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## Reclaiming the Faravahar

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Published by Leiden University Press

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Reclaiming the Faravahar: Zoroastrian Survival in Contemporary Theran.

first ed. Leiden University Press, 2014.

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## Notes

- 1 Roy Mottahedeh writes, “It might be very well to claim that he [Hāfez] meant that it was internal religion that really mattered and that that the Elder referred to was a master of *erfan*, not a Zoroastrian in the normal sense of a fire worshiper. But Hāfez seemed never to find the words to praise such real guardians of religious law as mullahs” (1985:141).
- 2 Three months in Summer of 2004 (May–August), three months in Summer 2005 (May–August), one year from November 2006 to November 2007 of which about three months were spent in Gahwāreh, conducting fieldwork among the Kurdish Ahl-e Haqq, and ultimately six months from January 2008 to July 2008.
- 3 Amighi (1990); Barr (1985); Bekhradnia (1991, 1992); Boyce (1968–1970); Carter (1918); Choksy (1987–2006); Darmesteter (1887); Fischer (1973); Hanson (1975); Herzfeld (1947); Hinnells (1969–1976); Hintze (2000, 2004); Humback (1991); Jackson (1896–1913); Jones (1964); Langer (2004); Luhrmann (1996); Moulton (1913); Nigosian (1993); Rose (2011); Shaked (1984); Skjaervo (2001); Stausberg (2004); Writer (1994).
- 4 Judith Butler clearly distinguishes the two: “It is important to distinguish performance from performativity: the former presumes a subject, but the latter contests the very notion of the subject ... What I’m trying to do is think about performativity as that aspect of discourse that has the capacity to produce what it names. Then I take a further step, through the Derridean rewriting of Austin, and suggest that this production actually always happens through a certain kind of repetition and recitation. So if you want the ontology of this, I guess performativity is the vehicle through which ontological effects are established. Performativity is the discursive mode by which ontological effects are installed.” (1993a:111–112).
- 5 Including works of Austin (1962), Butler (1990–1997), Barth (1993, 2002a), Hefner (1985), Hirschkind (2001a, 2001b, 2006), Lambek (2002), Sahlins (1981, 1985), and Warner (2002a, 2002b).

- 6 Drawing on Judith Butler and John Austin works that I discuss in next pages.
- 7 Post conquest, as Jamsheed Choksy points out, “Specific interactions, particularly those involving conflict and cooperation, led to new relationships within a territorial expanse stretching from the Euphrates River to beyond the Oxus River” (1997:138).
- 8 For a comprehensive history, see Richard Frye (1975), Richard Bulliet (1975), and Patricia Crone (2012).
- 9 Taylor draws distinctions between social theories and social imaginaries, “I speak of *imaginary* because I’m talking about the way ordinary people ‘imagine’ their social surroundings, and this is often not expressed in theoretical terms; it is carried in images, stories, and legends. But it is also the case that theory is usually the possession of a small minority, whereas what is interesting in the social imaginary is that it is shared by large groups of people, if not the whole society. While leads to a third difference: the social imaginary is that common understanding that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy” (2002:106).
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Muhammad Arkoun defines cultural imaginary as “the deeply-held indigenous values that provide the most salient and strongly motivating bases for action, feeling and thought, inspiring them in their ordinary lives, in their symbolic and religious experiences, and in their dialectical interaction with the rest of the world” (Lindholm 2002:10).
- 12 Using Hodgson phrase (1974:vol. II), kerygmatic mode of religious experience, “in which the ultimate is sought in the moral events recorded in history. Recalling this historical revelation permits re-imagining one’s own life within the historical religious drama” (Lindholm 2000:292).
- 13 Using Benedict Anderson phrase (1983).
- 14 See Roshan Rivetna (2012).
- 15 For other waves of migration to China, Russia, and the Caucasus, see Choksy (2006a:138) and (2006b:333). Regarding Zoroastrian migrants to China, Choksy writes, “By the late Middle Ages, all those communities either had been completely assimilated into the local population or had died out” (2006b:333).
- 16 Roshan Rivetna (2012).
- 17 For statistics before 1960 see Boyce (1977). In 1966, “Association membership combined with census data placed the overall population of Zoroastrians within Iran at approximately 60,000”; “The 1960s and early 1970s were a period of increased opportunity for Zoroastrians to travel outside

- Iran. As a result, by 1979, relocation to France, Germany, Canada, and the United States of America for educational and vocational training followed by resettlement in those countries had reduced the community's numbers" (Choksy 2006a:160). FEZANA Journal estimated the number in 2004 to be between 24,000 and 90,000 due to underreporting (2004:17/4). While Eliz Sanasarian refers to an increase of the Iranian Zoroastrian population from 35,000 before the revolution to 50,000 (2000:50) the government census shows a decline from 32,589 in 1986 to 27,920 in 1996 (Price 2005:317).
- 18 The official Iranain census. <http://iran.unfpa.org/Documents/Census2011/2011%20Census%20Selected%20Results%20-%20Eng.pdf> (accessed, 28 May 2014).
- 19 A Kermani Zoroastrian graduate student in Tehran told me that their concentration in Kerman is probably due to the region's geographical isolation as well as the tolerance of minorities there.
- 20 For instance, Zoroastrian merchants in Tehran increased from 50 in 1881 to 500 by 1912 (Amighi 1990:148).
- 21 Article 13 of the 1979 Constitution of the Islamic Republic: "Zoroastrian, Jewish, and Christian Iranians are the only recognized religious minorities who, within the limits of the law, are free to perform the religious rites and ceremonies, and to act according to their own canon in matters of personal affairs and religious education" (Choksy 2006a:163). Also see Janet Afary (2005) for earlier roots in Constitutionalism of 1905, as well as Hourii Berberian (2005).
- 22 The idea of self-representation in *majlis* goes back to 1906 with the backing of Ayatollah Abdullah Behbahani (Choksy 2006a:150).
- 23 Marker was a Parsi who moved to Quetta, Pakistan, during the British Raj, and also funded a Zoroastrian school in Yazd (Choksy, personal correspondence).
- 24 For a complete survey of Zoroastrian temples and sacred sites see Choksy (2006b); also Robert Langer (2004).
- 25 Using Abbas Amanat on Persianate world (2002).
- 26 See Patricia Crone (2012).
- 27 See Richard Frye (1975); Aptin Khanbaghi (2009).
- 28 Term borrowed from Aptin Khanbaghi (2009).
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 See Patricia Crone (2012) important study for a comprehensive account of these revolts.
- 31 Abu Moslim was a pseudonym—he was known as "Abu Muslim Abdul-Rahman b. Muslim al-Khorasani (a Muslim son of a Muslim, father of a

