

ZARATHUSHTRA - THE GOLDEN STAR

(FOURTH EDITION)

by

Pareen Lalkaka

Illustrated

P. B. Kavadi



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Mrs. Parveen Lalkaka, Avasia House, Darabshaw Road, Mumbai 26.

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Preface to the first Edition

Here is a book named Zarathushtra -The Golden Star” written by Mrs. Paireen Lalkaka. The book deals with the life of the Prophet, stories of the Amesha Spentas and the Kusti Prayers. It is meant for children and is consequently written in extremely simple style so that children can easily read it, understand it, and enjoy it. To please children the book is illustrated with coloured pictures.

Ancient Iran was clothed with luscious vegetation. The farmers who cultivated the fields had flocks of sheep, cows, horses, dogs and camels. In the absence of money, these were exchanged for the purchase of the necessities of life. When strong people living on the frontiers poured down and attacked the innocent and carried away their cattle and eatables, they prayed to God for help. Ahura Mazda asked the Fravashis to go to the world to help mankind. They willingly agreed. Amongst those that came to Iran was the child Zarathushtra who was destined to rise as a prophet.

At the time of his birth Zarathushtra laughed, whereas all other children cried. As he grew up he became kind and generous. When he began to preach his religion, the hostile heretic priests carried on counter propaganda against him. Friendless and forlorn, Zarathushtra fled to Ahura Mazda and requested him to help him as a friend. He longed to see and greet Ahura Mazda. With the Lord God with him, he taught people to be kind and loving. Zarathushtra then visited King Vishtaspa and his noble queen, Hutaoshi, who helped him whole-heartedly.

Then follow stories about the Amesha Spentas. The first King Hushang who discovered fire and other precious things for the nourishment of the people. The story of Zahak, Faridun and Kawa the blacksmith, Iraj the brave and kind and his brothers, Kaikhushru and other Kai kings and the lovely story of Shireen and Shehernaz ends the stories. The book ends with the Kusti prayers.

It is very creditable of Mrs. Paireen Lalkaka to have written such an excellent book. This book is of universal interest, and I am sure that people all over the world will enjoy reading it and will learn something about our prophet and have a glimpse of our religion.

by the Late
Dastur M. N. DHALLA
M.A., PH.D., D.LITT.

Acknowledgements

I humbly thank Dastur Dr. Framroze Bode and the late Dr. Irach Taraporewalla, who first taught me the beauty of my religion and helped and guided me to write this book, and who recommended it for publication.

My thanks are due to Dastur Khursheed Dabu who read the text and who recommended it for publication in the following words:

“I have perused the booklet and find it worthy of publication.”

I also thank Dastur Navroze Minocherhomji for very kindly reading the text and helping me with certain Avestan names; and Madame Ferangis Yeganegi, from Iran, for her valuable advice concerning the arrangement of the contents of this book.

I wish to express my warm thanks to the generous donor who has made possible the publication of this little book, and wishes to remain anonymous.

I also thank Mr. S. Ramu, the head of the Printing Press, and Miss Sahiar for their kind help and their genuine desire to see this little book in print.

Last, but not least, are my thanks due to my parents and many other parents, my husband, my sisters, the children I have known and loved, including my own and the artist who has painted the pictures for this book. He took many months studying old manuscripts and books in the Library of the Cama Oriental Institute, changing and re-painting the pictures so that they would look as ancient as possible -though no one today knows exactly what the people in Zarathushtra's day looked like or what clothes they wore. It is his pictures that make the words come alive, and for his love and infinite patience I am deeply grateful.

Preface to the Third Edition



This book was first printed in 1965 so that Zoroastrian children could learn about their religion from an early age. It was hoped that reading this book would kindle a fire in their hearts to know and learn more about the religion of Zarathushtra.

The second edition was brought out in 1992 by the World Zoroastrian Organization, London, with the help of donations from Dr. (Mrs.) Shirinbanoo S. Kutar of London, U.K. (in revered memory of her late husband Dasturji Dr. Sohrab Hormusji Kutar), and Hilda and Rumi Sethna of London, U.K. (in pious memory of their late mother Mrs. Piroja Pherozshaw Sethna) and The World Zarathushtrian Trust Funds, London.

Due to a demand for more copies of the book, it is being re-printed. I am deeply grateful and sincerely thank The W.Z.O. Trust for Women and Children for bringing out this third edition.

May it help to generate a great love of our religion amongst our Zoroastrian children and, may children of other faiths who read this book, get to know the religion of Zarathushtra, broad based on Truth, Righteousness, the Divine Law and the ever encompassing Love of God.

PAREEN LALKAKA

Preface to the Fourth Edition



Pareen Lalkaka's book, *Zarathushtra – the Golden Star*, has been very popular ever since it was first published in 1965. It is an ideal tool for generating interest in young children to the religion of our Prophet Zarathushtra.

It is to the credit of Pareen Lalkaka that she has undertaken a painstaking labour of love to research, prepare and publish reading material that young children will find interesting.

We Zoroastrians, a community of achievers have evolved from the genes of the likes of Jamsheed, Faredoon, Cyrus, Darius and many other giants cast in a similar mould. It stands to reason, without doubt, that our successes are undoubtedly linked to our faith.

For all human beings, faith is a very vital attribute. Faith is the fountainhead from which goodness flows and righteousness in all its glory is manifest. In my estimation our success has largely been due to the fact that we have kept the faith. We have remained true to the teachings of our prophet in word and more importantly in spirit. We as a community will do well to remember that as long as we keep the faith, we shall be assured of continued ascent.

The WZO Trust Funds, Mumbai are pleased to sponsor the publication of the fourth edition, for distribution to families who would like to create interest in our religion in their children. Copies will be available upon request, till stocks last, from Union Press where the book is being printed.



DINSHAW K. TAMBOLY
WZO Trust Funds - Chairman

Zarathushtra - The Golden Star

Long long ago, in the country of Iran, lived a man called Zarathushtra. he became a great Prophet. “What is a Prophet”? you will ask. A Prophet is a man who knows something about God and His ways. He tells us how by loving God we begin to love everything He created. This makes us always happy.

Iran is a beautiful country with many mountains and rivers. When Zarathushtra was born in Iran the men were tall, fair and strong. Most of the men were farmers and worked in the fields. They kept camels, horses, cows, sheep, goats, dogs/cats and other animals. There were shepherds too. The people drank the milk which the cows, sheep and camels gave them. The wool from the sheep was used in making warm clothes. The winters are very cold in Iran.

The women in Iran were beautiful and fair. They had lovely big eyes and very long hair. When the men went to work, the women stayed at home and cooked the food. The girls helped their mothers at home. The boys helped their fathers in the fields. They dug the ground and grew food.

The people did not know anything about money. In those days when a person wanted something, he would give a cow or a sheep or some other animal or vegetable, and take what he wanted. There were no cars, buses or cycles. People walked or rode on the backs of animals, The people of Iran lived a quiet life and were very happy. When the ground became very hard and they could not grow even grass, they would leave that place. They would take all their animals and go to another place. These people moved about like this from place to place, and were called Nomads.

Now in the mountains of Iran lived some very strong people. They would suddenly come down the mountain side, kill the farmers, take away their animals and all the food they had grown. These bad people also took away women and girls and made them work for them as slaves. These people were lazy and did not want to work. So they would take away everything from the poor farmers.

God listens to the prayers of the good farmers and helps them

The good farmers thought of God. They called God “Mazda Ahura”. They said :“God is called Mazda because He has created the Universe. The sun, stars, this earth of ours, and everything we see around us has been created by Him. He is called Ahura because he is the beginning and father of all living things. He has made men, animals, birds, plants and all that lives under water. He will always help us.”

So they cried out to Mazda Ahura saying :-

“O Mazda Ahura, please help us in this world. Many people are hurting us and we are very unhappy.”

Mazda Ahura felt very sorry for His people. He asked all His Fravashis to come to Him. A Fravashi is a spark of God, which is within everyone. This spark comes from the Boundless Light which has no beginning nor end and which is God. No one can hurt a Fravashi. When any one dies, that person’s Fravashi goes back to Mazda Ahura and stays with the Boundless Light.

The Fravashi thought -

“Who will go and stop these men from hurting others? Who will teach them to love one another and be happy again?”

Then, from the Great Light of God, came the Fravashi of Zarathushtra which said-

“I will go, if God will help me. Without God’s help I can do nothing.”

As soon as the Fravashi of Zarathushtra said this, its light began to shine very brightly. It became brighter and brighter. Now the Fravashi of Zarathushtra could see only the great Light of God around it. Then the Fravashi of Zarathushtra knew that God would always be near him. This Fravashi came into the world and entered the body of a child called Zarathushtra. When Zarathushtra grew up he became the Great Prophet.

I shall now take you far away to a place called Chorasmia and tell you something about a girl called Doghdo.



