Chapter II

This chapter has three sub-topics. The first sub-topic discussed about the two great gods namely; Varun\textsuperscript{a} and Ahura Mazda, and compares their qualities and attributes together. Because in fact Varun\textsuperscript{a} goes back to the Indo-Iranian period and Ahura Mazda in the Avesta agree with him in character thought not in name. Second sub-topic explains about Mitra and Mithra and third sub-topic is about Sun which is called “Sūrya” in the Vedas and “Hvarexšaeta” (khorshid) in the Avesta.

1. Varun\textsuperscript{a} and Ahura Mazda

A. Varun\textsuperscript{a} in Vedas

Varun\textsuperscript{a} is one of the oldest of the Vedic deities, a personification of the all-investing sky, the maker and up-holder of heaven and earth. As such he is the king of universe, king of gods and men, possessor of illimitable knowledge, the supreme deity to whom special honor is due. He is often associated with Mitra, he being the ruler of the night and Mitra of the day, but his name frequently occurs alone however the of Mitra occur rarely.\textsuperscript{1}

Varun\textsuperscript{a} has been shown by the side of Indra, the greatest of the gods of the R\textsuperscript{g}\text{\textael}da. The anthropomorphic personality of Varun\textsuperscript{a} is more fully developed on the moral than the physical side. The descriptions of his person and his equipment are scanty, more stress being laid on his activity.

\textsuperscript{1} T. Rengarajan, Dictionary of Indian Epics , P521
He has a face, eyes, arms, hands and feet. He moves his arms, walks, drives, sits eats and drinks. The poet regards the face (anikam) of Varuna as that of Agni. Varuna is farsighted and thousand-eyed. The sun is the eye of Mitra and Varuna (I, 115, 1; VI, 51, 1; VII, 61, 1).

Varuna is preeminently called the asura (RV. I, 35, 7; II.27.10; VII.65.2; VIII.42.1) and is often glorified as the upholder of the cosmic law- rīta (RV. I.23.5). He is the regulator of the waters (RV. II. 28.4; V.85.6; VII, 64.2); The rising and the setting of sun, the failing of rains, the growth of vegetation, the flowing of rivers, the flying of birds, even the winking of the eye are governed by the subtle working low of Varuna. In his capacity of the world – sovereign, Varuna is said to be commanding a large band of spies (RV.I.24.13; VI. 67.5; VII.61.3; VII. 87.3), who being undeceived and wise, observe keenly all the happenings in the universe and report to their master, without delay, any case of lapse against and transgression of that law. The over lord, Varuna himself has the sun for his eye. (RV.I.115.1; VI.51.1; VII, 61.1), so that he can supervise unobstructedly the happenings in the universe and the activities of human beings. Varuna’s golden abode is in the highest heaven (RV. V. 67. 2); there he occupies his seat, which is great, very lofty, and firm on account of the thousand columns. It is the duty of the all – seeing sun, together with other spies, to go to the dwelling of Varuna and report the

2 MacDonell A., History of Vedic Mythology, P 34
deed of men (RV. VII. 60, 1). Varuna is the unfailing witness of man’s truth and falsehood (RV. VII, 49, 3). He perceives all that exists within heaven and earth and all that is beyond; none can escape from Varuna aby feeling even far beyond the sky.3(AV. IV. 16. 4-5).

Varuna prepared a path for सूर्य (Sūrya, the sun), he divided the great nights from the days4 (RV. VII. 87. 1). Wind is his sprit; he, the cherisher of the world, is the feeder on (sacrificial) food, like an animal upon fodder; all glorious of Varuna, manifested between the vast and spacious heaven and earth. , give delight to all5 (RV. VII, 87, 2). The excellent spies of Varuna behold the beautiful heaven and earth, as well as (men) who, the celebrators of rites, constant in sacrifice, wise and intelligent address (to him their) praise6 (RV, VII, 87, 3). In him deposited the three heavens, the three earths with their six seasons are shown in him; the most adorable, royal Varuna has made this golden sun undulating in the sky, he has made it to diffuse light7 (RV. VII, 87, 5). As the sun, Varuna placed the ocean (in its bed) white as drop (of water), vigorous as an antelope, object of profound praise, distributor of water, the powerful transporter beyond sin , the ruler of this exiting (world )8 (RV. VII. 87. 6).

4 Rgveda Samhita, Translated by H.H Wilson, Vol 3, P 312.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid, Vol 3, P 313].
7 Ibid.
8 Rgveda Samhita, Translated by H.H Wilson Vol 3, P 314.
Varuna is so great that “through his cosmic majesty (mahindā), the creatures (janums) become established (of Varuna) who prop asunder the two world, even though they are enormous (RV, VII, 86.2).”

Worshippers invoke Varuna to be free from sin as follows:

“May we be free from sin against that Varuna, who has compassion upon him who commits offence.” (RV. VII. 87.7).