Muslim of Khorasan’). This name was meant to indicate that he was neither client nor patron, Arab nor Persian, but was simply a Muslim from Khurasan. As M.A. Shaban says, ‘he was a living proof that in the new society every member would be regarded only as a Muslim regardless of racial origins or tribal connections.’ His integrative policy was also indicated by the fact that recruits were registered not by lineage, as had been Umayyad practice, but by name and place of birth” (Lindholm 2000:97–98).

- 32 See Aptin Khanbaghi (2009:206).
- 33 <http://www.radiofarda.com/articleprintview/318719.html> (accessed, July 2013). <http://qurt.blogspot.com/print/post-19/> (accessed, July 2013).
- 34 See Richard Frye (1975).
- 35 Ira Lapidus writes that the vast empire of Abbasid made the capital Baghdad “a great commercial city for international trade ... Jews, Christians, and Muslims, as well as secret pagans, Persians, Iraqis, Arab Syrians, and Central Asians made up its cosmopolitan population ...” (1988:56).
- 36 He “claimed to be the manifestation of God, the divine fire of the hidden imam, and the *mahdi* [the twelfth Shi’a Imam]” (Lapidus 1988:241). For a comprehensive discussion of the Imam concept, see Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi (1994).
- 37 Isfahan “symbolized the legitimacy of the dynasty, its vast plazas and bazaars were a symbol of the ordering of the world by royal decree; its religious monuments signified royal sustenance for the faith; its gorgeous decoration was the universal sign of royal splendor” (Lapidus 1988:240).
- 38 Andrew Newman challenges this “migration thesis,” arguing that “... Arab Twelver clerics ... rejected the Safawid identification with Twelver Shiism in this period. Clerical disquiet with the Safawids stemmed from such factors as the abruptness of Ismail’s conversion to Twelver Shiism; the consistently extremist nature of Safawid religio-political discourse which, following Tabriz, was an unorthodox amalgamation of non-Shii and Shii religious expression and politics ...” (1993:67).
- 39 Lindholm (2002:117).
- 40 During the same period, however, fourteen churches were built for Armenians in Isfahan.
- 41 Posted on vohuman.org on February 5, 2005.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 Mary Boyce (1979:178).
- 44 For the complex sequence of events on Zoroastrians cooperation with the Afghan forces and paying a hefty price later see Choksy (2006a:139–141).

- 45 “Here was a fascinating situation where colonial power could extend across national borders to impact directly on the lives of Individuals who were not citizens or subjects” (Choksy 2006a:143).
- 46 [http://www.caiss-soas.com/CAIS/Religions/iranian/Zarathushtrian/zoroastrians\\_iran\\_islamic\\_era.htm#\\_ftnref2](http://www.caiss-soas.com/CAIS/Religions/iranian/Zarathushtrian/zoroastrians_iran_islamic_era.htm#_ftnref2) (accessed, July 2013).
- 47 “Apocalyptic thinking,” Amanat writes, “continued to resonate with the ways in which history was interpreted and lived by a variety of Muslims in nineteenth-century Qajar Iran. Astrological calculations in synchronicity with Shi’a eschatological tradition set the date 1844 as a fatal year when a variety of millenarian responses were voiced within the Shi’a community-Nimatullah, Isma’ili, Babi—and, beyond, among a heteroglot Christian, Zoroastrian and Jewish population living in Persianate landscapes” (Amanat 1989:96). Also see Philip Kreyenbroek (2002).
- 48 For a list of other efforts during the Qajar in order to lift discrimination against Zoroastrians see Choksy (2006a:143–144).
- 49 For population figures see Choksy (2006a).
- 50 I am deeply indebted to Professor Jamsheed Choksy for this data.
- 51 Bekhradnia (1992:37–41); Choksy numbers the schools to be thirty-eight (2006a:148).
- 52 See Tavakoli-Targhi (2001).
- 53 These terms are borrowed from Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* and Michael Lambek’s *The Weight of the Past: Living With History in Mahajanga, Madagascar* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).
- 54 Kamyar Abdi (2001:51–76).
- 55 See Afshin Marashi (2008, 2009).
- 56 See Hamid Algar (1972), and Abdul-Hadi Hairi (1977).
- 57 See گبر in Dehkhoda Dictionary; according to Choksy gabr means “‘hollow, empty,’ hence ‘one lacking faith, infidel’” (2006b:332).
- 58 Dehkhoda Dictionary.
- 59 اگر گبر صد سال آتش فروزد/ سرانجامش همان آتش بسوزد (ویس و رامین)
- 60 It says, “Human beings are members of a whole, In creation of one essence and soul. If one member is afflicted with pain, Other members uneasy will remain. If you have no sympathy for human pain, The name of human you cannot retain.”
- 61 Sa’di, *The Rose Garden* or *Gulistān*, trans. Edward Rehadzek p. 2. Omphaloskepsis, Ames, Iowa.
- ای کرمی که از خزانه غیب گبر و ترسا وظیف خورداری/ دوستان را کجا کنی محروم تو که با دشمن این نظر داری
- 62 For these translations I am indebted to Farid Fozi.