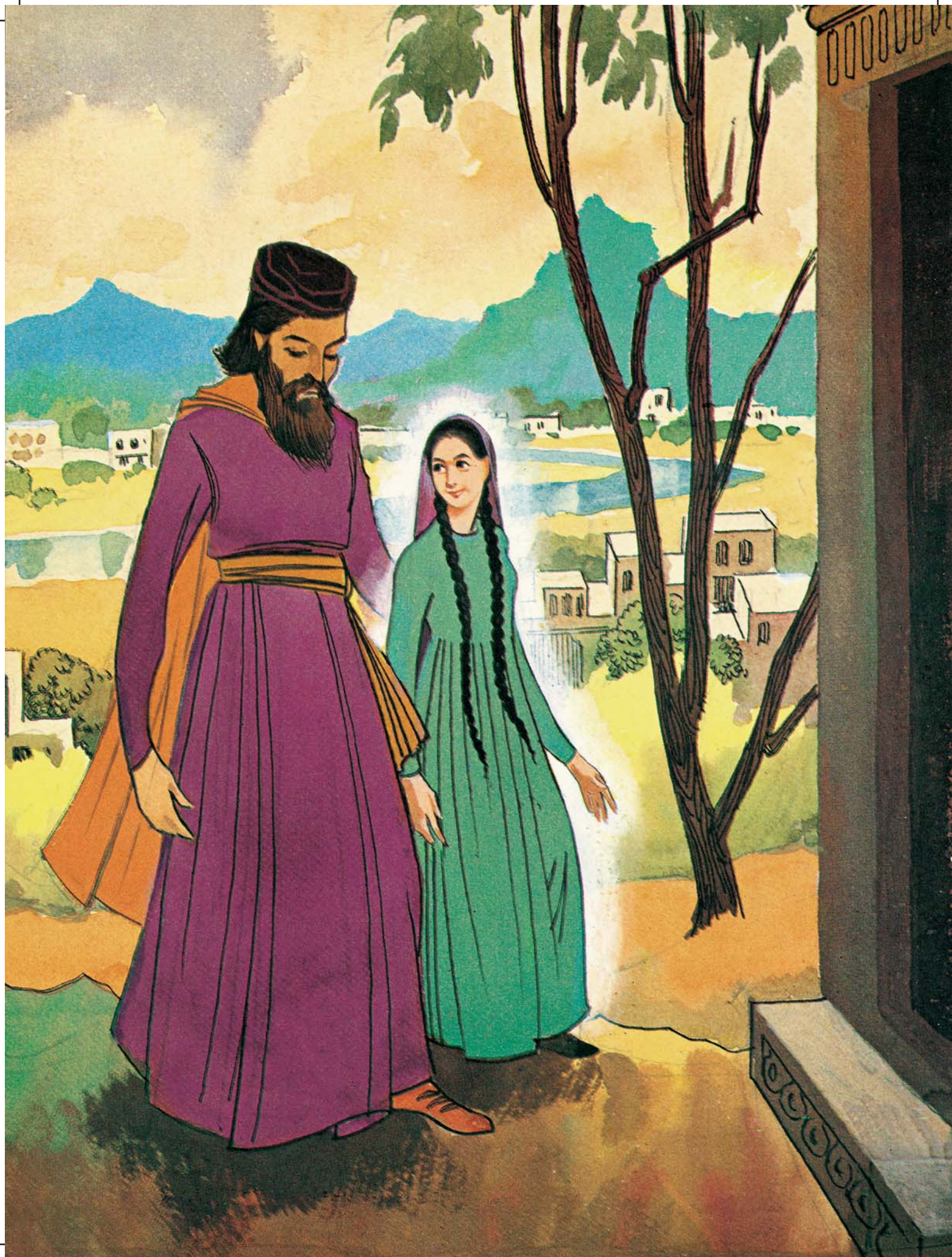
The Birth of Zarathustra

In the city called Chorasemia lived a beautiful and good girl called Doghdo. Doghdo was the daughter of a very kind man called Frahim-rava.

When Doghdo was fifteen years old, a wonderful thing happened to her. Her whole body began to shine with a beautiful soft light. Her father and mother and all her relatives began to wonder at this soft light all around her. Wherever she went this light went with her.

Everyone soon heard about Doghdo and the wonderful light which shone around her body. The people did not know why Doghdo's body shone so brightly. They were frightened. They thought that she was a bad girl. They did not want this girl as they thought she would make everyone sick. They thought that if they looked at her they would become ill.

Doghdo's father heard about this and was sad. He knew that his daughter was very good girl and that what the people thought was all wrong. Frahim-rava was afraid that his lovely Doghdo would be hurt by these men. So, one day, he took her far away to the house of a great friend. It was a beautiful place. There were many mountains all around it and a big river flowed through the city. Doghdo loved the place as soon as she saw it. Her father's friend was called Paeteraspa. He lived in a big house near the river. Paeteraspa took Doghdo into his own house and was very kind to her. Doghdo was very happy.



Paeteraspa had a son called Pourushaspa. Pourushaspa and Doghdo became great friends. They began to love each other. One day they got married and were very happy.

Pourushaspa and Doghdo both loved Mazda Ahura. They always prayed to Him to make them good and kind to everyone. One day, Doghdo knew that she was going to have a baby. She thought - "Zarathushtra is going to become my baby. I must look after him well and let no one hurt him. Mazda Ahura is sending him to Iran to help the people to be happy. I must not be afraid for the Light of God is in me and will always help me."

Then, Pourushaspa also felt that he must take care of beautiful Doghdo and look after her and baby Zarathushtra.

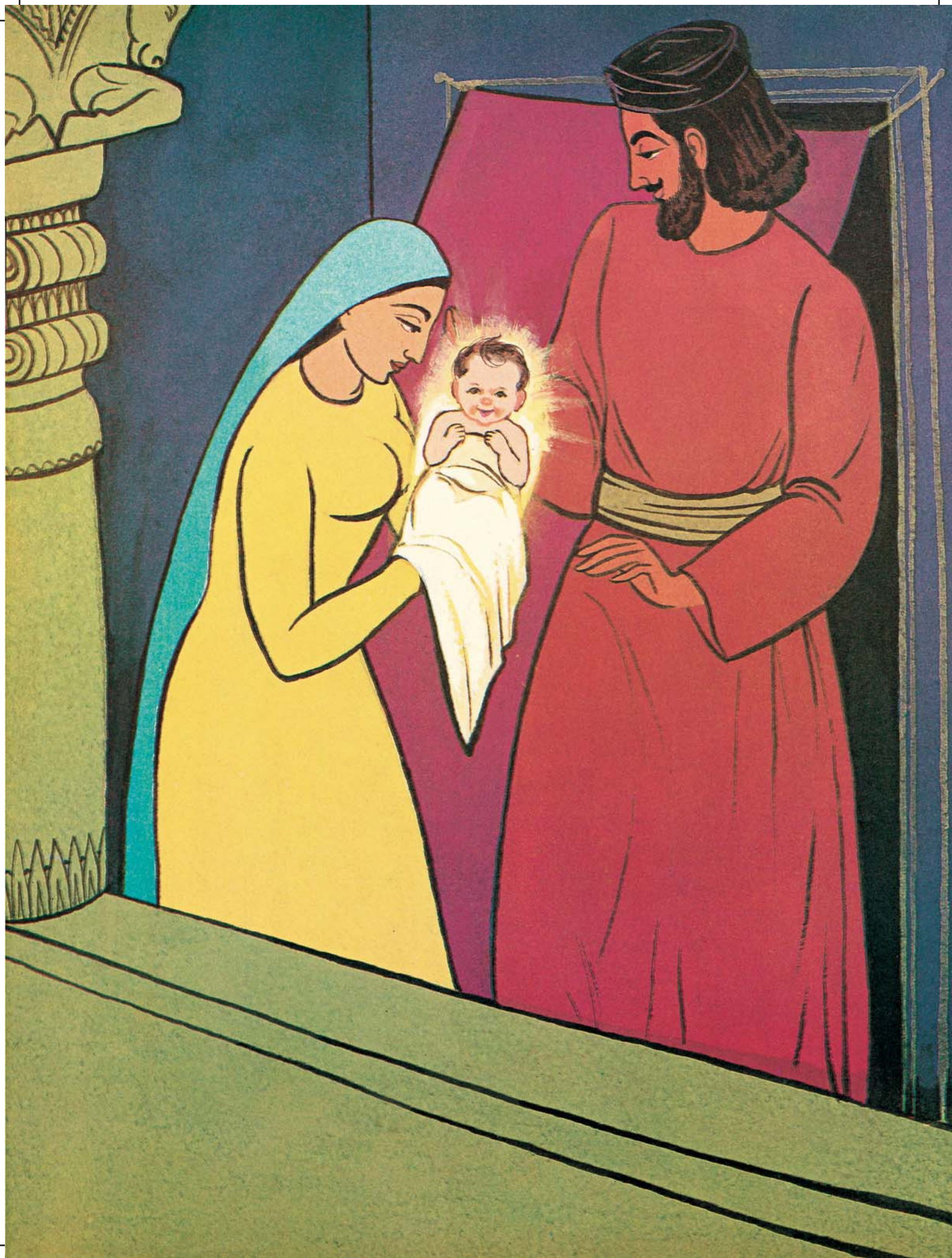
One day, when Doghdo woke up, she felt very happy. It was a lovely morning. The sun was shining and the breeze was making a gentle sound as it passed through the leaves of the trees. All the flowers were out in the fields and the birds were singing on the trees. Pourushaspa and Doghdo knew that their baby would be born on this day. Yes, Zarathushtra was born on that beautiful day.

When Zarathushtra was born, a lovely light shone all around him. God sent this light to tell people that Zarathushtra was going to be a great Prophet

Baby Zarathushtra was still more different from other babies. All babies, when they are born, cry, but Zarathushtra laughed. The women near Doghdo ran to tell Pourushaspa about Zarathushtra. They said :-

"Your little son laughs, Pourushaspa, and a wonderful light shines around him. It is Mazda Ahura who has sent him to you. He is going to be a very good and great man."

Baby Zarathushtra laughed because he remembered Mazda Ahura. He was happy because he knew that God had sent him into the world to help all the people to be happy. He was Zarathushtra the Golden Star of Iran and of the World. So we remember the day Zarathushtra was born. It was the first day of spring. It is blessed day for everything that lives.