वि मच्छथाया रशनामिव्र ऋह्याम ते िरुण खामृतस्य ।
मा तन्तुश्छेदद ियतो ददयं मे मा मात्रा शारेयपसः पुर ॠष्टोः ।।

“Cast off from me sin, Varuna, as if it were rope; may we obtain from you a channel (filled) with water; cut not thread of me (engaged in) weaving pious works; blight not the elements of holy rites before the season (of their maturity)”

Varuna is worshipped as follows:

- May we, Varuna, deeply meditating on you, earnestly praising you, and (engaged) in your worship, be prosperous; glorifying you daily, like the fires (that are kindled in your honor) at the coming of the luminous dawns (RV. II. 28.2).

- Keep off all danger from me, Varuna; supreme monarch, endowed with truth, bestow your favor upon me, cast off (from

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9 Dandekar, R.N., Varuna, Vasishta, and Bhakti, P 2.
10 Rgveda Samhitā, Translated by H.H Wilson, Vol 3, P 314.
11 Rgveda Samhitā, Translated by H.H Wilson, Vol 2, P 69.
12 Ibid., P 68.
me) sin, like a tether from a calf; no one rules for the twinkling of an eye, apart from you\textsuperscript{13}. (RV. II. 28. 6).

- Harm us not, Varuna, with those destructive (weapons), which, repeller (of foes), demolish him who does evil at your sacrifice; let us not depart (before our time) from the regions of light; scatter the malevolent, that we may live\textsuperscript{14}. (RV. II. 28.7).

1. The attributes of Varuna and Mitra

Varuna and Mitra looking on the man, guardian of all things that fixed and move, beholding the good and evil acts of mortals\textsuperscript{15} (RV, VII, 60, 2). Aryaman, Varuna and Mitra are the chastisers of all guile and falsehood. And they are infallible and mighty\textsuperscript{16} (RV, VII, 60, 5). They are ever Vigilant with unclosing eyes, caring for heaven and earth, lead on the thoughtless\textsuperscript{17} (RV, VII, 60, 7). Sūrya spreads the beautiful light of Mitra and Varuna, he who beholds all existing creatures observe well, the zeal that is in mortals\textsuperscript{18} (RV, VII, 61, 1). The holy sage, renowned afar, directs his hymn to Varuna and Mitra. Mitra and Varuna are vaster than the ample earth, bounteous donor, the glorious and expensive heaven. They

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid, P 69.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} Hymn of Rigveda, Translated by T.H Griffith, P 364.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid 365.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
maintain beauty in plant and in people, diligent of observers of truth and vigilantly protecting\(^\text{19}\) (RV, VII, 61, 3).

Worshipper praises the strength of Varuna and Mitra, because that strength, by mightiness keeps both worlds asunder\(^\text{20}\) (RV, VII, 61, 4).

They rule in heaven and earth (RV, VII, 64, 1), and send from heaven rain, sweet food and bounties (RV, VII, 64, 2). With Aryaman they consider as kings, geared of mighty everlasting order and the lord of rivers (RV, VII, 64, 2).

Worshipper invokes Mitra – Varuna as follows;

- “I will exalt your sacrifice, with homage; as priest, I, Mitra – Varuna invoke you. May these new hymns and prayer that I have fashioned delight you to the profit of the singer (RV, VII, 61, 6).

- This priestly task, Gods Varuna and Mitra! Hath (has) been preformed for you at sacrifices. Convey us safety over every peril. Preserve us evermore, ye Gods, with blessing.”\(^\text{21}\) (RV, VII, 61, 7).

Some times they are worshipped accompanied with the holy Agni as follows:

\(^{19}\) Rgveda Samhitā, Translated by H.H Wilson, Vol. 3, P 273.

\(^{20}\) Hymn of Rgveda, Translated by T.H Griffith, P 365

\(^{21}\) Hymn of Rgveda, Translated by T.H Griffith, 365.
• “May holy Agni, Varun a and Mitra send down their riches upon us in thousand. May they bright once, make our priest-songs prefect, and, when we laud them, grant us our wishes.”\(^{22}\) (RV, VII, 62, 3)

They are worshipped accompanied with Aryaman to vouchsafe free down, room, and to find good path for traveling as follows:

• “Now Mitra, Varun a, Aryaman vouchsafe us freedom and room, for us and our children. May we find paths all fair and good to travel. Preserve us evermore, ye gods, with blessings(RV, VII, 62, 6).

• May the imperial Varun a and Mitra and high born Aryaman accept our present.”\(^{23}\) (RV, VII, 64, 1).

Mitra and Varun a are called when the sun rises as follows:

• “With the hymn I called you, when the sun hath risen, Mitra and Varun a whose thought are holy, whose power divine, supreme and ever lasting, come with good heed at each man’s supplication.”\(^{24}\) (RV, VII, 65, 1).

