

For it was not until several decades at least—so we must remember—after the Jews were first deported there, that Babylon became Persian, while we need not just here consider the case of that portion of the captives, who were distributed in the “cities of the Medes”; and the interest here should therefore become *intense*. Here was Israel on the one side, for long pre-Exilic centuries without a pointed hope of any such an Immortality as most of us hold dear, without a Judgment, without a Resurrection, without a Heaven, a Millennium (or a Hell), yet suddenly at once awakened to these expectations, by a calamity which had brought swift ruin upon their remnant, while their status was at times much like that of slaves, or worse. And again, *vis à vis* to them were Median multitudes, military, civil, priestly, princely, regal, with their illustrious Imperial figure at their head,—and these, only a few brief decades later on, swarming in the streets and roads of Persian Babylon, the city with its province now from that time on the Persian capital.

Aryans to a man, these Medo-Persians—as we might almost say of them—they had long since been possessed with the hope of that same future conscious life beyond the grave which the Jews had just acquired with much emotion, let us hope; and these are the obvious ineffaceable facts which the most ultra-conservative of all historical theologians will not, because he cannot, attempt to dispute. They are the A—B—C of all historical religious knowledge upon the points; and they should be familiar, if not notorious, to every student of our Holy Faith; that is to say, so long as we hold to this spontaneous growth of Immortality among the Jews. No Bible-class, nor indeed should any Sunday-school instructor be without this knowledge as to this most solemn circumstance. *It was our own religion in a friendly race.*

*All who deny, as well as all who believe in, Persian influence, posterior or prior, are here, as perforce, agreed; this is the matter to be apprehended and held in mind. I refer, of course, to persons of clear intellect and sound candor in all my assertions as to the unanimity here.*

The prophets first speak of the details of a systematized immortality and the other elements of eschatology *in the Exilic period*,—and this is a notorious matter of common certainty *entirely aside* from the question as to where they ultimately got their later fuller ideas upon it; and no one who is educated in the preliminaries here inexorably involved, denies this. The Jewish scheme, as we

see from the earlier Bible, was utterly rudimental as regards these vital elements, in all previous time. Their immortality was for the most part a dim, shadowy, half-conscious state much like the classic Hades;—with little Judgment, and Heaven or fiery Hell, with but transient flashes of vivacity.

[This is notorious, and it was preached in my pulpit close on forty years ago, the speaker not having been then thought particularly "broad." Let the reader take up his pre-Exilic Bible and read it backwards; say, ten chapters at a time,—he will be profoundly struck with this marked negative peculiarity;—the evil kings like the good ones, died,—and "slept with their fathers"—and their (varying) sons "reigned in their stead"—and where is there any Judgment for the evil as for the good—and where is there any Hell for the one, or Heaven for the other—the "Semitic future state" before the Exile ignored or merely guessed at them, as every scholar knows, and as has been long since popularly ceded. Look at the very Ten Commandments, where is there any Last Judgment, even there,—the place of all others where we should the most expect to find it,—where is there any reward or punishment? The future state is not even mentioned. It was during the horrors of the Exile that God's people began to doubt whether, indeed, the righteous "never was forsaken";—they, like ourselves, when, similarly situated, amidst financial ruin, turned bitterly to God, and sang the finest, if, at the same time, the most terrific of their hymns (see Psalm cxxxvii, with its close—if indeed that close be genuine). Then soon after we begin to hear of "awaking from the dust," of a Judgment—rhetorically majestic beyond description (see Daniel—Revelations is its echo); then we first hear of a "golden age," culminating in the thousand years of Chiliasm (N. T.); then, first, the angels assume their names and forms, becoming "princes" (see Daniel); then a conscious "Immortality" becomes defined; then the Saviour was "promised long" and "the Gentiles were to rejoice in His Light"; and "the earth"—not alone Judea—"was to be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." It soon became a complete pre-Christianity—with the known results. (Extract from a speech delivered in London in March, 1909, and from articles elsewhere communicated.)]