- 63 For the different attitude in North America and “accepting” new members, see Rashna Writer (1994:213–218).
- 64 Choksy points out that since many Iranian Muslims “may have distant ancestors who were Zoroastrian ... Iranian Zoroastrians still do accept converts covertly although they do not proselytize for fear of retribution from the majority Shi‘ate community” (2006a:172). See chapter 6.
- 65 This model is partially influenced by Dilip Gaonkar’s “Towards New Imaginaries” (2002) and Nilufar Gole, “Islam in Public” (2002). Also see Benjamin Lee, and Edward LiPuma (2002).
- 66 For scholarly discussion on these influences see Barr (1985); Shaked (1984); Hinnells (1969, 1974, 1976); Carter (1918); Hanson (1975); Jones (1964).
- 67 Professor Choksy, personal correspondence.
- 68 He also argues that they are agonistically toned, redundant, empathetic, conservative and homeostatic.
- 69 Zoroastrians do not reflect the kind of heroic society that Sahlins refers to; however, the two characteristics are recognizable: “the main relationships of the society are at once projected historically and embodied currently in the persons of authority” (Sahlins 1985:47).
- 70 Developing this description, I had Marshall Sahlins’s of Maori’s cosmology in mind (1985:35–57).
- 71 Using Comaroffs’ phrasing (1992).
- 72 Benedict Anderson’s phrase.
- 73 <http://www.leader.ir/langs/fa/?p=contentShow&id=5814>; For the English version see <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/02/world/middleeast/o2iran.html> (accessed, May 2014).
- 74 Attār has influenced Iranian mystics who created its mystical landscape, including Rumi. The following couplet is ascribed to Rumi, “Attār traversed the seven cities of love; We are lost in the curve of the first alley.”  
هفت شهر عشق را عطار گشت/ما هنوز اندر خم یک کوچه ایم
- 75 After the election of President Ahmadinejad the political situation in Iran became grim. I started communicating with the Fulbright-Hays requesting to change my project. I defined a project in Tajikistan. Fulbright-Hays’ answer was negative, even though geographically and linguistically it was very similar. Tajikistan was even more appealing to my expertise as I did not speak Kurdish and Tajiks speak Persian.
- 76 Case no. IA-8651.
- 77 <http://amordad.blogfa.com/post-2005.aspx> (accessed, May 2014).
- 78 See Negar Mottahedeh (2008).
- 79 It is worth noting that during my fieldwork I met a young man who was

- working on his Religious Studies master's degree, focusing on Zoroastrians. He said the Iranian community is much more open than the Indian Parsi community.
- 80 For a comprehensive history of this conversion, see Susan Stiles (1984), and Fereyduh Vahman (2007).
- 81 Accompanied by her two sons in the field, she has been exposed to certain aspect of the culture, like enrolling children in school, learning views on appropriate child behaviour, cross-cultural play, etc.
- 82 *آب دریا را اگر نتوان کشید/هم به قدر تشنگی باید چشید* Rumi, *Mathnavi Manavi*.
- 83 For an extensive discussion of this see Anne Lovell (1992).
- 84 Phrase borrowed from Henry Rutz (1992).
- 85 See Louis Gray (1907:343).
- 86 Richard Frye writes, "We know that the Persians, as well as other peoples of the Near East, borrowed from Egypt, for example, the so-called Zoroastrian calendar which may have been introduced from Egypt ca. 441 BC" (1972:104).
- 87 Louis Gray addresses this in his discussion of the Avestan months (1904: 195).
- 88 For the list of "Life-giving immortals," see Oktor Skjaervo (2011:14), and Jenny Rose (2011:28–29).
- 89 "This Time/ritual exhibits a hypertrophied cosmology, resembling the Mayan obsession with time" (Personal correspondence with Charles Lindholm).
- 90 For a more complete account of the Zoroastrian scripture, see Nigosian (1993:46–70).
- 91 Avestan: *urvān*; Pahlavi: *rawān* (soul).
- 92 "The *Yasnā*, literally, 'sacrifice,' was the text accompanying the morning ritual (*yasnā*) performed to recreate the world of light after a period of darkness" Skjaervo (2011:34).
- 93 See Simone Cristoforetti (2004).
- 94 On the fortieth day of Imam Hoseyn's martyrdom, called *Arba'in-e Hoseyni*, I caught a cab covered with Quranic writings driven by a religious looking old man with a white beard. When we saw a procession of flagellating mourners, he shook his head and said, "They have ruined our youth; those who were nice were killed in the war (Iran-Iraq) and the rest are busy with this stuff." Then he articulated a philosophy against mourning saying that, "If Imam Hoseyn was killed in God's path, he will go to Heaven as God has promised in Quran, so we need to celebrate the occasion, what is this mourning and flagellation for then?"

95 Using Ali Hussein characterization (2005).

96 See Ali Hussein (2005:85).

97

چهره ی میدیوزرم گاه

98

چهره ی میدیوشم گاه

99

چهره ی پئته شهیم گاه

100

چهره ی ایا سرم گاه

101

چهره ی میدیاریم گاه

102

چهره ی همسپتدم گاه

103 For comparison see Mary Boyce's account of Gāhambārs in Sharif-Abad village, Yazd (1977:33–52).

104

خفتگان را خبر از زمزمه مرغ سحر / حیوان را خبر از عالم انسانی نیست

105 Monday, 30 April 2007; 15 March 2008; Tuesday, 29 April 2008.

106 Friday, 4 May 2007.

107 Sunday, 16 March 2008.

108 In the end they distributed raw nokhod and stew (*āsh*).

109 Amirieh, which is a part of Pahlavi or Vali Asr street south of Moniryyeh. The hill is Jian Panah.

110 For further discussion see Boyce (1977:99–107); also see Choksy (1989:94–99).

111 On the basis of this principle, in a competition for the design of a new fire-temple in Tehran, the high mobed criticized a design and said that “the fire sanctum has to be on the back not in the centre; there are architectural standards that we have to follow.” I discuss this issue in chapter 6.

112 For more information on the fire discourse see chapter 6.

113 On pād̄yāb ritual see Choksy (1989:53–62).

114 Mahmoud Omidslalar (2006).

115 “The emission of breath ... and saliva ... is governed by the notion that bodily substances are open to pollution upon leaving the human body” (Choksy 1989:84). For complete discussion on rituals of purity see Choksy (1989, chapter 4).