Mitra, and Varun a astretch out their arms and they drive with the rays of the sun as if with their arms. Like Savitr and Tvas t r they have beautiful-handed (supān b). Mitra and Varun a hasten up with their feet

\(^{22}\) Ibid. P 366.
\(^{23}\) Hymn of R gveda, Translated by T.H Griffith, P 366.
\(^{24}\) Ibid, P 367.
and Varuna treads down wiles with shining foot. He sits on the strewn grass at the sacrifice and like other gods he and Mitra drink the Soma juice. Varuna wears a golden mantle (drāpi) and puts on a shining robe. But the shining robe of ghee with which he and Mitra are clothed is only a figurative allusion to the sacrificial offering of melted butter. The only part of Varuna’s equipment which is at all prominent is his car. It is described as shining like the sun, as having thongs for a pole a car-seat and a whip and as drawn by well-yoked steeds. Mitra and Varuna mount their car in the highest heaven.25

These two great gods, Mitra and Varuna, closely connected with each other, are at the top of Ādityas, one of them being Varuna who is the greatest of all.26

Mitra and Varuna’s abode is golden and situated in heaven and Varuna sits in his mansions (pastyāsu) looking on all deeds. He and Mitra’s seat (sadas) is great, very lofty, firm with a thousand columns and their house has a thousand doors. The all-seeing sun rising from his abode goes to the dwellings of Mitra and Varuna to report the deeds of men and enters their dear dwelling. It is in the highest heaven that the Fathers behold Varuna Varuna alone, or conjointly with Mitra, is often called a king (rājā), like the other leading deities and Yama and others. He is king of all, both gods and men of the whole world and of all that exists.

25 Ibid. P 34
26 Oldenberg, H, the religion of the Veda, Translated by S.B Shrotri, P 95.
Varunãa is also a self-dependent ruler a term generally applied to Indra. Much more frequently Varunãa, alone or mostly in association with Mitra is called a universal monarch (*samrãj*).\(^{27}\)

The attribute of sovereignty (क्षत्र *ksã atrã*) is predominantly manner appropriated to Varunãa and generally with Mitra and twice with Aryaman also. Otherwise it is applied only once respectively to Agni, Brãhaspati, and the Aśvins. Similarly the term ‘ruler’ (क्षत्रिय *Ksã atrÝya*) in four of its five occurrences refers to Varunãa or the Ādityas and once only to the gods in general. The epithet *asura* is connected with Varunãa, alone or accompanied by Mitra, oftener than with Indra and Agni; and taking account of the proportion of hymns, it may be said to be especially applicable to Varunãa. Mitra and Varunãa are also called the mysterious and noble lords (असुर आर्य *asura ārya*) among the gods. The divine dominion of Varunãa and Mitra is often referred to with the word माया (*mãyã*). This term signifies occult power, applicable in a good sense to gods or in a bad sense to demons. The good sense of माया (*mãyã*) like that of असुर (*asura*) (which might be rendered by ‘mysterious being’) is mainly connected with Varunãa and Mitra, while its bad sense is reserved for demons. By occult power Varunãa standing in the air measures out the

\(^{27}\) MacDonell .A , History of Vedic Mythology, P 35

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earth with the sun as with a measure, Varuṇa and Mitra send the dawns, make the sun to cross the sky and obscure it with cloud and rain, while the honeyed drops fall; they cause heaven to rain and they uphold the ordinances by the occult power of the asura. And so the epithet māyin “crafty” is chiefly applied to Varuṇa among the gods.

Varuṇa is sometimes visible to the gaze of his worshippers; he dwells in a house having a thousand doors so that he is ever associated with men. He is said to have good eyesight, for he knows what is in the hearts of men. He is king of gods and men. He is sovereign ruler of the universe.

Varuṇa is a great lord of the laws of nature (ऋत). He established heaven and earth and dwells in all the worlds. He and Mitra rule over the whole world or encompass the two worlds. They are the guardians of the whole world. By the law of Varuṇa heaven and earth are held apart. With Mitra he supports earth and heaven, or heaven, earth, and air. He made the golden swing (the sun) to shine in heaven. He placed fire in the waters, the sun in the sky, Soma on the rock. The order (ऋत rāt) of Mitra and Varuṇa is established where the steeds of the sun are loosed. The wind which resounds through the air is Varuṇa’s breath. By Varuṇa’s ordinances (व्रतानि vratāni) the moon shining brightly moves at night,

28 W.J.Wilkins, Hindu Mythology, P 38.
and the stars placed upon high are seen at night but disappears by day. In another passage it is said that Varuna has embraced (pari sva asvajê) the nights, and by his occult power has established the mornings or days (उस्रः usrah) 29.

2. Varuna aas the regulator of seasons and waters

Varuna a is sometimes referred to as regulating the seasons. He knows the twelve months; and Mitra, Varuna, and Aryaman are said to have disposed the autumn, the month, day and night.