Zarathustra grows up

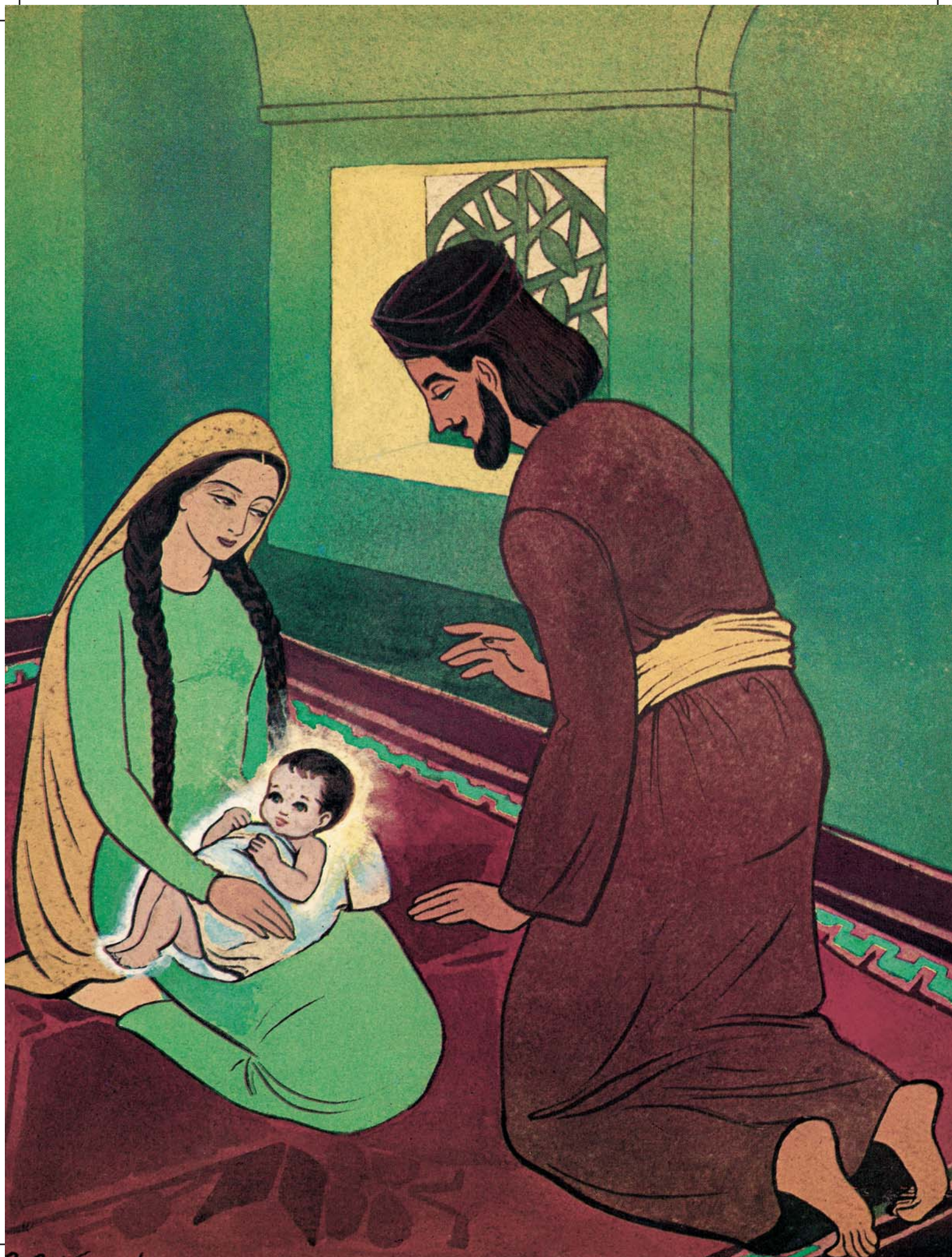
Baby Zarathushtra grew up to be a lovely big boy. He was very clever and spoke about God to lots of people. His mother and father asked a clever teacher to teach him. But, in a short time, Zarathushtra knew more than his teacher. So the teacher was sent away.

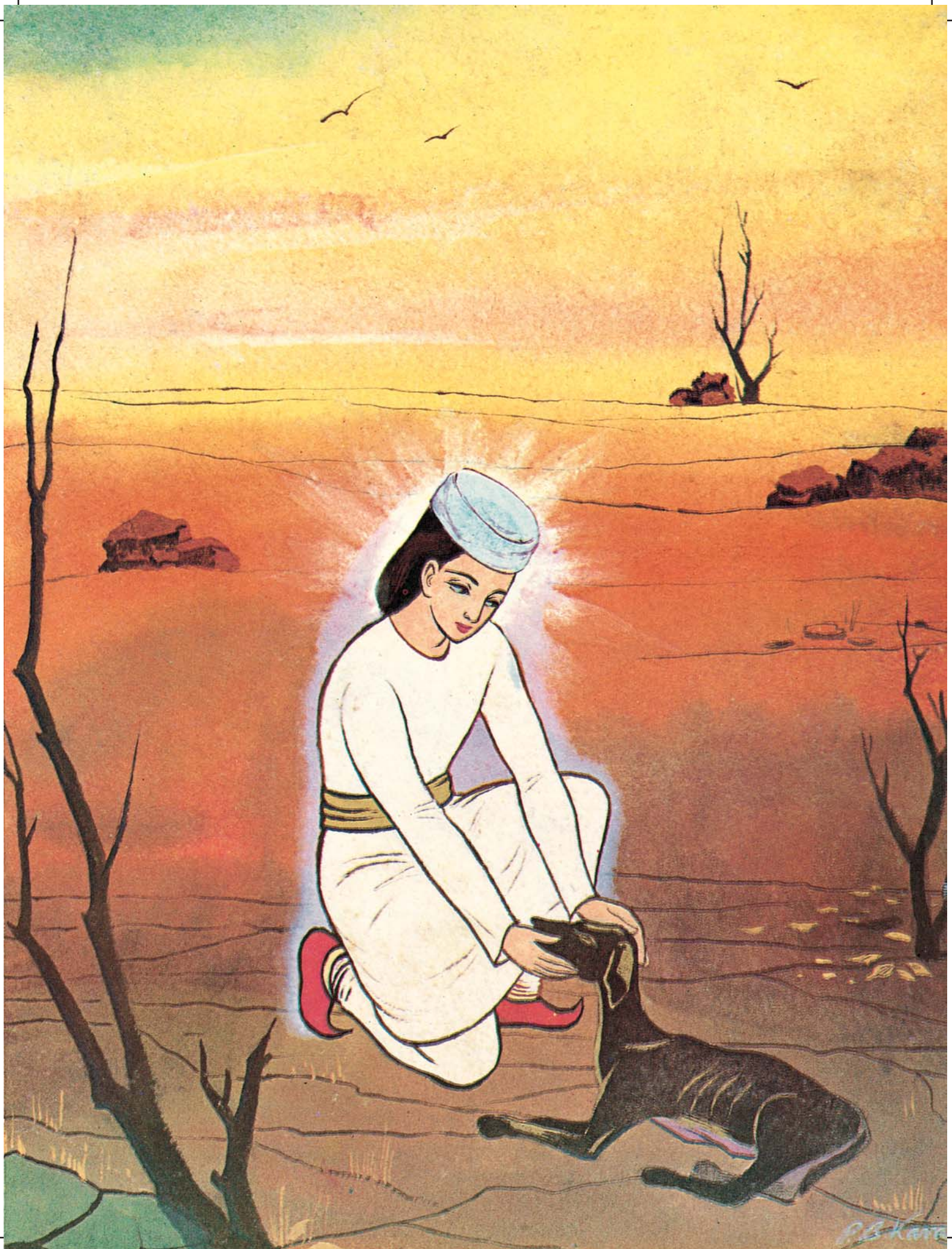
Zarathushtra was a happy boy. He loved everything and was kind to all. He always tried to make other people happy like himself. Zarathushtra was happy because he never felt alone. His Fravashi often showed Zarathustra whatto do.