116 On one occasion, while reciting from the Avesta, the mobed picked up one of the fruits from the table and in a circular motion touched the rest of the fruits. In another Gāhambār when the mobed representative performed, he used a vase filled with branches to touch the *lorck* or admixture of nuts several times, also in a circular motion. Another mobed cut the fruits at the beginning of recitation, while during another Gāhambār, the mobed started by peeling an orange, and cutting the watermelon, and cucumbers. When I talked to him afterward, he said, “It [chopping] is part of the ceremony and it is usually done by the assistant.” On the occasion that I

am narrating here, at the very beginning the mobed lit the candles and cut the fruits.

117 See Oktor Akjaervo (2011:17–18).

118 While Zoroastrians do not publicize these celebrations, other cultural organizations, for instance *Neyshabur Foundation*, a non-Zoroastrian cultural foundation, circulated an email containing information on the ceremony. While encouraging attendance, it warned that “in order to make documentary *Vezerat Ershad* or Ministry of Guidance’s approval was required.”

119 Looking for *Marker*, I entered a building on the south-east corner of the *Eshraq* square where on its blue ceramic portal an inscription of *Rostam Baq’s* is calligraphed. I had heard it to be one of the Zoroastrian buildings in that block. I asked a lady how to get to *Marker*. “Who has invited you?” she asked. When I replied “the head of the Zoroastrian Association,” she said, “In that case, follow me.” We took a five minute walk towards the Centre’s gate. Part of the left yard was a playground and around it was a pathway giving cars access to the back of the main hall. As on other occasions, a truck loaded with dried bread and other items from Yazd was selling by the main entrance.

120 جشن سده، جشن بزرگداشت کشف آتش، جشن پیشرفت بشریت، بر همه مبارک  
121 از جشن سده صدای نوروز شنو/در ظلمت شب صدای روز شنو

122 Modelled after Robert Rotenberg (1992:18).

123 For instance, the head of the Association delivered what he framed as a “joyous message” about the reopening ceremony of the Zoroastrians’ *Yeganegi Clinic*, inviting all “to attend.” He mentioned that the community’s poetess had undergone surgery; the high mobed then requested a prayer for her health. Nonetheless, she had sent her book of poetry, from which a young man recited a poem that contained the story of *sadeh*

ای آتش گرم و روشن و پاک/وی بال گشوده سوی افلاک.../ناگاه شراره ای بر افروخت/هر خار  
و خسی که بود از آن سوخت.../پیدایش آتش از همینجاست/هر چند در این میان سختیاست/در  
روز دهم زماه همین/شد آتش جاودانه روشن/زهار که هدیه ای خدایی/روشنگر قوم آریایی/پیری  
است که بس شراره دیدست/گه گفته و گه شنیده است/افسرد وی نکشت خاموش/از خاطره  
ها نشد فراموش/زهار اگر زبان گشاید/بس راز نهفته را نماید/این ملک زبس که زین دلم دید/چون  
آهن آبدیده گردید/ایرانی پاکزاده/زهار/این آتش گرم را نگهدار/چون شعله عشق جان است/یاد  
آور آتش مغان است

124 For a survey of diverse scholarly opinion see Solomon Nigosian (1993:15–16).

125 Indian Parsis also celebrate this day.

126 [www.t-z-a.org](http://www.t-z-a.org).

- 127 Reading that “[i]n our calendar the dates of the divine prophets are nicely recorded and it is necessary to record the day of khordād from month Farvardin and the day khordād from month *Day* respectively for the birth and ascension of the ancient Iranian Prophet.” <http://www.amordad6485.blogfa.com/post-111.aspx> (accessed, May 2014).
- 128 Earlier, on 20–28 November 2005: “Remarks by ayatullah Ahmed Jnnati, secretary of the Council of Guardians or Shura-ye Negahban of the Constitution ... comparing non-Muslims to ‘animals who roam the Earth and engage in corruption’ garnered a sharp response from majlis’ representative Niknam. Niknam rebuked Jannati for his ‘unprecedented slur against religious minorities,’ adding ‘non-Muslims not only are not beasts, but if Iran has a glorious past and civilization to be proud of it owes this to those who lived in the country before the advent of Islam.’ Niknam commented further ‘those who sully the Earth are humans who do not show respect for the other creatures of God.’ In a warning to members of religious minorities not to question the state’s fundamentalist Shi’ite leaders and their views, Niknam was summoned before a tribunal of the Revolutionary Courts to answer charges that he had displayed a lack of respect for Iran’s Muslim leaders and had spread false information” (Choksy 2006a:183).
- 129 Veena Das’ phrase (1995).
- 130 See Williams Clackson (1868); also Gherardo Gnoli (1980).
- 131 “Iran: Tajikān (Tajiks) which was the late Middle Persian term for Arab invaders” (Professor Choksy, personal communication). Also, see Choksy (1997).
- 132 25 of Esfand, Wednesday.
- 133 On one occasion two mobeds and on another only one performed. In one of the events the mobed’s voice was especially emotional. The man next to me said, “He does not even recite well; he does not pause where he is supposed to. He is just happy to recite, (*delesh khosheh*.)” In a while he made another comment, saying that “He just skipped a couple of pages.”
- 134 انوشه روان، روان (اسم) ایدر یاد باد  
 135 درود باد بر فروهر همه جانبازان و سلحشوران و همه جان باختگان راه ایران  
 136 جانباخته زنده روان  
 137 و همه جان باختگان جنگ تحمیلی با هاروانان در اینجا به یاد باد. روانشان شاد و بهشت برین جایگاهشان باد
- 138 The list included nine in the U.S., three in Bombay, two in London, one in Sweden, one in Pakistan, seven in Yazd, three in Kerman and the rest in Tehran. These were the deceased of year 2007–2008 (1385–1386). With the exception of one name that was *Ruh-u-llāh*, the rest of them

all were non-Arabic and Persian. The first four pages included this list and on the seventh page in large printed letter it read, “Truthfulness and Righteousness are the best beneficences and the cause of serendipity. Serendipity belongs to the person who desires the best truthfulness and purity.” راستی و پاکی بهترین نیکی ها و سبب خوشبختی است. خوشبختی از آن کسی است که خواستار بهترین راستی و پاکی باشد. The back cover reads, “May their ravān be blissful and Heaven their place” and the bottom reads, “Tehran Zoroastrian Association.”