In the Rgveda Varuna is often spoken of as a regulator of the waters. He set free the waters of the rivers generated in the firmament; hastening (to his task), as a horse let loose rushes to (a flock of) mares (RV.87.1). He sends abroad the waters (RV, VII, 87, 2). He caused the rivers to flow; they stream unceasingly according to his ordinance. By his occult power the rivers swiftly pouring into the ocean do not fill it with water. Varuna and Mitra are lords of rivers. As the sun, Varuna placed the ocean (in its bed) white as drop (of water), vigorous as an antelope, object of profound praise, distributor of water (RV, VII, 87, 6). Varuna is said to descend into sea (सिंधु sindhum) like Dyaus. It is rather the areal waters that he is ordinarily connected with. Varuna ascends to heaven as a hidden ocean. Beholding the truth and falsehood of men, he moves in the

29 MacDonell A, History of Vedic Mythology, P 36, 37.

30 RgvedaSamhitā, Translated by H.H Wilson, Vol 3, P 314.
midst of the waters which drop sweetness and are clear. Varuna clothes himself in the waters. He and Mitra are among the gods most frequently thought of and prayed to as bestowers of rain. Varuna makes the inverted cask (of the cloud) to pour its waters on heaven, earth, and air, and to moisten the ground, the mountains then being enveloped in cloud. Mitra and Varuna have kine yielding refreshment and streams flowering with honey. They have rainy skies and steaming waters. They bedew upon the pasturage with ghee (=rain) and the spaces with honey. They send rain and refreshment from the sky. Rain abounding in heavenly water comes from them.31

In the Atharvaveda he is also connected with the waters as soma with the mountains:

“For the waters let king Varuna call you; let soma call you for the mountains…”32

Varuna as upholder created all waters and flow the rivers as follows:

- The Aditya, the upholder, has created all this water; the rivers flow by the power of Varuna, they never weary, they never stop, they have descended with swiftness, like birds upon the circumambient (earth)33. (RV. II. 28. 4).

31 MacDonell .A, History of Vedic Mythology P 37, 38.
32 Atharvaveda Samhita, Translated by W.D Whitney, Vol 1, P 148. (AV 3.3.3).
33 Rigveda Samhita, Translated by H.H Wilson, Vol 2, P 68.
His golden house is in the waters. He sheds rain waters, and he and Mitra are the lords of waters. In the Yajurveda similarly the waters are his wives, and he is child of waters, in which he establishes his abode, and Mitra and Varuna are the leaders of waters. The gods themselves follow Varuna’s ordinances or those of Varuna, Mitra, and Savitri. Even the immortal gods cannot obstruct the fixed ordinances of Mitra and Varuna. Mitra and Varuna are lords of order and light, who by means of order are the upholders of order.

3. Varuna’s ordinances

Varuna’s ordinances are fixed and unassailable; through their operation the moon walks in brightness, and the stars, which appear in the nightly sky, vanish in daylight. The gods themselves follow Varuna’s ordinances or those of Varuna, Mitra, and Savitri. Even the immortal gods cannot obstruct the fixed ordinances of Mitra and Varuna. Mitra and Varuna are lords of order (ṛta) and light, who by means of order are the upholders of order.

4. Varuna’s Power

Varuna’s power is so great that the birds flying in the air, the rivers in their sleepless flow, cannot attain knowledge of his power and wrath. As the sun, Varuna is vigorous as an antelope, object of profound praise, the powerful transporter beyond sin, the ruler of this exiting world (RV, VII, 87, 6). He knows the flight of the birds in the sky, the course of

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34 Keith, A.B, the Religion and philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads, Vol I, P 98.
35 W.J.Wilkins, Hindu Mythology, P 39.
36 MacDonell, A, History of Vedic Mythology P. P 38
37 Rigveda Samhita Translated by H.H Wilson, Vol 3, P 314.
the far travelling wind, the paths of ships on the ocean, and behold the entire secret thing that have been or shall be down. Varuna as king and mighty lord is worshipped in the RV (VII, 89, 1-5) as follows:

- “Let me not yet, king Varuna into the house of clay. Have mercy, spare me, Mighty lord.
- When, Thunderer! I move along tremulous like a wind – blown skin. Have mercy, spare me, Mighty lord.
- O Bright and powerful God, through want of strength I erred and went astray. Have mercy, spare me, Mighty lord.
- Thirst found thy worshipper though he stood in the midst of water – floods. Have mercy, spare me, Mighty lord.
- Varuna whatever the offence may be which we as men commit against the heavenly host. When through our want of thought we violate thy laws, punish us not, O god, for that iniquity.”

He embraces the All and the abodes of all beings. The three heavens and the three earths are deposited in him. Varuna is omniscient. He knows the flight of birds in the sky, the path of ships in the ocean, the course of the far travelling wind, and beholds all the secret things that have been or shall be done. He witnesses men’s truth and falsehood. No creature can even wink without him. The winking of men’s eyes are all numbers by

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38 W.J.Wilkins, Hindu Mythology, P 39.
39 Hymn of Rṣi gveda, Translated by T.H Griffith, P 378.
Varuna, and whatever man does, thinks, or devises, Varuna knows them (AV. 4, 16). He perceives all that exists within heaven and earth, and all that is beyond; a man could not escape from Varuna by fleeing far beyond the sky. 40

He is one who makes the sun to shine in the heaven; the winds that below are but his breath; he has hollowed out the channels of the rivers which flow at his commend, and he has made the depth of the sea. 41