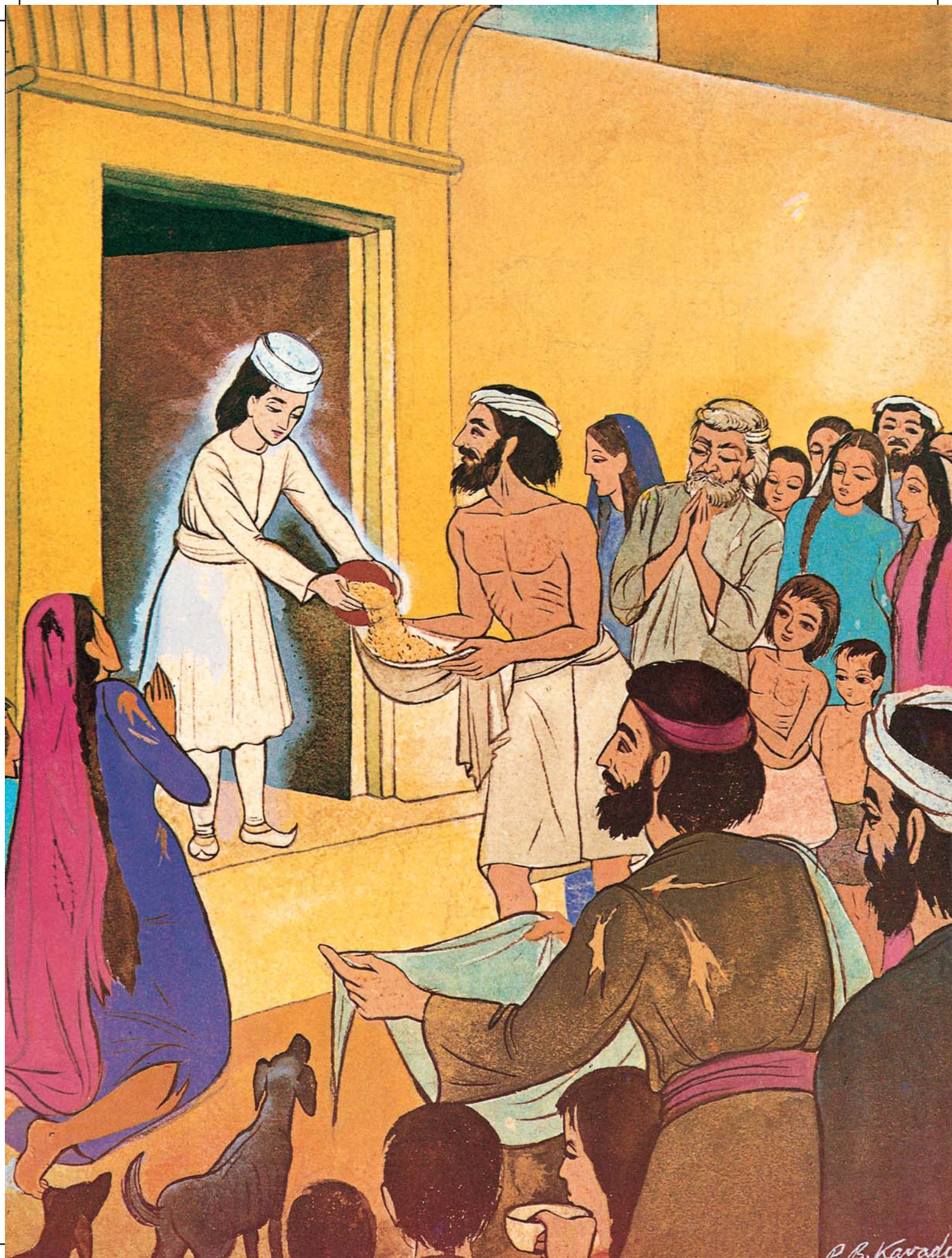
All the boys loved Zarathushtra. They asked him: “How are you always smiling and happy?” Zarathushtra would always say: “You can also smile and be happy if you try to see the spark of God inside you. Try to know what God wants you to do. If you keep quiet you will soon know what God wants you to do. We can think of good or bad things. Try to think of all that is good. This will make you good and happy. Do not think of what is bad. This will make you bad and very sad. Try not to keep everything for yourself. Give what you have to others and be kind to everyone. Then, if some one hurts you, you will not feel angry, because God will always make you feel happy.”

One day, Zarathushtra was walking down the road. He saw a very thin dog. The poor dog was lying in the middle of the road. This poor little dog was dying. It had nothing to eat for a long time. Zarathushtra felt very sorry for the poor dog. He ran home and brought some water and a piece of bread. The dog ate up the bread and drank the water. It felt better and its tail began to wag. It licked Zarathushtra’s hand as if to say ‘thank you’. It was happy now and stood up. Zarathushtra lifted it up in his arms and took it home. He asked his mother and father if he could keep it. They said:

“Yes, Zarathushtra, you can keep it. Look after it well. Love it, and give it food to eat and take it out for walks.”







Zarathushtra promised to do everything for-the dog, and so he kept it.

Then there was a time when there was no rain in Iran. The ground became dry and hard. All that was grown in the ground died. People felt very hungry as they had nothing to eat. many people died, and some began to beg for food at the road-side. Zarathushtra felt very sorry for all these people.

“Do not cry, do not be unhappy,” he said, “I will give you all the food I have”

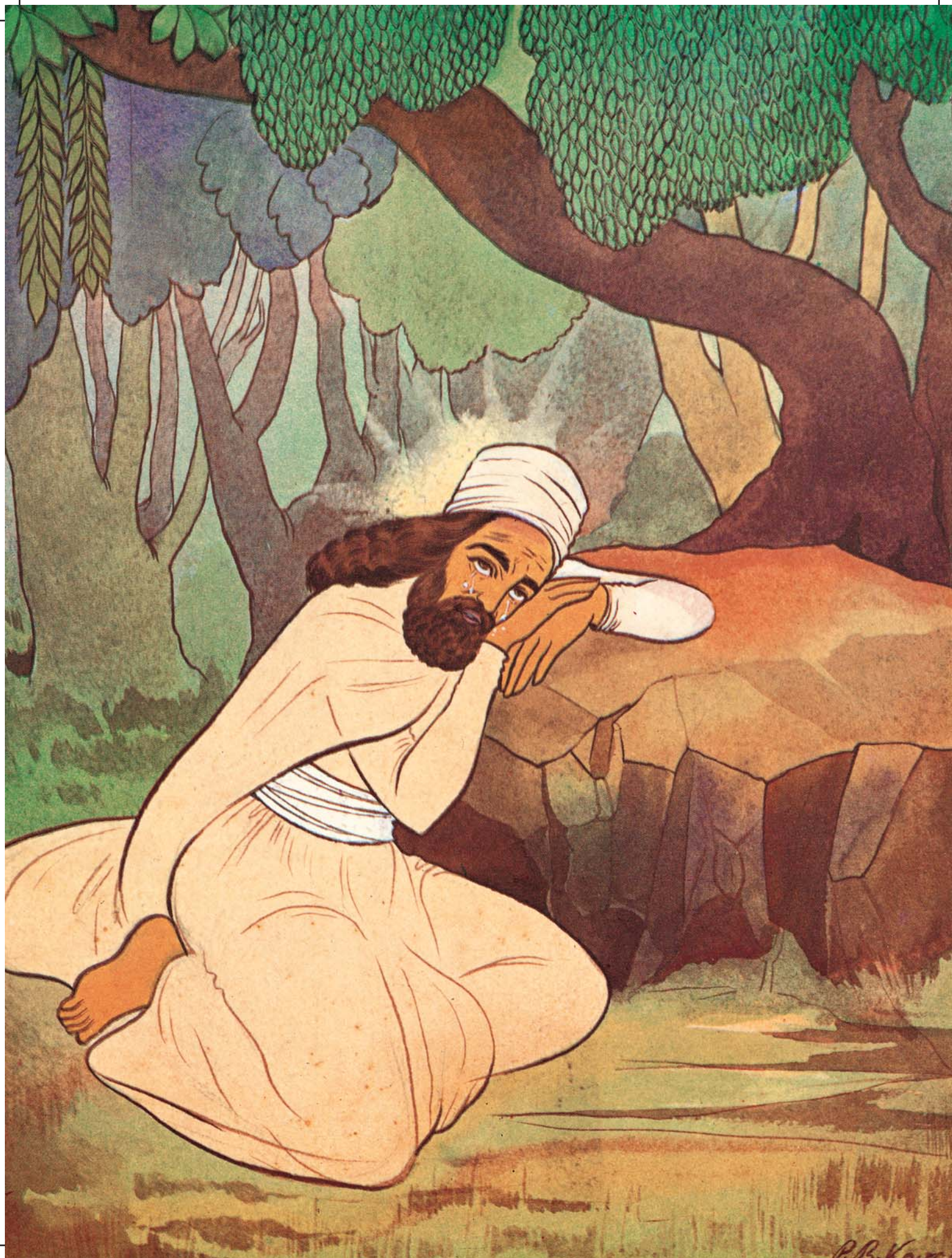
He went home and said to his mother and father :-

“Please let me give all the food we have to these poor people. They are so hungry.”

“Yes, Zarathushtra, give everything to these hungry people. We will also pray that Mazda Ahura will help them and make them happy again.”

So Zarathushtra and his mother and father gave away all the food they had in the house. They became as poor as those people whom they helped. Zarathushtra and his parents were happy because so many people were made happy again.

Now we shall see what happened to Zarathushtra when he became a man.



Mazda Ahura helps Zarathushtra

When Zarathushtra grew older he became very sad. Some people did not want him to know God. They said :

“If there is a God who loves every one, they why are so many people sad in the world? Why do they have to suffer? Why are some people so poor that they are hungry and die? What is the use of believing in God? Come with us and we will make you very happy. Do not worry about other people. Let them be unhappy. Let them die.”

For some time Zarathushtra did not know what to do. He went from place to place for many months, but these sad thoughts never left him. He began to feel alone in the world. Then, one day, when he could bear it no longer, he cried out to Mazda Ahura :

O Mazda Ahura, come and help me. Show me what I must do. I can not think and I do not know what to do or where to go.”

Then Zarathushtra began to see the Light of God in him and he felt that he must not be afraid. He thought :

“God is always near me and will help me. I must not listen to these people. They do not want to help anyone. They do not love people. These men only love themselves. They hurt the poor people and kill them. They are not really happy. If I take away all they have, they will be very sad.”

Zarathushtra began to feel happy again. He knew now that the light of God never leaves anyone. Zarathushtra prayed to Mazda Ahura by lighting the great fire. He asked Mazda Ahura to make him pure like the fire. Everything that is thrown into the fire, even if it is dirty, turns into ashes and becomes clean. Zarathushtra prayed to be “allowed to go nearer and nearer to Mazda Ahura Himself, like the flames of the fire which leap upwards, higher and higher. Zarathushtra knew that God’s Light is in every one. We think of God’s Light inside us as if it were a little fire, burning in each one of us. We cannot see the Fravashi inside us, but we can see the fire we make. So, when we pray to Mazda Ahura, we pray before some fire or light.