- 139 روانشادان  
140 ایدر یاد باد
- 141 See Poure Davoud (1995).  
142 See Richard Bulliet (1979).  
143 As Robert Rotenberg identifies them (1992).  
144 Idea borrowed from Robert Paine (1992).  
145 گهی خوشدل شوی از من که میرم/ چرا مرده پرست و خصم جانم؟  
146 The burial of the corpse is a change from exposure of the corpse to the open air for desiccation, discussed in chapter 6.  
147 روانشاد، آمرزیده همگی درگذشتگان  
148 Avesta: *frasho-kereti*; Pahlavi/Middle Persian: *frashegird*; Farsi: *fereshgar* (Choksy, personal correspondence).  
149 فراخوان حضور در آیین نوزوتی 18/2/1387 انجمن موبدان تهران با انتشار آگاهی نامه ای از زرتشتیان خواست تا روز آدینه سوم خردادماه در آیین نوزوتی یکی از دانش آموختگان این انجمن حضور یابند. متن اطلاعیه انجمن موبدان تهران از این قرار است: با شادمانی بسیار به آگاهی همکیشان گرامی می‌رساند آیین نوزوتی آقای سهراب موبد بهرام هنگامی در روز سپندارمزد و خردادماه 3746 زرتشتی برابر آدینه 3/3/1387 خورشیدی از ساعت ۸ بامداد در مکان آدریان تهران و جشنگاه خسروی برگزار میشود. حضور گرم شما همکیشان در این آیین روحانی شکوه افزای این مراسم خواهد بود.  
150 See also Firoze Kotwal (1999–2000).  
151 “The age of initiation was gradually lowered, with present-day Irani Zoroastrians undergoing it between twelve and fifteen and with Parsi Zoroastrians initiating their offspring at age seven due to the influence of Hinduism” (Choksy 1989:55). Mary Boyce also refers to the ages of fifteen and seven for Iran and India, respectively (1977:236).  
152 Seventy-two is a significant number both in Zoroastrianism and in Shi’a Islam, and Zoroastrians believe the Shi’a adopted it from them. I will discuss this further later.  
153 In the sofreh exhibition an old koshti-spinning wheel was also displayed, fed with seventy two threads. They told me, “Some elderly women might still be able to operate the machine.”

- 154 For a detailed discussion of the verses corresponding with the ritual winding and unwinding of the cord see Choksy (1989:55–62).
- 155 “As for times of private prayer, it was ordained that the Zoroastrian should pray once during each of the five watches of the twenty-four-hour day—an invaluable religious exercise which Mohammad adopted from Zoroastrianism” (Boyce 1977:29). For a complete description see Mary Boyce (Ibid).
- 156 This talk was given in a commemorative ritual of *porseh* wherein references to the deceased by means of the phrase “jubilant *ravān*” were frequent, wishing the deceased an elevated status in heaven. He said, “We have to fulfill this wish in *this* world; we have to wish to experience heaven here. We succeed in achieving this through self-discipline that transforms the whole society.”
- 157 Influenced by Nicholas Dirks’ discussion of anthropological histories (1996).
- 158 Using Nicholas Dirks’ discussion on colonialism and culture (1992).
- 159 For these views of culture see Ward Goodenough (1964, 1990).
- 160 This is while Zoroaster is now believed by scholars to have lived and preached not in Iran but somewhere in central Asia. Jackson identified the “kingdom of Bactria” as the scene of Zoroaster’s zealous ministry, and wrote that he was born in “Atropatene, to the west of Media,” but “this prophet without honor in his own country met with a congenial soil for the seeds of his teaching in eastern Iran” (Jackson 1896:21). and “its blossoms later bore fruit in the west.” (Jackson 1893a:231). Along the same lines, Moulton and Bartholomae agreed that Zoroaster migrated into East Bactria but they specified Lake Hamun as the place of his religious activities, where he was welcomed by King Vishtaspaes (Cf. James Moulton. *Early Zoroastrianism*, 1912:84).
- 161 He addressed the reopening of a Zoroastrian library, discussed in chapter 6.
- 162 Fariba Adelpour further discusses that the ethic of *javanmard* goes beyond “a traditional legacy,” and offers “a permanent improvisation according to a given mode in the musical sense. Through studying it one can understand more clearly the emergence of ‘the individuality of eminence’ with a certain charisma; the affirmation of social qualities that can be turned into political qualities; the importance of gifts in Iranian society; the changes in, and especially the institutionalizing of, the idea of trust that is at the heart of practices involving gifts; and, in addition, the operation of the economic networks of the bazaar” (1999:4).

- 163 Almut Hintze's analysis indicates that "[t]he Gathic hymns are arranged in concentric circles around the Yasnā Haptanhaiti, 'written in a liturgical rhythmic prose style'" [Johanna Narten 1986 Cf. Hintze 2000:32]. "On the Literary Structure of the Older Avesta" (Ibid:50).
- 164 See Firoze Kotwal (1999–2000:1–8).
- 165 See Lawrence Mills (1902:768–769).
- 166 Also see Jenny Rose (2011:71–73).
- 167 The difference results from the different counts of the six seasonal thanksgivings of gāhambārs that each lasts for five days. They could be counted as six or as long as thirty days.
- 168 توانا بود هر که دانا بود / ز دانش دل پیر برنا بود
- 169 It seems this is a common way of thinking among Iranians. For instance, a middle aged grey-bearded Muslim told me once, "The Western world has progressed in technology but they do not enjoy their lives. They are secluded in their houses without having any relations with others. What is good in that? They are still fighting for the advancement of the principles of individualism in the form of liberalism, democracy, self-centrism, and egoism. This would not bring unity. From the time of Adam human has been pursuing these issues."
- 170 See Shahla Haeri (1985).
- 171 This law has recently been challenged, mostly in the North American Zoroastrian community. See Rashna Writer (1994:218–220).
- 172 Influenced by Fredrik Barth's situational approach to ethnicity (1969).
- 173 See the Associate Press 20 December 2008 article on the *Yaldā*.
- 174 See note 126.
- 175 For a sophisticated comparative analysis between Zoroastrian and Shi'i sofreh see Sabine Kalinock (2012).
- 176 These sorts of inventions are not without precedence in the community. For instance, this gathering on the second day of the New Year in the fire-temple itself is somewhat new, about a hundred years old and founded by a prominent Zoroastrian, Keykhosro Shahrokh. It was originally to be held on the first day of *Nowruz*, but when Shahrokh became member of the parliament and this day was occupied in the congress for the *salām* ceremony dedicated to the shah, it was changed to the second day.
- 177 اشونامه شماره 8
- 178 The chief among them is Sepante-Mainu, "God's creative organ [or] the 'Holy Spirit'" (Gershevitch 1964:12).
- 179 A term used by Irach Taraporewala, cited in Jalil Doostkhah's translation of Avesta, *Introduction* page thirty-nine.