5. Varuna’s Govern

As a moral governor Varuna stands for above any other deity. Indeed all the natural phenomena are controlled and directed by this god. The gods themselves follow Varuna’s law (RV. VIII.41.7) and are incapable of obstructing in any way the proper conduct of that law. The divine dominion of Varuna is often referred to with the word माया (māyā), ‘occult power’. On account of माया(māyā), Varuna wields supreme sovereignty over the whole universe, which is said to have been originally created by him. He is the imperial ruler (samrāj) of all, both god and men (RV. X.132.4; II 27.10) of the whole world (RV. V. 85.3) and of all that

40 MacDonell. A, History of Vedic Mythology, P 39
41 W.J.Wilkins, Hindu Mythology P 38.
exists. Not even the slightest activity in nature and in human and animal life passes unnoticed by him.\footnote{Dandekar, R.N., Asura Varuna, (Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Vol XXI, April – July 1940), P 158, 159.}

His wrath is roused by sin, the infringement of his ordinances, which he severely punishes. The fetters (पाशाः, pāśāḥ) with which he binds sinners are often mentioned. They are cast sevenfold and threefold, ensnaring the man who tells lies, passing by him who speaks truth (AV. 4. 16). Mitra and Varuna are barriers, furnished with many fetters, against falsehood. Together with Mitra, Varuna is said to be a dispeller, hater, and punisher of falsehood. They afflict with disease those who neglect their worship. On the other hand, Varuna is gracious to the penitent. He unties like a rope and removes sin. He releases not only from the sins which men themselves commit, but from those committed by their fathers. He spares the suppliant who daily transgresses his laws and is gracious to those who have broken his laws by thoughtlessness. Varuna has a hundred, a thousand remedies, and drives away death as well as releases from sin. He can take away or prolong the life. He is a wise guardian of immortality, and the righteous hope to see the next world. Varuna and Yama, are the two kings who reign in bliss. Varuna is on a footing of friendship with his worshipper, who communes with him in his celestial abode and sometimes sees him with the mental eye.\footnote{MacDonell, A, History of Vedic Mythology, P 40.
6. Varuna as Indo-Iranian god

Varuna goes back to the Indo-Iranian period for the characters Ahura Mazda of the Avesta agrees with him in character though not in name. The name of Varuna may even be Indo-European. At least, the long accepted identification of the word with the Greek, through presenting phonetic difficulties, has not been rejected by some recent authorities on comparative philology. But whether the word is Indo-European or the formation of a later period, it is probably derived from the root ṛṛ-, ‘to cover’, thus meaning ‘the encompasser’. Sāyanā connects it with this root in the sense of enveloping or confining the wicked with his bonds, or commenting on Taittirīya Samhitā in that of enveloping ‘like darkness’. If the word is Indo-European, it may have been an attribute of Dyaus, the ordinary name of ‘sky’, later became the regular appellative of sky in Greece, but an exalted god of the sky in India.44

B. Ahura Mazda in the Avesta

Ahura Mazda is the name that Zoroaster gives to the god. He is placed in the top of Zoroastrian religion. Ahura Mazda means “The lord of wisdom” or “The wise Lord”45. The first element of this compound Ahura “Lord “ is one of the Indo-Iranian generic forms of god head and Zoroaster confers upon it the Iranian epithet Mazda “wise”.

44 Ibid. p 42
Ahura Mazda still holds sovereign sway over both the worlds; his authority in the world of righteousness is undisputable, and his imperial right is unchallengeable. He is the greatest and very best of the angels. The old Persian inscriptions speak of him as the greatest of the divinities. The archangels and angels dutifully carry out Aura Mazda’s orders. Reverence for him has never abated, and adoration of him dose not languish with the advent again of the old Indo-Iranian divinities. Like dual divinities Varun and Mitra who received joint invocation during the Indo-Iranian period, Ahura-Mithra or Mithra-Ahura are invoked together. Ahura generally takes precedence and Mitra stands second in compound; but in the Mihir (Mithra) Nyāyish⁴⁶ (prayer) composed in honor the Mithra, and also in the Yasht dedicated to Mithra, the order is reversed and we have then Mithra and Ahura. He is yet the sublimest goal of human aspiration. The best of all sacrifices and invocation are those of Mazda⁴⁷.

The faithfuls acknowledge their indebtedness to Ahura Mazda and devoutly offer to him their homage and sacrifice. They worship him with the very life of the body, and they long to reach him through the medium of fire, through the Good Mind through the righteousness, through the deeds and word of wisdom, as well as through good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. Ahura Mazda in fact is implored to be their very life and limb in both worlds. It is through the Best Righteousness that the true in heart

⁴⁶ Khorde Avesta, by Pour Davoud. E, P 118.
⁴⁷ Dhal. M .N, History of Zoroastrianism, p.154, 155
aspire to behold the Lord to approach him, and associate with him. The attainment of the companionship and kingdom of Ahura Mazda is the pious wish of the supplicant\textsuperscript{48}.