To resume—that dull and dim futurity—as just said in the extract—suddenly took on for itself the fuller form of accountability in judgment, that is of conscience, and of retribution in a restored body and immortal soul, *whereas in Persia these views had been elaborated for indefinitely previous ages*; and this last their books

now prove, as does the sister Veda. For every such doctrine as that of the God-Unity, a developed Angelology, an Immortality, Resurrection, Judgment, Heaven and Recompense, *inexorably presupposes far distant antecedents*, foreshadowing its coming on, and in the same literature, unless that literature itself distinctly repudiates such antecedents; in Avesta they do stand thus affirmed to overwhelming repletion; but in pre-Exilic Israel they are denied by the conspicuous omission.

With what surprise, then, growing to astonishment, must the keen-witted Semites of the early Captivity have first discovered this circumstance! Here they were themselves just new-born novices, as it were, a handful of beginners in a full system of Immortality, doubtless also much affected by the impression that their views were a new discovery, and stirred to their utmost depths with all the emotional effects of regeneration in its train. But when they began to become acquainted with the Persian army, whose arrival, victory and continued presence they hailed as their temporal salvation, they discovered to their amazement that their own fresh ideas upon futurity were an ancient creed with their new-found friends; and that it was held almost universally, not always of course with that personal fervor which the Jews then felt as neophytes, but that it was most certainly held with ponderous conviction by the very chief representatives of the new Babylonian life, who would be, of course, the so-called Magian priesthood.

One would indeed say that they—these tendencies—must have been long latent in the keen-witted Jewish intellect, awaiting only the first stir of impulse to burst them into bloom, and at first, as I contend, with no immediate exterior or objective inculcation of them from their enormously distinguished liberators; so that, all of a sudden, if we might so express it, an immortality, with all its correlated hopes and fears, sprang into life with them, and became defined, from spontaneous vital action. Since homes were lost on earth—such was the interior psychic process, then, just as so often with ourselves—*Heaven* was to “make amends,”<sup>7</sup> while *Hell* was to heap its horrors upon oppressors—though even *Hell* itself, as it seems, was not quite quick enough for their keen just vengeance. Recall the chief Exilic Psalm of its date and creed, I mean the one hundred and thirty-seventh, the finest piece in literature—that literature, and of its kind, I think.

Such is then the phenomenon which we are called upon to notice and to ponder, the *originality and self-growth* of immortality,

<sup>7</sup> See the extract just above.

with its fellow thoughts,<sup>8</sup> among the first Exilic Jews of Babylon, *not first learnt* from their redeemers, but sprung into quick life within their own excited interior passions, that is, from grief and hate. This also proves as a fact, if indeed it be a fact, that the Jewish soul was fine in its susceptibilities, that its intellect was sagacious,—“architectonic” as we used to call it, in the philosophical sense,—and so ingenious, while the Persians, who suddenly came in upon, and over, the Israelites in their first fervent Jewish expressions of this faith, had inherited it all through an indefinitely previous duration. Such then is our second essential point, next after the citation of the texts. Of course (and let me be here most carefully understood, as I repeat what I have all along, as I hope, implied) I am here dealing with the filled-out and symmetrically adjusted systems of the Persians and the Jews alone, as regards the particulars in point. Immortality, in a dimmer sense of it, could not be shut out from any branches of the human family who could still dream of the departed dead, or experience febrile ocular and auricular delusions, with their invariably accompanying apparitions. Recall, too, the immortality of Egypt, so important in its application. Immortality, in many a varied view of it, is well-nigh universal. What I am here discussing is that *well-defined religious system elaborated in all its main details in symmetry and practical effect*, and which we find thus extensively and pointedly established in ancient times *only among these two nations whom I name*. It is a thing also somewhat different, of course, from Plato’s elaboration, precious as this last undoubtedly is, and was, as it is also different from that of wildest tribes. And it is *that*, as I contend, *this well-filled out and elaborated scheme*, which was of *native growth* in Babylonian Israel,—and this in spite of the almost immediately following arrival upon the scene of the Persian priests with the same detailed creed long since domesticated, and this but a few decades later on. So much for this, the all-important point.

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Quite another question is it indeed, when we inquire whether this so widely extended Aryan creed, in which the Israelites were overwhelmed during their first Exilic centuries in Persian Babylon, had any *later and supervening* influence upon these already accepted but new found similar convictions of the Jews.