- 180 While still a contemporary reading, Dinshah Irani discussed these under the subtitle of “seven spiritual stages” twenty years earlier; he named the last stage as *vesal* (attainment, fulfillment of love) describing unification with God, which belongs to the next world. (1982:107).
- 181 Dinshah Irani (1982:107).
- 182 See Afshin Marashi (2008:61).
- 183 As the protective angel of animals, Vahuman occupies a special place among other angels, and in every month the days that coincide with this Amshāspand are called *nabor*, wherein Zoroastrians are encouraged to abstain from eating meat.
- 184 Lawrence Mills translated Vahuman to be “the good-minded saint” (1900: 87).
- 185 Bekhradnia reported that *lorik* nowadays are handed to each guests and also sent to absent guests at weddings both inside and outside Iran, a small amount wrapped in decorative green or white net. “*Lorik* has thus acquired the function of representing an aspect of traditional Zoroastrianism” (1992:23–45).
- 186 One of the students told me that “in reverence of this Amshāspand that, which is symbolized by earth, all sofrehs are spread on the floor.” Nonetheless, in many instances this was not observed and tables were used instead—which with all the emphases put on keeping the tradition alive, I was surprised to observe.
- 187 Contemporary Iranians’ pronunciation is *mordad*, which actually means mortal, exactly the opposite. The community was reminded of this corrective point by many speakers on many.
- 188 Some of the oldest cedars in villages of Yazd and elsewhere were cut down as Ahmadinejad initiated a campaign against “superstitions.”
- 189 Dinshah Irani (1982:107).
- 190 Personal correspondence.
- 191 *Mobed Association* (2008:29).
- 192 Personal correspondence.
- 193 گلیم بخت کسی که ساخته اند سیاه/به آب زمزم و کوثر سفید نتوان کرد  
194 جام می و خون دل هر یک به کسی دادند/در دایره قسمت اوضاع چنین باشد  
195 For further discussion on ashā see next chapter.
- 196 تربیت نا اهل را چون گردکان بر گنبد است  
197 عاقبت گرگزاده گرگ شود  
198 گوهر پاک بیاید که شود قابل فیض/ور نه هر سنگ و گلی لولو و مرجان نشود  
199 کمتر از ذره نه ای پست مشو عشق بورز/تا به سرچشمه خورشید رسی رقص کنان/دامن دوست بدست آر و ز دشمن بگسل/مرد یزدان شو و فارغ گذر از اهرمنان

- 200 گلی خوشبوی در حمام روزی/رسید از دست محبوبی به دستم/بدو گفتم که مشکمی یا عبری/که  
از بوی دلاویز تو مستم  
بگفتا من گلی نا چیز بودم/ولیکن مدتی با گل نشستم/کمال همنشین در من اثر کرد/وگرنه من همان  
خاکم که هستم
- 201 چنان با خوب و بد سر کن که بعد از مردنت عرفی/مسلمان به زمزمت شوید و هندو بسوزاند  
202 سری را که درد نمیکند نباید بست
- 203 On cosmict dualism see Solomon Nigosian (1993:88–90), also Oktor Skjaervo (2011:8–9).
- 204 Formulated after Fredrik Barth's anthropology of knowledge model (2002a).
- 205 See chapter 3.
- 206 As Professor Choksy pointed out to me, "Zoroastrians also have a parallel tradition, dating from Safavid times onward of blaming Shi'a for extreme persecutions."
- 207 <http://www.cais-soas.com/News/2007/June2007/28--06.htm> (accessed, May 2014).
- 208 <http://www.asriran.com/fa/news/14038> (accessed, May 2014).
- 209 There are reports that on Tuesday, 26 June 2008 many Iranians (I assume mostly local Shi'a), gathered in front of the governor's residence to protest at the destruction order.
- 210 <http://www.cais-soas.com/News/2007/June2007/28--06.htm> (accessed, May 2014).
- 211 He said we can understand this in many different ways. It may be an innate expression of supplication. Or it may symbolize that God is everywhere, particularly in the skies. Energy therapy is another explanation. For further discussion on similarities with Islam see Alessandro Bausani (2000).
- 212 These five times include three o'clock in the morning to dawn, dawn to noon, noon to three o'clock, three o'clock to dusk, and then the night prayer till midnight.
- 213 Fischer also refers to this possible link (1980:268 n. 15).
- 214 *Mobed Goshtasb 52, Yazd.*
- 215 اَآا لله و آآا الیه راجعون
- 216 عیب رندان مکن ای زاهد پاکیزه سرشت/که گناه دگری بر تو نخواهند نوشت/من اگر نیمم و گر  
بد تو برو خود را باش/هرکسی آن درود عاقبت کار که کشت
- 217 This is also the opening question of the Chidag Handarz: Poryotkeshan, a 9th–11th cent. AD/CE Pahlavi Zoroastrian catechism. Transl. R.C. Zaehner, *The Teachings of the Magi*.
- 218 Nicholson trans (1926).
- بشنو از فی چون حکایت میکند/از جدایی ها شکایت میکند/کز نیستان تا مرا بریده اند/از نفیرم  
مرد و زن نالیده اند/ هر کسی کو دور ماند از اصل خویش/ باز جوید روزگار وصل خویش