1. Ahura Mazda Attribute and Qualities

The Yasna sacrifice opens with the praise of Ahura Mazda and enumerates the following divine titles:

Maker, Radiant, Glorious, the greatest, the best, the most beautiful, the most firm, the most wise, of the most perfect form, the highest in righteousness, possessed of the great joy, creator, fashioner, nourisher, and the Most Holy spirit. He is all-pervading. There is no conceivable place where he is not. Closer than the nose is to the ears, or the ears are to the mouth, is he to all that which the corporeal world thinks, speaks, and does. He is the greatest temporal and spiritual Lord. He is the absolute ruler. He is the most mighty and righteous. He is benevolent. He is the Maker, the most holy, the wisest, and the best one to answer when questioned. He is the omniscient wisdom. He is undeceivable. He is omniscient and never sleeping. Radiant and glorious are the most frequent epithets with which the texts open the invocation to divinity. Above all Ahura Mazda is the spirit of spirits. This essential trait stands intact through

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.
all change in the concept of God. He is not invested with any anthropomorphic Character, and his multifarious epithet are truly the figurative expressions of human language used by man in his feeble attempt to give vent to an outburst of feeling of devotion and reverence for his Heavenly Father. Ahura Mazda is synonymous with light, even as his opponent is identical with darkness, and the sun is spoken of as his most beautiful form\textsuperscript{49}.

Just as Rigveda speaks of the sun as the eye of Mithra and Varuna, so do the Avestan texts call the sun the eye of Ahura Mazda. Speaking about the nature of Ahura Mazda, Plutarch well remarks that among objects of sense the Zoroastrian godhead most of all resembles the light. The star-spangled heaven is his garment; the holy spell is his soul. Many are the names by which mankind have learnt to know him. The first Yasht, which is dedicated to him, enumerates seventy four of these attributes. They are all descriptive of his wisdom, far sighted, power, righteousness, justice, and mercy\textsuperscript{50}.

2. The virtues of the names of Ahura Mazda and Amesha-Spentas

According to the Ormazd Yasht the name of Ahura Mazda and Amesha-Spentas are the most powerful part of holy word, strongest, most victorious, most glorious, most effective, most fiend-smiting, best—

\textsuperscript{49} Dhall. M. N, History of Zoroastrianism, p.155, 156.

\textsuperscript{50} Dhall. M. N, History of Zoroastrianism, p.155, 156
healing, best the malice of Daêvas and men, makes the material world best come to fulfillment of it’s wishes, free the material world best from the anxieties of the heart.  

3. The Names of Ahura Mazda

According to Ormazd Yasht, When Zoroaster asked Ahura Mazda about his names he replied him and enumerated twenty names at the first time. :

“My name is the one of whom questions are asked.
My second name is the herd – giving.
My third name is the strong one.
My fourth name is perfect holiness.
My fifth name is all good things, created by Mazda, the offspring of holy principle.
My sixth name is Understanding.
My seventh name is the one with understanding.
My eighth name is knowledge.
My ninth name is the one with knowledge.
My tenth name is weal.
My eleventh name he who produces weal.
My twelfth name Ahura (the Lord).

51 The Zend Avesta, P II, P 21
My thirteenth name is the most beneficent.
My fourteenth name is he whom no harm.
My fifteenth name is the unconquerable one.
My sixteenth name is the All-seeing one.
My seventeenth name is the healing one.
My nineteenth name is the creator.
My twentieth name is MAZDA (the all-knowing). 52

And second time Ahura Mazda in the other part of this Yasht enumerates his other names for Zoroaster:

“I am a keeper; I am a creator and maintainer; I am a discerner; I am the most beneficent Spirit.
My name is bestower of health; my name is the best bestower of health.
My name is the Āthravan; my name is the most Āthravan – like of all Āthravans.
My name is Ahura (the Lord).
My name is Mazda (the all knowing).
My name is the Holy; my name is the most holy.
My name is the Glorious; my name is the most Glorious.
My name is the full-seeing; my name is the fullest-seeing.
My name is the far-seeing; my name is the farthest seeing.

52 The Zend Avesta, P II, PP 24,25
My name is the protector; my name is the well-wisher; my name is the creator; my name is the keeper; my name is the Maintainer.

My name is the Discerner; my name is the Best Discerner.

My name is the prosperity – producer; my name is the word of prosperity.

My name is the king who rules at his will; my name is the king who rules most at his will.

My name is the liberal king; my name is the most liberal King.

My name is He who does not deceive; my name is He who is not deceived.

My name is the good Keeper.

My name is He who destroys malice.

My name is He who conquers at once.

My name is He who conquers every thing.

My name is He who shaped every thing.

My name is All weal; my name is Full weal; my name is master of weal.

My name is He who can benefit at his wish; my name is He who can best benefit at his wish.

My name is the beneficent one; my name is Energetic one; my name is the most beneficent.

My name is the Holiness.

My name is the great one.

My name is the good Sovereign; my name is the best Sovereigns.