Zarathushtra leaves his home and helps everyone to be happy

Zarathushtra, now wanted to help other people to find the Light of God in themselves. So, one day, he said :

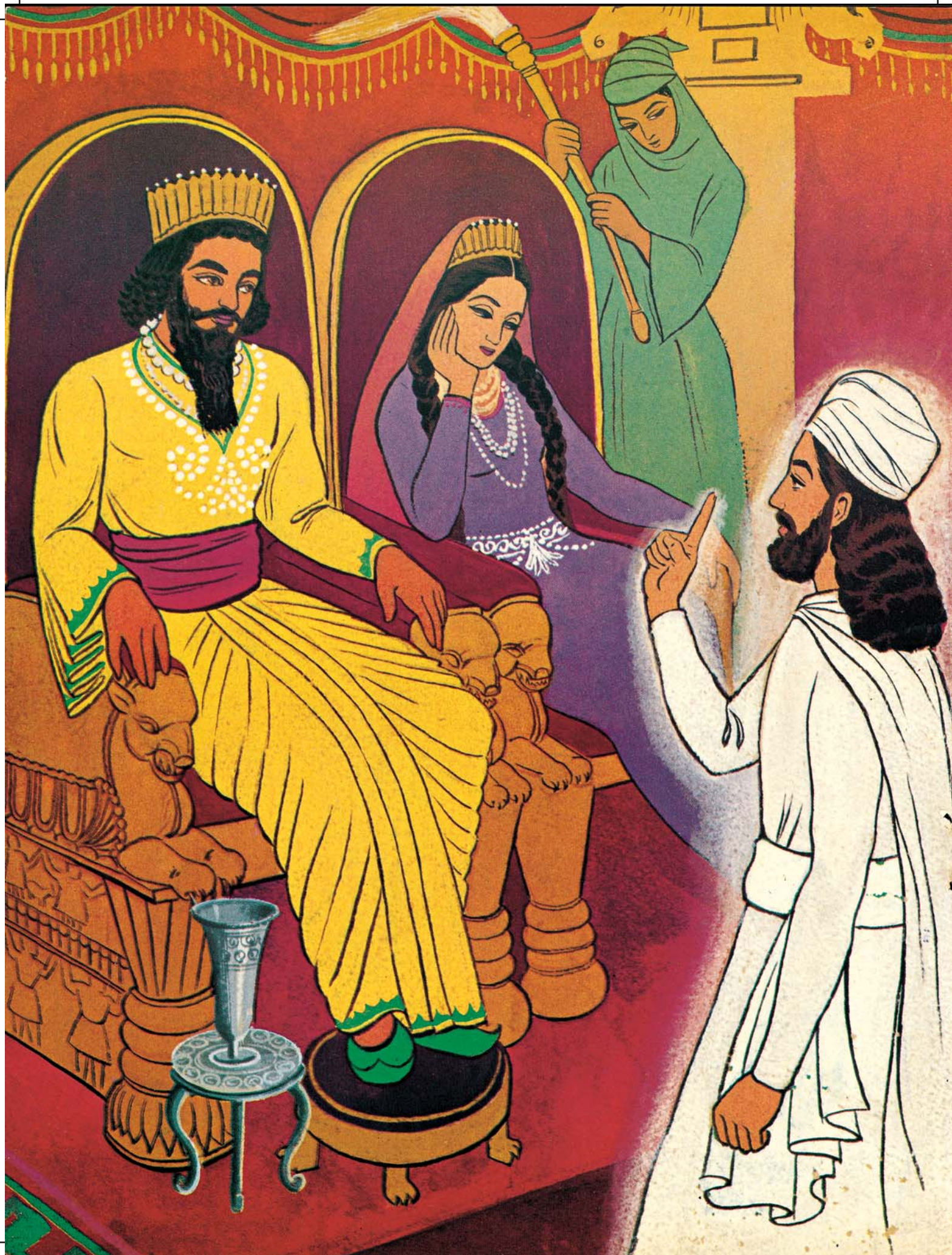
“Dear mother and father. I must leave you now and speak to the peoples of the world and tell them about God and how His Light is in each one of us. I thank you for all you have done for me.”

Pourushaspa and Doghdo wanted to give Zarathushtra many things to take with him. But Zarathushtra said:

“Father, I want only one thing from you. Please give me your Kusti (girdle). I shall wear it around my waist and give thanks to God. Mother, I shall always love and remember you.”

So Zarathushtra left his home and went far away. We do not know where he went. For many years not one of his friends or relatives saw him. After nearly ten years he came back to the people. He went to the houses of the poor and spoke to them about God. He told them not to be afraid or unhappy but to try and understand God by seeing His Light in all. Zarathushtra taught them to keep their bodies clean and to wear clean clothes. He also told them to think good and kind thoughts about everyone, and to speak good and kind words to everyone and to do good to all and so to help others to be happy. People began to love Zarathushtra. He was very kind and spoke charmingly. They tried to learn more about God and see His Light in them. They said:

“We love you Zarathushtra. Tell us more about God and about the beautiful world He has made. Show us how to love God.”



Zarathushtra meets King Vishtaspa and Queen Hutaoshi. Then Zarathushtra returns to God

Many yeas passed. Zarathushtra became the Great Prophet of Iran. He had gone to many places telling everyone about God and how to love Him. One day he came to Bactria. Bactria is a place in the East of Iran. The King of Bactria was called King Vishtaspa. This King was a very clever and a good man. Zarathushtra wanted to see the King.

One day, Zarathushtra met King Vishtaspa and his Queen Hutaoshi. He talked to them about God and how everyone can be happy in this world if one knows that God's Light is in one's self. The King and Queen listened to him and the Queen thought much about God. She felt so happy because she knew that she would never be alone. She began to pray to God and love Him. She spoke to the King about all this. Many men tried not to let the King think of God. The Queen however was so kind and good that the King believed her. He also listened to Zarathushtra and felt much better and happier too.

So, for many years Zarathushtra worked among the people and made them happy. They began to be kind to everyone and to love each other. Then when Zarathushtra had finished the work God had sent him to do, his time to leave this world came, and he went back to God, as we will all do, one day.



The beginning of everything

“**L**ook, mummy, isn’t the sky beautiful? But I can’t look straight at the sun. It makes my eyes water. Why can’t I look at the sun?”

“The sun is very bright and hot, Sorab, so hot that you can feel its heat even though the sun is many, many miles away from you. The sun gives us light, life and heat. If there were no sun we would have to live always in darkness and cold.

“Mummy, how did the sun come? asked Rasheid

Do you really want to know? Listen and I shall tell you the story.

We do not know what there was, long long ago. We believe there was nothing. Then, something happened. Sparks of light shot out. These became greater in number and went round and round. These grew and grew until they became a big hot mass. This is our sun. Later, other stars shot by the sun and, as they passed it, they pulled away a great bit of it. These small hot bits began to turn and turn, one after the other. Then, after many years, they settled down into moving around the sun. They became much colder. These are the planets.

Are we on a star’ said Shehernavaz.

“No, Shehernavaz, we are on the Earth. The Earth is one of the Planets. All the planets go around the sun. The Earth became cooler and cooler. As it became cooler, it became smaller. Large mountains came and hollows were made. Then rain came and filled all these hollows with water, wind, rain and ice started to work. The big rocks crumbled, the wind carried the dust away. The rain washed all the sand to the rivers and seas. In this way the mountains became smaller and the waters became less deep. Then came earthquakes. The earth began to shake. Some land under water came up. Other land went lower and lower until it was covered up with water.”

“But what did the people do when all this was happening to the Earth?” said Meher

“There were no people, Meher. People came many, many years later. This is what we think must have happened.”

“Tell us how people came.” said Shehervavaz.

“This is another story. It is the story of how life came on the Earth and changed and changed till man was made. We do not know what the first living things looked like. They may have looked like little bits of jelly. We call this Protoplasm. Protoplasm is a very big word, and it is a word we must remember. Every part of a living thing has lots and lots of this protoplasm. It is this protoplasm which is the living thing in us all. If we did not have this protoplasm we could not live. When a living thing dies, all the protoplasm in it dies too.

Now all these bits of jelly lived right in the water. Slowly, some of them came to the top. They learnt how to use the light of the sun to make a green thing called Chlorophyl. Another big word isn't it? They made a green coat out of this chlorophyl. This made them look straight. They could not move so fast but they had some shape and were different from the bits of jelly. This is how the first plant life must have begun.

Then came some who were too lazy to make chlorophyl. They threw off their chlorophyl coats and started to eat up all the living things around them. They could move quickly and they learnt to change the shape of their bodies. This is how the first animal must have come.

These first plants and animals changed and changed. They became bigger. The animals changed for many many years. Fishes appeared. After them came the reptiles and birds. Then the mammals came. Last of all came man. That is how man came.”

“But who made all these things?” said Roshan

“God made them, Roshan. We call God Mazda Ahura. Mazda means the Creator of the Universe. God made the sun, moon, stars, earth, sky, water out of nothing. Ahura means the Lord of Life. It is God who had made all living things. We come from God and we remember Him in our prayers and thank Him for everything”.

Hushang

Long, long ago, it was so long ago that people have forgotten it, lived a great King of Iran called Hushang. He was good and kind to all. When people were angry they came to the King and he would make them happy again. His people called him Shah, which means King.