- 219 حجاب چهره جان میشود غبار تم/خوشا دمی کزین چهره پرده بر فکتم/چنین قفس نه سزای چو من  
خوش الحانیست/ روم به روضه رضوان که مرغ آن چمتم/چگونه طوف کم در فضای عالم قدس/که  
در سراچه تقدیر تخته بند تم
- 220 See Jawid Mojaddedi (2003); Michael Sells (1996); Gerhard Böwering (2005).
- 221 Mason reported on Luis Massignon's discovery of Hallaj and his later travels to "the Middle East, Iran, Khurasan, and Western India, collecting any and every work by him and memorial to him that had survived the centuries. Massignon discovered that Hallaj was indeed very much alive, often in folkloric ways, in the popular imagination and in circles of religious orders in remote areas of the Islamic world. In recent decade Hallaj has been the subject of a number of plays and poem by leading Arab, Persian, and Turkish writers" (1979:xix). Mason wrote that Hallaj "danced as an alternative to abstractionism and despair," and "believed in ... direct inspiration from the Source ..." (Mason 1979:xvii).
- 222 Skjaervo writes, "The daenā is what allows man to 'see' in the world of thought, but she also appears to the (breath-) soul in the form of a woman representing the totality of a person's thoughts, words, and deeds in life, which determines how she looks and for which the soul is judged in the beyond ... The word is often translated as 'religion,' but this only applies to certain uses of *den* in the Pahlavi literature and there is no reason to think that the word may have had the modern meaning of religion in the *avesta* and early Sasanian times" (2011:31).
- 223 For a full account of this popular tradition among Zoroastrians, see Solomon Nigosian (1993:12–13).
- 224 Some historical accounts give a different picture of the spread of Zoroaster's message that also violates the abovementioned rejection of religious conversion: "[h]is ringing voice of reform and of a nobler faith found an answering echo in the heart of the Bactrian king, Vishtaspa, whose strong arm gave necessary support to the crusade that spread the new faith west and east throughout the land of Iran. Allusions to this crusade are not uncommon in Zoroastrian literature. A fierce religious war which in a way was fatal to Bactria, seems to have ensued with Turan." (Jackson 1896:21)
- 225 According to him, it is only in the cosmology born out of Zoroaster that two worlds are equal which made Plato, who identified himself as a student of Zoroaster, assume, albeit mistakenly, a third middle world.
- 226 "After Zoroastrians abandoned the fire temple at Baku, it was used by Hindus (there the remnants of ascetic practices)" (Professor Choksy, personal correspondence); also see Choksy (2006b).

- 227 “This was influence of Islam and Christianity on Zoroastrianism in both Iran and India” (Choksy, personal correspondence). Professor Lindholm commented, “I think this may well be a response to the Shi’ite denial of mystical practice—and to a desire to be modern. Ascetic or ecstatic practices are ‘primate.’”
- 228 “William James called this the “once born” perspective” (2004).
- 229 برگ درختان سبز در نظر هوشیار / هر ورقش دفترست معرفت کردگار  
230 ابر و باد و مه و خورشید و فلک در کارند / تا تو نانی به کف آری و به غفلت نخوری  
همه از بهر تو سرگشته و فرمانبردار / شرط انصاف نباشد که تو فرمان نبری
- 231 See Anne Schimmel (1974).
- 232 *Amordād* reported, <http://www.amordad6485.blogfa.com/post-1095.asp> (accessed, July 2013).
- 233 In recent years, some Muslim women have also entered this male dominated tradition, breaking the taboo.
- 234 زنانشان چنین اند ایران سران / چگونه اند گردان جنگ آوران  
235 According to her, the masculine Amshāspands are vahooman (wisdom and good thought), Ashāvahishta (rule and order in the world), Khshatra-vairyā (that Ahura Mazda has power but uses it in the good path). The feminine Amshāspands are Sepante-armiti (love and sacrifice that is exemplified on earth in the mother), Hoorvatāt (completion and perfection) and Ameretāt (everlastingness and immortality, a status will be achieved after achieving the first five).
- 236 A modern interpretation. See Choksy (2002).
- 237 See chapter 2.
- 238 وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانٍ قَوْمِهِ  
239 Another pejorative term from the root *mogh*, originally used for pre-Zoroastrian priests.
- 240 Another pejorative term from the Arabic *kafir* meaning infidel.  
241 <http://archive.today/TNh2U> (accessed, May 2014).
- 242 For a detailed discussion on this change see Choksy (2006a:15).
- 243 میندار که آتش پرستان بُند/پرستنده پاک یزدان بدند  
244 از آن به دیر مغامع عزیز میدارند/که آتشی که نمیرد همیشه در دل ماست  
245 Rumi, trans: Nicholson (1926).  
آتش عشق است کاندَر نی فتاد/جوشش عشق است کاندَر می فتاد  
آتشست این بانگ نای و نیست باد/هر که این آتش ندارد نیست باد
- 246 On burial practices in Iran see also Fereydoon Shirmard Farahmand (1998).
- 247 For a discussion of such transformation in other religions see Talal Asad (1993).