My name is the Wise one; my name is Wisest of Wise.
My name is He who does good for a long time. “53

4. Necessity of reciting of Ahura Mazda’s names and the time to pronounce it

The person who is in this material world shall recite the names of Ahura Mazda either by day or by night. Those names should be pronounced in these times:

When he rises up or when lays himself down.

When he binds on the sacred girdle54, or when he unbinds the sacred girdle.

When he goes out of his dwelling – place, or when he goes out of his town, or when he goes out of his country and comes into another country.55

5. The benefits of Ahura Mazda’s names

The man who recites and pronounces the name of Ahura Mazda neither in day nor in night shall be wounded by weapons of the foe who rashes Aêshma - like( with anger ) and is Drug- minded; not the knife, not the cross-bow, not the arrow, not the sword, not the club, not the sling – stone shall reach and wound him.56

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53 The Zend Avesta , P II , PP. 27, 28
54 Koshti or “the sacred girdle” which the Parsi must never part with.
55 The Zend Avesta , P II, P. 29
56 Ibid.
Those names shall come in to keep him from behind and to keep him in front, from the Drug unseen, from the female Varenya fiend⁵⁷, from the evil-doer bent on mischief, and from that fiend who is all death, Angara Mainyu. It will be as if there were a thousand men watching over one man.⁵⁸

6. Ahura Mazda in the Inscriptions and Stone carving of Achamenian kings

The name of Ahura Mazda has been mentioned in the inscriptions and stone carvings of Achamenian kings. Many kings from the Achamenian kings like Darius, Xerxes, Ardshir and etc, have written their actions on the inscriptions. They have mentioned the name of Ahura Mazda, as one who helps them in their actions. For instance Darius says as follows:

“Ahura Mazda granted me this Kingdom; Ahura Mazda helped me to gain this kingdom; by order of Ahura Mazda, I have this kingdom”⁵⁹

And in another place he has mentioned the name of Ahura Mazda and other gods who help him as follows:

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⁵⁷ Interpreted as the demon of lust and envy. (The Zend Avesta, P II, P 29
⁵⁸ The Zend Avesta, P II, P. 29
⁵⁹ Norman Sharp, Commandments of Achamenian kings, P 34.
“Whatever I accomplished, I did it by order of Ahura Mazda. Ahura Mazda and other gods helped me.”\textsuperscript{60}

“Ahura Mazda will bless the person who worships him”\textsuperscript{61}

According to Darius’s opinion worshiping of Ahura Mazda is cause of prosperity and happiness as following:

“The person who worships and respects Ahura Mazda, he will be prosperous and happy in the course of life and after death.”\textsuperscript{62}

“Let the person who invokes Ahura Mazda be happy in the course of life and after life.”\textsuperscript{63}

In another inscription Ahura Mazda and other royal gods (probably Mitra and Anāhita) are worshipped to protect the country as follows:

“May Ahura Mazda and other royal gods help me!

May Ahura Mazda protect this country from enemy, drought and 
\textit{druq} (\textit{drug} or \textit{druj})\textsuperscript{64}. I request it from Ahura Mazda and other royal gods as a blessing. May they give this as a blessing.”\textsuperscript{65}

In the same inscription he calls Ahura Mazda as the greatest god as follows:

“The great Ahura Mazda, the greatest god who created the king Darius, he granted me the kingdom. Darius is a king by order of Ahura Mazda.”\textsuperscript{66}

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., P 70.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., P 76.
\textsuperscript{62} Dandamayuf, M.A, Iran in the Achamenian kings era, Translated by R. Arbab, P 356.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{64} 
\textit{druq} (\textit{drug} or \textit{druj}), mean “dishonesty” and “falsehood”. It is also called as a demon in the ancient Iranian literature and Avesta. (Afifi .R, Mythology and Culture of Iran. P 509).
\textsuperscript{65} Norman Sharp, Commandments of Achamenian kings, P 81.
And in another inscription Ahura Mazda is worshipped as creator of the earth, sky, people, happiness and one who appointed Darius king as follows:

“Ahura Mazda is the great God who created this earth, that sky, this people, the happiness of the people and who appointed Darius as king, one king among all, one ruler from many (people)”\(^{67}\).

Xerxes the son of Darius believes, by order of Ahura Mazda, he and his father have built the Persepolis\(^{68}\) and whatever is beautiful as follows:

“By order of Ahura Mazda I built this gate of all countries. I and my father (Darius) built many other beautiful things in this Persepolis whatever is beautiful I did by order of Ahura Mazda”\(^{69}\).

Xerxes also mentions the Art (or Ard, the god of wealth in Avesta) beside the name of Ahura Mazda in some inscriptions as he says in his inscription discovered in the Persepolis as follows:

“Among these countries, there was a place where the people worshipped the demons.

I destroyed the temple of demons by order of Ahura Mazda. And announced them that: The demon will not be worshipped. In that place I worshipped Ahura Mazda and Art (Ard) courteously”\(^{70}\).

\(^{66}\)Ibid, P 81.

\(^{67}\) Ibid 85.

\(^{68}\) The name of ancient Palace that belongs to the Achamenian Kings. It also was the capital of Achamenian kings in the ancient Iran.