Here I am as decided in my positive assertions as I have just been in my negatives. Every conceivable item points to the reciprocal

<sup>8</sup>I should except Chiliasm—the thousand years—that is pure Avesta.

effects of the two systems, the one upon the other,—and in view of the doctrinal identities in point, with their groupings,—and, in view of the overwhelming superiority of the position of the recently successful Persians to that occupied by the handful of mourning captives,—everything, as regarded also from every reasonable point of view, looks rather towards this later influence of the great religious patron nation upon their once suffering but now grateful protégés, while but few have suggested the other direction to the current. It would require of us indeed an hypothesis of an aggressive missionary ardor of no low degree, energized by irresistible interior and passionate vigor, if we should hold to the opinion that the crushed remnant of the Holy People attempted and actually succeeded in converting the vast Perso-Median empire to a creed which they had themselves maintained well-nigh throughout their history.

To affirm that the Jews converted the Zoroastrians would simply be to assert that they re-converted the long since previously converted, or originally believing nation, once again to its own immemorially inherited ancient creed, whereas everything indicates the surging course of a volume of influence the other way. "Affection," alone of itself, must have had something to do with the intricate psychic motions inevitably stirred within the one party or the other in the vivid situation. The signal Conqueror of their oppressors would be naturally the object of their enthusiasm, as would be indeed the leading personages in his garrisons. Think of the change which Cyrus occasioned in their circumstances at his advent, and see how they recalled it in Isaiah xlv-xlv. My claim in argument is, therefore, for a very strong and completely surrounding and enveloping *later* and supervening influence of the North-Persian One-Godism, Angelology, Immortality, Judgment, Resurrection, Millennium, Heaven and Recompense, upon the same slightly earlier developments in Israel during the Captivity.<sup>9</sup>

And let me also not be misunderstood here once again, and with regard to a principle which I hold to be crucial in all these discussions—it is this. There are those, and many, who have indeed held and hold to the striking opinion,—so often here noticed to refute it,—that this entire scheme of Jewish God-unity, Angelology,

<sup>9</sup> The following remarks appeared under other wording in the July number of this periodical, and they are repeated here to recall the previous publication, and for the benefit of those who may not have dwelt upon them at their first appearance. They cannot be too emphatically impressed upon all well-meaning men. Readers will doubtless notice, as I trust they will also condone, the inevitable difference in the stylistic flow of the passage; another, but not necessarily "different," "spirit" animates them; many years have elapsed since the earlier essay was penned.

Immortality, Resurrection and Recompense, was not only subsequently confirmed, defended and encouraged, in a word "*saved*," by that of the North-Persian theology of the restorers,—a proposition which we may accept,—but that the Jews *originally* and *first of all* received it from the Persians in its full definite out-formed shape, that is to say, that they *borrowed* it as a whole, took it over bodily, either through dominant influence, or through charm.

Now I do not regard it as being at all a just or honorable thing to lay one illogical straw in the path of those many who have held, or still hold, to such a view, if they hold to it with honesty. And this fact affords me here at once the duty and the opportunity of stating what I believe to be an indispensable and necessary law of which I spoke, for that law regards just this point of *mere mental initiative* in the connection, with a supposed, or really, divinely inspired authority for any certain set of opinions either new, or on the other hand, long since cherished, and even hereditary. I hold that *any so-called, or real, divine authority through inspiration, or the like, has little, if anything, to do with the fact that portions of the mental ideas themselves involved have been imparted through various sources wholly unconnected with the previous development of the faith concerned.* This inspiration has,—as I contend, to the exact contrary of the opinion just refuted,—nothing whatever to do with the question of the mental channels through which the mere ideas themselves may have been imparted to the favored race of people, and much do I deplore the prevalence of a contrary impression. I would then not only concede, but urgently *assert* such an opinion as that just mentioned by me, and this as being essential to all thorough procedure in the searchings of comparative religion. I will not indeed here cite or repeat the passage to this effect from the original article. Let the reader who at all apprehends the truly solemn issues which may be here at stake, turn to the July number of *The Open Court*—with the statements there re-edited from the *Nineteenth Century Review*,—and let him re-study the whole lecture.