- 248 سنت قدیمی هفت سین و زنده داریم/به این آداب و سنن احترامی خاص میندازیم
- 249 Qoutingn Lave and Wenger phrase (1991). Pierre Bourdieu's model of *habitus* (1977) accounts for two kinds of learning process: the unconscious inculcation of religious principles in the more traditional settings, as well as the formalized and conscious learning of formal schooling. See LeVine (1994).
- 250 In 1981, Mehrdad Mehrin estimated the population to be “more than three hundred thousand.” Other estimates indicate 360,000 Zoroastrians in 1977 (Amighi 1990). See chapter 1, n. 8.
- 251 In personal correspondence professor Choksy commented that the religion is passed through the paternal line. Accordingly, the child should be considered Zoroastrian.
- 252 <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/06/us/06faith.html> (accessed, May 2014).
- 253 Among the Parsis, Tanya Luhrmann (2002) notes that different schools of thought have different emphases on the importance of rituals, approaches to dualism, intermarriage, and conversion. The orthodox that promote total exclusion of others are concerned that increasing assimilation will alter the community beyond recognition, while the liberals are concerned that the community will die out without intermarriage and conversion. Maneckji Nusserwanji Dhalla, the Parsi high priest of Karachi critical of orthodoxy writes, “The permanent blockade to an influx from outside, the abandoning of the fold by an increasing number of both men and women, and the ever-falling birth-rate of the community ... it can be said that [the question of conversion] has become the thread on which hangs the very existence of this microscopic community” (1975:713–714).
- 254 “A celebrated eastern fabulist and philosopher, sometimes identified with Aesop,” *The Larger Persian English Dictionary*, S. Haim.
- 255 Friday, 1 February 2008.
- 256 Friday, 15 February 2008.
- 257 It was originally named *Anjoman-e Iran Bastan*, frequently visited by figures such as Foroozafar and Hamidi Shirazi, Bahrām Farahvashi also mobed Firuz Azar Goshasb and mobed Shahzady.
- 258 سلمانٌ مِنَّا أَهْلُ الْبَيْتِ
- 259 I am using the translation by Franz Rosenthal of Ibn Khaldoun's *Muqad-dimah* (III, pp. 311–315, 271–274).
- 260 This event was simultaneous with the *Haft-Sin* competition discussed in chapter 4.

- 261 Starting on the first day of 1387 (March 2008).
- 262 Even though the Islamic Republic's constitution guarantees the right of the recognized religious minorities to operate according to their canon in religious education, in practice it is not fully in their purview and the basic religious books for minorities produced by the Ministry of Education and Training are also used. See Choksy (2006a:168), and Patricia Higgins (1984).
- 263 *Technorati*: <http://www.sifry.com/alerts/archives/000493.html> (accessed, May 2014).
- 264 Roy Mottahedeh writes, "In fact, Persian poetry came to be the emotional home in which the ambiguity that was at the heart of Iranian culture lived most freely and openly. What Persian poetry expressed was not as enigma to be solved but an enigma that was unsolvable. In Persian poetry of any worth nothing was *merely* something else; the inner space of the spirit in which Persian poetry underwent its thousand transformations was ultimately a place where this ambiguous language reached a private emotional value that had to remain private, because to decode it as mere allegory, to re-express it in any form of explanatory paraphrase would be to place it back in the public domain and, therefore, in the realm in which it was intended to remain ambiguous" (1985:164).
- 265 While the Foundation marks this day on Esfand 29, the celebration of Zoroastrians was on Bahman 29 which is according to the fifth day of Esfand to the Zoroastrian count, Monday, 19 February 2008.
- 266 <http://www.sarmayeh.net/ShowNews.php?35324> (accessed, July 2013).  
 "کلاً جشن روز ولنتاین برگرفته از جشن سپندارمزدان ایران است و اساساً مبدایی ایرانی دارد."
- 267 While this trend regarding Zoroastrians challenges Andersons' argument that the dawn of nationalism necessarily marks the dusk of religious modes of thought (1991:11), it proves him right in terms of using Islam as the precursor of Iranian nationalist self conception.
- 268 Using Abbas Amanat on Persianate world 2002.
- 269 White House photo by Chris Greenberg: <http://www.payvand.com/news/08/mar/1247.html> (accessed, May 2014).
- 270 While the U.S. media headlines overwhelmingly announced that the Iranian Supreme Leader immediately dismissed the President's call for a new beginning, he actually left the door open, conditioned upon measures to indicate "real change" in the U.S.A. "hostility" towards Iran, including "release of Iranian assets, lifting the oppressive sanctions, and abandonment of unconditional support for the Zionist regime."
- 271 A Zoroastrian mobed.

- 272 See Christopher Buck (1998).
- 273 This is similar to what the Soviet Union did with the Jews and Cuba with the dissidents by permitting out-migration. In the larger Iranian context, however, Zoroastrians exemplify an Iranian history that is filled with emigrations of this nature. Recalling Shamlou who calls on fellow Iranians to “[r]emember our strange migration from one alienation to another, so that the search for Faith would be our only virtue,” recalling that “our history was of restlessness. Not of belief. Not of hometown.”
- 274 Babayan also refers to the conflation of Zoroaster and Abraham (2002:189).
- 275 This research addressed a larger theoretical discourse concerned with the mechanisms of sociocultural reproduction in a globalized world where minority groups struggle to remain viable and to affirm their “authentic” status. The Zoroastrian case can serve as a point of comparison for parallel efforts undertaken by global “indigenous rights” movements, as documented by Ronald Niezen (2003) and others. It shows how the Zoroastrian situation, as both a global community and a local minority, and as a literate monotheist religion, both differs from and resembles these “aboriginal” movements for recognition. As we saw, Zoroastrians continually make claims to be more modern and rational than the predominant society. The usual rhetoric of first nations, however, relies on spiritual superiority, innate connection to the earth, collective unity, and generally other rational and mystical claims to assert authenticity and authority.
- 276 Phrase used by Whitehead in his notion of historicity (2003).
- 277 Phrase used by Lambek in his discussion of historicity (2002).
- 278 Term used by Hirschkind in his cultural analysis of history (2006).
- 279 As he once recited, Sohrab Sepehry says that “‘we have to wash our eyes and look differently.’ With a blue or red lens everything is blue or red. Now imagine if we wear glasses of pessimism or cynicism, then we always see the empty half of the glass. No wonder that Sohrab Sepehry also reminds us that we have to find the truth from children. This is because they are not familiar with lying; it is we adults who teach them to lie.”
- 280 Shervin Malakzadeh’s (2009) analysis of textbooks in Iran shows a move away from revolutionary images that now even include the image of the Pasargadae in the text when illustrating an Iranian family in its home. Hamid Rezai (2009) also argues that Khatami brought about structural and institutional changes that allowed for an identity construction different from that of the “Islamic Man.”
- 281 As reported by Amordad, the Zoroastrian news agency, they are partly for

the tourists, while many of the shop owners as well many youths who wear jewels made of these images do not know their significance.

282 [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l\\_uTfuI2Pt8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_uTfuI2Pt8) (accessed, May 2014).

283 <http://www.berasad.com/fa/content/view/1560/> (accessed, May 014).