\(^{69}\) Norman Sharp, Commandments of Achamenian kings 109.

\(^{70}\) Bahar, M, Asian Religion, P 48.
Beside Ahura Mazda, Mithra and Anāhita are also worshipped by the Achamenian kings. Their name appeared in the inscription of Achamenians king from the kingdom period of second Ardashir (359-404 BC)\textsuperscript{71}.

He in his inscription says as follows:

“My grand father, Darius built this building (Persepolis). Fire destroyed it in the time of first Ardashir (my father). I built it again by order of (according to desire) of Ahura Mazda, Anāhita and Mithra. May Ahura Mazda, Anāhita and Mithra keep me under their shelter and protect me any enmity; and don’t destroy whatever I have built”\textsuperscript{72}.

So according to inscriptions and stone carving of Achamenian kings, Ahura Mazda is considered in the top of the gods as creator, helper, granter of the kingdom, the lord who orders, cause of prosperity and happiness, deserve to worship and respect, the greatest god, one who orders to destroy the demons, and beside the other royal gods as helper, protector, one who bless the people. Such epithets can be found in Ahura Mazda in Avesta and Varun\textsuperscript{a} a in the Vedas.

Some time Ahura Mazda is worshipped beside the royal gods. According to the scholars opinion these royal gods are Mitra and Anahita. Because in some inscriptions the name of these two gods are mentioned with his name. Once he worshipped beside the Ard (Art).

\textsuperscript{71} For more information see chapter 1.II , “Mitra in the Inscription and Stone Carving of Achamenian kings”
\textsuperscript{72} Pour Davoud, Yashts , Vol 1, P 168.
In the end of this part we want to know; are there some similarities between Varunā in the Vedas and Ahura Mazda in the Avesta and Inscription and stone carving of Achamenian kings?

It has already been mentioned that Varunā goes back to the Indo-Iranian period for the Ahura Mazda of the Avesta agrees with him in character though not in name. So there are some similarities between them as follows:

1- Varunā and Mitra are considered in the top of Ādityas and they are Universal Monarch and noble Lord among the gods, so Ahura Mazda is on the top of all Amesha Spentas and Yazate (Geniuses) in the Avesta and is the lord of Wisdom the greatest of the divinities.

2- In the Rāgveda the sun is considered as the eye of Mitra and Varunā, similarly the Avestan texts call the sun as the eye of Ahura Mazda.

3- Like dual divinities who received joint invocation during the Indo-Iranian period, Ahura-Mithra or Mithra-Ahura are invoked together similarly in the Vedas Mitra and Varunā generally are mentioned together. But in the Avesta Ahura generally takes precedence and Mithra stands second in compound whereas in the Vedas Mitra comes first and Varunā asecond in compound.

4- Varunā is farsighted and thousand-eyed. He sits in his mansion and looking all deeds, witnesses men’s truth and falsehood. And also
Varuna and Mitra are vigilant with unclosing eye; similarly the Ahura Mazda is the full-seeing, the far-seeing and all-seeing one.

5- In the Vedas the attribute of sovereignty (ksatra) is a predominant manner appropriated to Varuna similarly in the Avesta Ahura Mazda is the good ruler Sovereign and the best of Sovereigns.

6- Varuna alone, or conjointly with Mitra, is often called a king (rājā) and the term ‘ruler’ (Ksatriya) refers to Varuna similarly Ahura Mazda is the king who rules at his will and the liberal king.

7- Varuna is also a self-dependent ruler; Ahura Mazda is the absolute ruler.

8- The epithet asura is connected with Varuna alone or accompanied by Mitra similarly the epithet Ahura is applied for Ahura Mazda.

9- Varuna is a great lord and he established heaven and earth and dwells in all the worlds, similarly Ahura Mazda is the great one and the Creator of all.

10- Varuna and Mitra as imperial rules (samrāj) rule over the whole world or encompass the two worlds and they (Varuna and Mitra) are the guardians of the whole world; similarly Ahura Mazda holds sovereign sway over both the worlds; his authority in the world of righteousness is undisputed, and his imperial right is unchallengeable.

11- They (Varuna and Mitra) are the guardians of the whole world similarly; Ahura Mazda is the keeper, the Maintainer, the protector, and good keeper.
12- Varun$a$ is omniscient similarly; Ahura Mazda is the Mazda (the all-knowing) and all-pervading.

13- Varun$a$ is the great lord of cosmic law ($r\text{-}ta$) similarly in the Avesta Asha is the name of an Amesha Spenta (Urdibehisht) who is the representative of god low and Universal system. (In fact Amesha Spentas are the various manifestations of Ahura Mazda).

14- In the Vedas Varun$a$ is regulator and distributer of the water. This epithet of Varun$a$ has been appeared in the Avesta for Anâhita the goddess of waters who spread the waters into the Āryan countries.

15- In the Vedas Varun$a$ is mighty one and by this mightiness he keeps both worlds asunder. So Ahura Mazda is also described as strong and mighty one in the Avesta and inscriptions of Achamenian.