One day, the Shah, with his friends went out to see his country. They came to a mountain and saw something dark. This dark thing was far away. It looked like a big face with red eyes and a big yellow and red mouth. From the mouth came smoke. There was so much smoke that the Shah could not see anything more. The Shah came nearer this huge thing. He came slowly because he was surprised. Behind him came all his men. Then Shah Hushang picked up a large stone and threw it at this big face. The stone hit another larger stone. Something strange happened. The Shah and his men opened their eyes wide. They looked and looked. They saw something creeping out from where the stone fell. It was small at first, then slowly grew bigger and bigger. It now had a big yellow and red mouth and red eyes. The Shah and all his men bowed down before this thing and called it "Fire". That night, the Shah made a big fire. He called all his men and they stood around it and sang. Soon all the people learnt to use fire in cooking, burning, and in many other ways.

Shah Hushang found lots of other things. He found iron in the rocks. He made axes and saws from iron. He found water and he made this water go to places which were very dry. When the water came, the land became soft. Then men began to grow food and eat it. They thanked King Hushang for all he gave them. But the Shah was clever and good. He knew that it was God who had given all these great things to man. He knew how God wanted every living thing to be happy. So Shah Hushang told all his people to thank Mazda Ahura. He said :-

"Don't thank me, my good people. I have not given you these things that make you happy. Thank God for everything you have."

Then the people thought about Mazda Ahura's good and loving mind. It is God's mind, Vohu-Mana that thinks new things for us. If you try to understand how God loves everything you will never be sad. God's love will make you very happy.



Shah Hushang and his men watching the fire



Zahak and Faridun

Many years after Shah Hushang's death lived a good man called Mardas. Mardas was King of Arabia. Arabia is a country very close to Iran and the people of Arabia are called Arabs. King Mardas had a son called Zahak. He loved Zahak very much.

One day, Zahak was alone. He began to think bad thoughts. He thought "If I kill my father, I shall become King." He tried hard not to think this bad thought because he loved his father. But Prince Zahak was weak and lazy man. He wanted to be called a King and have lots of money and the people to work for him. So one day, he dug a big hole in his father's garden. He covered the tops of the hole with small branches and grass. No one could see the hole. The next morning Zahak's father walked into his garden and he fell in the hole and died. The people were very sad when they knew that their good King was dead. They called Prince Zahak and made him their King.

Some days later a man came to King Zahak and said:-

"Great King, let me be your cook. I am a very good cook. You will love to eat the food I cook for you."

The King was happy and made him his head cook. In those days people

did not kill animals. They lived on vegetables and fruit and they were very strong. But when this cook came, he began to kill animals and cook them in blood. The King liked this food. One day, when he was eating a chicken, he called the cook and said :-

“Ask me anything, I shall give it to you.” The cook replied :-

“I wish to kiss your shoulders, great King.

The King felt very happy and asked the cook to come near him and kiss his shoulders. The cook kissed him on the shoulders. Suddenly, two black snakes began to grow, one from each shoulder. The King became very angry. He called out loudly :-

“Where is that cook?”

Everyone shouted for the cook but he could not be found. He had gone. King Zahak became very unhappy. He sent for all his doctors, but no doctor could remove the snakes. At last, a doctor said :-

“O King, you must keep the snakes. If you give them the brains of men they will be happy and will not hurt you. Give them lots of food to eat and they will sleep all the time.”

So the cruel King ordered that two young men should be killed every day and their brains be given to the serpents. The people cried when, every day, they saw the King’s cooks catch two young men and drag them to the kitchen.

After sometime King Zahak fought the Iranians and became their King. Then, one night, the Shah had a dream. He dreamt that a tall young man hit him on the head, tied his hands and legs and dragged him to a big mountain. He cried out and woke up. He was afraid. He called his clever men and asked them about this dream. One clever man said :-

“The young man who hits you is Faridun. God will send him to kill you.”

When Shah Zahak heard this, he was full of fear. He sent his men to every corner of his country. He told them to go into every house and kill all the babies, because he wanted to kill Faridun before Faridun could become a big man.

Now, in a small hut lived a woman called Farnak and a baby boy. The boy's father was called Abtin. Abtin and Farnak called their little son Faridun. One day, the Shah's men heard about this baby Faridun. They tried to find the hut where Abtin and Farnak lived with their son Faridun. Abtin and Farnak were very frightened and ran away with Faridun. But the Shah's men caught Abtin and took him to the Shah. The Shah was very angry to hear that Farnak had run away with Faridun. The Shah had Abtin killed.

Now Farnak was hiding not far away. When she heard of the death of her dear Abtin, she took Faridun, and, one night, she ran far away. She came to a field where a wonderful cow lived. The skin of this cow was like the colour of a peacock's feathers. She begged the cow to look after Faridun. The cow said she would look after the baby. So Farnak left Faridun with the cow and went away to stay alone in a small hut not very far from where the cow lived.

Soon, Shah Zahak's men heard about this. The Shah took some men and started to find the cow. Faridun's mother was very frightened and came quickly to the cow purmaya. She said:

"Thank you Purmaya for looking after my Faridun and giving him your milk. Now the Shah's men know where Faridun is, so I have come to take him away from you. These bad men are coming to kill Faridun."

So, Farnak took Faridun and ran to the top of a big mountain called Mount Alburz. On Mount Alburz lived a holy man. She went near him and said: -

"Holy man, please look after my son. God has sent him to kill the cruel King Zahak."

The Holy man took Faridun in his arms and promised to look after him

Now King Zahak came with his men to the field where the cow Purmaya lived. They tried to find Faridun, but could not find him. They were so angry that they killed the poor cow.

Many years passed. Faridun grew up and became very tall. One day, he found his mother. He said :-

"Mother, tell me the truth, who is my father?"

Then his mother cried and told him all about his poor father and how the cruel Shah had killed him. Faridun was very angry and said that he would fight Shah Zahak and kill him.

One day, while King Zahak sat on his throne, there came a big man called Kawa. He cried out in a loud voice :-

“I am Kawa, the black-smith, Why have you taken my last son? I had eighteen sons and you have taken them all. You have killed them and given their brains to your horrible snakes. Now you have taken away the only son I had left. You must give him back to me.

The Shah looked at Kawa and felt very frightened. He did not know why he felt so frightened. He gave back his son to Kawa. Kawa took his son and walked out of the palace. He shouted to the people around him :-

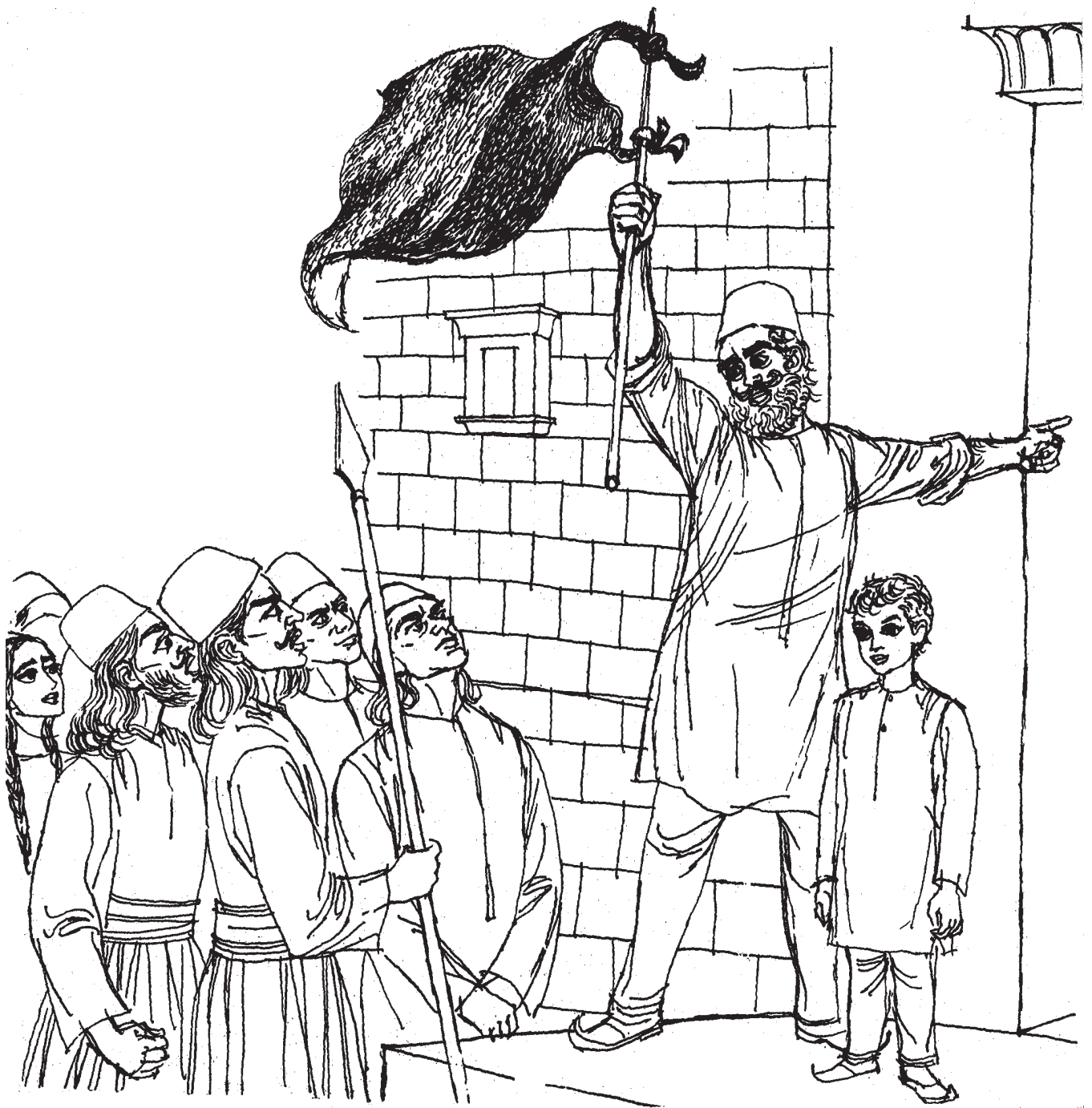
“Do not listen to this Shah. He is a cruel man. He has killed so many of our people. We don’t want him. We want a good and kind Shah.”

As he spoke many people came out of their houses to listen to him. Kawa took his leather apron, which covered his legs, and stuck it on the point of his spear. This became his flag. Holding the spear up he shouted :-

“Let us all go and see Faridun. We will ask him to be our Shah. We will all go and find Faridun.”

Many men went with Kawa to find Faridun. At last they found him on Mount Alburz. They asked him to become their Shah. Soon, Faridun came to fight Zahak. Now Zahak’s dream came true. Faridun hit him on the head, bound him and dragged him to a mountain. There, he tied Zahak, who died in great pain. Faridun kept the flag of Kawa. Later, it became the flag of all the Kings of Iran. Each King of Iran sewed beautiful jewels onto the flag. The flag began to shine like the sun.

So we see how God works all the time. Zahak came into the world. When he became cruel, God sent the good Faridun. It is through Asha, that everything happens. If we understand Asha, we will see God’s law and order in everything. If we try to understand Asha, which is how God works in the world and how things come to pass, we will be happy. We will then be good because we want to be good, not because of getting something.





Iraj

Faridun was King for many years. He made his people happy again. Faridun had three sons, Salam, Tur, and Iraj. When Faridun became old he gave all he had to his three sons. To his youngest son Iraj, he gave Iran. So, Iraj became the Shah of Iran.

After some time Salam and Tur became jealous of Iraj. They wanted to have Iran. So they sent a priest with a letter to their father. In the letter they said :-

“You have given the best and most beautiful country of Iran to Iraj. Iraj is much younger than we are. Why did you give him the best country? We want Iran. If Iraj gives us his country we shall be happy. If he does not give us his country we shall fight him.”

When Faridun read this letter he was very unhappy and angry with Salam and Tur. He showed the letter to Iraj. Iraj was a very kind and good man. He was happy and loved his father very much. Iraj read the letter and said :-

“Please don’t be sad my dear father : God has sent us all into the world. We are here for a short time and then we shall die and go back to God. I don’t want to be a King. I am quite happy without being a King. I shall go to my brothers and give them the country I have. I shall ask them not to be angry with me. I want them to love me. I am sure they will be happy and love me when I give them Iran.

Faridun was glad when he heard his dear son Iraj speak such kind and sweet words. The King said: -

“Go, my dear son. Take lots of your fighting men and see your brothers. Tell them what you want to do.”

But Iraj Said :-

“I shall go with just a few men. I don’t want my brothers to think that I have come to fight them.”

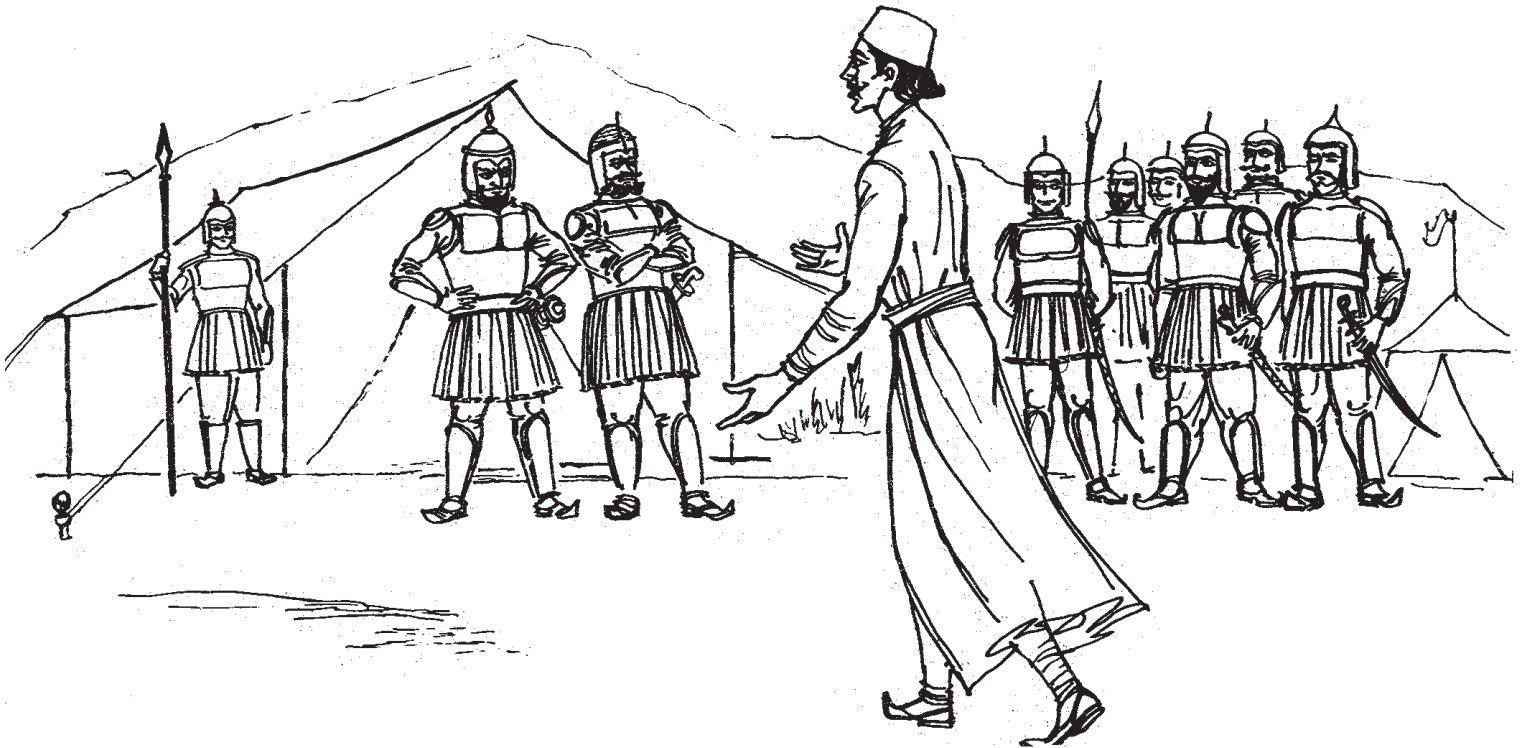
So Iraj went to Salam and Tur. He met them with their fighting men. Iraj smiled at all the men and they felt so happy. Salam and Tur heard their men say:

“Look at Shah Iraj. What a great and good man he is. He looks like a great King. We love him.”

Iraj sat down with his brothers and told them everything. He smiled and felt happy. But his brothers were still jealous of him. Iraj was tall and had a lovely face. They were not so tall and were not good to look at. Salam and Tur did not like their men loving Iraj. They were very angry, Iraj loved his brothers. He was not angry and he wanted to make them happy. He gave them everything he had, his country, his money and all his people. But the brothers were still angry with Iraj. They shouted at him, and tried to fight him and, because Iraj would not fight them as he really loved them very much, they killed him.

Iraj died. He was a brave and loving man. He was not afraid of anything because he knew that he was doing the right thing. If he had wanted to fight, he could have fought his brothers and killed them. But that would not have made him happy. He would have been sad for the rest of his life, just as Salam and Tur were never happy again.

Only a very brave man can feel love and kindness when some one tries to fight him and to kill him. Iraj was so brave because he was good, and God helps all good people not to be afraid of anything. Iraj was not afraid of anything, not even of dying. He knew that after he died he went back to God. He was happy to die because he loved Mazda Ahura. God gave Iraj his great Xshthra to fight everything bad. When a person wants to do something good, God gives His Xshathra and makes the person strong so that he can do that good thing. Salam and Tur were never happy again. They had done something very bad. They could not forget it and so they could not be happy. But Iraj went back to God and was happy for ever.



Kai Khusrau

Many years passed. Shah Faridun was dead. Salam and Tur were also dead. Many Shahs came, sat on the throne of Iran, looked after the people and died.

Now, when Shah Kai Kaus was looking after the people of Iran, Kai Khusrau was born in the country of Turan. Kai Khusrau was the son of Siyawush and Farangis. Siyawush was the Prince of Iran and he married Farangis, the daughter of Afrasiyab, King of Turan. When Kai Khusrau was born, Iran was fighting Turan. So Kai Khusrau was kept hidden from all. He lived in a forest with some friends of his. After many years, a great fighter from Iran, called Giv, came to the forest, He found Kai Khusrau and said:-

“Great Prince, I have been looking for you for a long time. Your Grandfather, the Shah of Iran, wants you to come and live with him.”

So Kai Khusrau went to Iran. The Shah was very happy to see him and looked after him very well.

When Shah Kai Kaus became old, he made Kai Khusrau the King of Iran. Kai Khusrau was a very good and kind man. He loved God very much and he also loved everyone. He was a good King and tried to make his people happy. But, Afrasiyab, the King of Turan wanted to become the Shah of Iran. So he started to fight with the people of Iran. For many, many years the people of both countries fought each other. Many people died. Shah Kai Khusrau felt very sad, but he could not stop King Afrasiyab from fighting.

Many years passed. Kai Khusrau became very old. One day, while he was thinking about God, he knew that God wanted him to make the young Prince Luhrasp the Shah of Iran. So, King Kai Khusrau called Prince Luharasp to him and said :-

“I am an old man now, I am tired and want to rest. I am making you the Shah. Love God and try to live a good life. Help to make your people good and happy.”

The people of Iran were very sad. They did not want Kai Khusrau to go. King Kai Khusrau said “Good Bye” to all his loving people. Then rode away. Zal, Rustom and other who loved him very much followed him. Kai Khusrau spoke to them :-

“Go back to Iran, my brave good men. I am old and my time has come to go to God. God sent me into this world and God will take me back. You are all young. Look after Shah Luhrasp,”

His friends had tears in their eyes. They did not want to leave their King. Zal, Rustum and Gudarz obeyed the Shah and turned back to go home. The others followed the Shah.

They went into the mountains and soon they became very thirsty. After some hours, they came to a spring. They alighted from their horses and drank the cool water. Here they made a fire, cooked some food and ate together. Then the Shah said :-

“Let us sleep here tonight. When morning comes, do not follow me any more. Where I go, you will not be able to go. Do not stay long, for a dreadful storm will come and lots of snow will fall. The road by which we came will not be seen, because the snow will cover it. You will be lost and will not be able to find your way back to Iran.”

They heard the Shah speak and then they all went to sleep. When morning came and they woke up, the Shah was not with them. They tried to find their King but could not find him. He had disappeared. His friends never saw him again. The Shah had gone to God and was one with Mazda Ahura.

His friends were very sad. They had forgotten what the Shah had told them. Suddenly, a terrible storm arose. Snow fell and it was very cold. Now they remembered what the Shah had told them to do. But it was too late. They could see nothing. They sat and cried. Next morning, they tried to find their way back home. They could not find the road. They tried hard to find it but they became lost. They had no food to eat. Soon, they became very hungry and died.

Zal and Rustum and Gudarz waited for their friends to return. When they did not come back, they were very worried. They knew that they had died.

King Kai Khusrau was always remembered by his people. They tried to love God as the Shah had done and to do good to everyone. Through Armaiti, the great love for God which helps us to understand Him, they would want to do everything God wanted them to do and so come nearer to Mazda Ahura. The people prayed that Armaiti would always be with them so that they would understand God.

Shireen and Shehernaz

Shireen and Shehernaz were two little girls. They were learning in the same school and were in the same class. They loved each other very much. They had black hair, and big dark eyes. They were both clever and liked going to school

Shehernaz was a poor girl. Her father was a postman and he worked hard all day taking letters to different people. Shehernaz's mother could sew. So she sewed all day and made all Shehernaz's clothes and her own too. She also cooked and did all the sweeping and washing in the house. Shehernaz's mother and father were too poor to have any servants in the house. But they were happy in their work and did not want to have any servants. Shehernaz helped her mother in cooking and sewing. She worked hard in school and was very happy.

Shireen's mother and father had more money. They lived in a big house. They were good and kind to everyone. They helped people to be happy, and so every one loved them. All the girls and boys loved Shireen. She played with all and was so jolly. Shireen's mother and father told her many things. They said :-

“Remember, Shireen, God's Light is in us. Our body is like a beautiful house in which the Light of God lives. Look after the body, Keep it clean. Eat clean food and breathe fresh air and take exercise every day. In this way you will keep well. If you are well, you can do everything and be happy.”

So Shireen was very careful and looked after her body every day. Shireen wanted to know everything. She asked her mummy and daddy many questions about this world and how God had made people. She asked about God. Her parents told her about God and how life began, and how the Light of God is in everything.

One day, Shireen's Class teacher said :-

“Would you like to write a story?”

“Yes,” answered all the children.

So they all started to write a story. Shireen wrote about the Earth, how it began, and how man came. The teacher asked everyone to read out their stories. After Shireen had read hers, everyone clapped because they liked it so much. Shehernaz had not come to school that day. Shireen wondered what had happened to Shehernaz.

When school was over, she ran to Shehernaz's house.

"Shehernaz, Shehernaz," she called as she knocked on the door. Shehernaz opened it. Her eyes were red with crying.

"What has happened?" asked Shireen.

"O Shireen! My daddy is dead. I want to die too," and she put her arms around Shireen's neck and cried and cried. Shireen cried too. After a little while Shehernaz said :-

"I won't be able to come to school. We have no money to pay the school fees. Mummy says she will have to work very hard to get more money so that we can live in this house and buy our food."

Shireen cried a lot with Shehernaz. She felt so sad to think that she would not see Shehernaz at school again.

Shireen went home. She told her mummy and daddy all about Shehernaz and her father dying. That night, Shireen tried to think of how she could help Shehernaz. She prayed to God to let her help Shehernaz. After her prayers, she kept quiet. Then, she knew what she could do. The next day, she went to school. She went up to her teacher and said :-

"Please teacher, let us act the story I wrote."

So the teacher told all the children to become something in the story. Shireen became the sun, Maneck became the earth and Jamshed became a jelly fish. In this way, all became something in the story. Then the story was acted. Shireen came with a big torch in each hand. She lit the torches and went running round and round. Then she ran around slowly and put out one torch. Soon, she stopped running around and stood still. Then Maneck, the earth, came and she did the same and then started to go round the sun. The teacher watched. She liked this very much. When the whole

story was over, Shireen said :-

“Let us act it again. We will have lots of people to see it.”

So, one day, lots of people came to see this play, They bought tickets and then came in. When the story was over, Shireen asked the teacher how much money they had made.

“Lots of money, Shireen.” This made Shireen very happy. She said :-

“Please teacher, give me half this money.”

“Why?” asked the teacher.

“I can’t tell you just now I but I will tell you later.” said Shireen. The teacher gave Shireen the money. Shireen ran to Shehernaz’s house.

“Look Shehernaz, I have brought you something. See, you have enough money to go to school for one year. After that, we shall write another story and get more money so that you can always go to school.”

Shehernaz was so happy. She jumped and jumped and clapped her hands. Her mummy kissed Shireen and thanked her very much. Shireen went home. She sat on her mummy’s lap and said: -

“Mummy, to-day I am very happy.”

Then she told her mummy everything that had happened. Her mummy smiled and kissed Shireen. She was happy too. Her mummy said :-

“Shireen, Zarathushtra has told us to look after our body well. He also told us to be good and kind to everyone and to learn as much as we can, so that we can understand all that God has made for us. A good clean body and good clean thoughts will help us to know more about the Light of God which is in us. We will then become better and better in every way. We will reach Haurvetat, which is perfection. We will be perfect in every way. Then we will really understand how the Light of God in us never dies. Our bodies die, but the Fravashis in us never die. They are immortal and never die. We will then understand something about Am-ereta, or, never dying. When we know and understand everything about God then our Fravashis go back to God.”

The Kusti Prayers

(A free translation)

Ashem Vohu :

Asha is God's Law of Goodness, Truth and Purity. It is the Law and order working in the Universe. It is the best and the highest. By following Asha in being good and truthful and pure in mind in all you do each day, you will be very happy.

Kem-Na-Mazda :

When I think of bad things, I hurt people and also myself. Who will take away these bad thoughts from my mind? Only You, my God, within me, can help me to take away these bad thoughts from me and give me good thoughts. It is Your Light inside me, my Fravashi, which will burn away all my bad thoughts. Then Vohu Mana, which is Your Good and Loving Mind will come and I shall think good and beautiful thoughts and be happy. Your Good and Loving Mind helps Asha to make everything better and better. Only Your Light inside me and Your Good Mind can help me to fight everything bad. Take me God. Through Your Good and Loving Mind let me see and understand all that happens.

O God, You know and understand everything.

O Armaiti, You are the great love for God, in my heart. Protect me from all my weaknesses, O Mazda Ahura, Lord God of Wisdom, and Armaiti, help me to know the good from the not good. Save me from all pain and everything bad. Let all lies be pulled down. May the beginning of everything bad be dried up. May all things bad be burnt to ashes. May all bad thoughts have such a fall that they can never get up again. May all that is not good and true vanish, never to destroy this beautiful Universe of Yours.

I love you, Armaiti. Help me to know Mazda Ahura, whose kindness in giving gifts never stops.

Ahura Mazda Khodae:

O God, most wise and alive in everyone, let Your Light shine in my

mind and so take away all strength from Ahriman, the darkness of my mind.

May all bad thoughts, bad words and bad deeds be destroyed with Your help. May everything that stops me from seeing Your Light in me be killed.

O God, I turn away from all dark thoughts, words and deeds, which in the darkness of my mind, I have covered myself with. I throw them away.

O God, alive in me, make me strong to stop being frightened. Make me strong to stop being sad. Make me strong to turn away from Ahriman (Angre Mainyu), the darkness in my mind, which makes me think, speak, and do wrong. Make me strong to see Your Light in me. All who are true love Asha, Your Law of Goodness, Truth and Purity, and so I will praise You, my God, by saying the Ashem Vohu.

Yatha Ahu Vairyo :

By following Asha, God's Law, I become like You, O God, for Vohu Mana, the Good and Loving Mind in me, guides me and helps me to become perfect. You give me your great strength and power, Kshthra, so that I can help all who are gentle, poor, helpless or sick and who pray to you for help.

Jas-me Avanghe Mazda:

Come to me, O God.

I pray to You, O Mazda, and follow the teachings of Zarathushtra which help me to believe in You.

As a Mazdyasni Zarathushti, I know that you are the one God who is in all things and I say that I am a true follower of this religion. I believe in and give myself to good and loving thoughts, good and loving words, and good and loving deeds. I believe in love, not hate, in peace, not violence, in being unselfish and helping others. I believe in doing everything in Your Name. This is the religion, Daena, as shown by You, a God, to Zarathushtra, and which I believe to be the greatest, the best and the noblest in the world.

All things good come from You, O Mazda Ahura

SOURCES FOR THE PICTURES

The following are some of the sources from which the pictures in this book have been drawn

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