

Pērōz, brother of Šābuhr, who, according to Ibn an-Nadīm, procured him audience with the king. According to the Manichaean *Kephalaia*, Šābuhr summoned Mani thrice from Ctesiphon, and on the third occasion accepted him as a member of his own court and gave him leave to preach his religion without hindrance throughout his realms.

According to Alexander of Lycopolis, Mani, as a member of Šābuhr's court, accompanied the king on one of his Roman campaigns, either against Gordian III (242-44) or against Valerian (256-60). According to the *Kephalaia*, Mani spent many years in attendance on Šābuhr, and many years preaching "with good harvest" in Persia and Parthia, and up to Adiabene and the lands bordering on the frontier with Rome. It appears that, as well as preaching, the prophet practised medicine and healed the sick. At some time before A.C. 262 he converted another of Šābuhr's brothers, namely Mihršāh, king of Mesene (text f).

Between 244 and 261, at a time when Mani himself was in Weh-Ardaxšīr (a part of al-Madaīn), he sent a mission to Egypt under Addā and Pattēg, who had earlier been to "Rome". (It seems probable that this Pattēg was Mani's own father.) This mission, which met with considerable success, reached as far as Alexandria (text h). Another mission, sent out by the prophet from Hulwān (on the highway from Babylon to Hamadān) was led by Ammō, who was accompanied by an Arsacid prince. Ammō penetrated to the far north-east of the empire, to Parthia and Marv and beyond (text h). There he founded communities, and converted the ruler of Waruč (modern Gharch) (text j). A third mission, led by Addā and Abzaxyā, in 261-62, made converts among the Christians in Karkūk. There were doubtless many other missions of which no record survives.

By the time of Šābuhr's death, probably in A.C. 273, Manichaeism appears to have been well established in his realms, although the state religion continued to be Zoroastrianism. Mani withdrew to Babylonia during the brief reign, lasting one year, of Šābuhr's son Hormizd I; but some time after the succession of Hormizd's brother, Vahrām I, he travelled down the Tigris, visiting his communities, and having reached Hormizd-Ardašīr (Ahwāz), intended to set out for the north-eastern provinces of the empire. This was forbidden him, and he turned back to Mesene, whence he travelled up the Tigris again to Ctesiphon. From there he visited Kholassar, where he was joined by the vassal-king Bāt, another of his royal converts (text k). There a summons came to him to attend Vahrām's court at Bēth-Lāpat (Gundešābuhr). Here he encountered the hostility of Zoroastrian

priests (text **m**), and after a harsh audience with the king (text **n**) was imprisoned, in heavy chains. He died after 26 days in captivity, probably in A.C. 277 (texts **o** and **p**).

### **The further history of the Manichaean church in Iran and the east**

After Mani's death, the leadership of his church was in dispute between two of his followers, Sisinnios and Gabriabos. The former was successful, and led the community until his martyrdom in 291/2. His successor, Innaïos, appears to have won tolerance for the Manichaeans, which lasted until new persecutions broke out under Hormizd II. Little is known of the church during the rest of the Sasanian period, except that it endured many bloody persecutions at the hands of the Zoroastrians, and that its main strength gradually became concentrated beyond the Oxus, over the north-eastern border of Iran. Towards the end of the 6th century the transOxian community claimed independence, under Šād-Ohrmizd, from the Babylonian Leader. Under the name of the Dēnāwars (see text **h**), they maintained their autonomy until the early 8th century, when this administrative schism was healed, the rule of the Babylonian Leader Mihr (c.710-40) being accepted in Central Asia.

Although the Manichaean community beyond the Oxus was reinforced by refugees (Persians and Parthians) from within the borders of Iran, most of its members were Sogdians, an eastern Iranian people inhabiting those regions.

The Arab conquest of Persia in the 7th century gave a brief respite from persecution to the Manichaeans there, and some even returned from beyond the Oxus to their homes. Under the 'Abbasids harsh persecutions began again. Nevertheless the church maintained itself in Bagdad until the 10th century, when the seat of the Leader was transferred to Samarkand. After this century the Manichaeans virtually disappear from Iranian records.

From at least 692 (when, after a troubled period, the Chinese re-opened the silk-routes across Central Asia), Manichaeism penetrated eastward through Sogdian merchant-colonies, strung out along the caravan-roads between the Sogdian city of Samarkand and China. A Manichaean missionary reached the Chinese court in 694; and in 732 an imperial edict gave permission for foreigners resident in China to practise this religion there.

In the 8th century a vast area of Central Asia was conquered by the

Uigur Turks; and in 762 one of their rulers adopted Manichaeism, which became the state religion of this huge kingdom until its overthrow by the Kirghiz in 840. Manichaeism probably survived in Eastern Turkistan till the Mongol invasion in the 13th century, maintaining itself most strongly in and around Qočo (near modern Turfan), which remained a petty Uigur principality. In China the religion was proscribed in 863, but although persecuted it survived there at least until the 14th century.

### **Mani's teachings**

Mani taught a strict dualism of spirit and matter. He held that good and evil are in essence and in origin separate and opposed, and that they became mixed in this world through the act of the evil principle (Matter or Darkness). Salvation lies in the release of goodness (Spirit or Light) from Matter, and its return to its original state of separation. This teaching Mani set out in an elaborate mythology, harmonized deliberately from different elements.

**The myth:** In the beginning the Paradise of Light stretched unbounded upwards and to left and right (or, northwards and to east and west). Below, or southwards, lay the Hell of Darkness. The land of Paradise is uncreated and eternal. Its substance is the Five Light Elements: Ether, Air, Light, Water, and Fire. It is ruled over by the Father of Greatness, and is inhabited by countless Aeons. A goddess, the Great Spirit, is as it were the Father's consort.

Hell is divided into five kingdoms, each of the substance of one of the Five Dark Elements. These are sometimes given the same names as the corresponding Light Elements (i.e. Air standing also for Dark Air) or sometimes the exact opposite (i.e. Darkness for Light). Sometimes, however, they are given other names, i.e. instead of Water, Poison, or Brine. The five infernal kingdoms are inhabited by five kinds of devils, two-legged, four-legged, winged, swimming, and crawling. Each kind is divided into two sexes, and lives in perpetual lust and strife. The Devil, or Prince of Darkness, king over all, combines in himself features of all five species of devil, namely demon, lion, eagle, fish and dragon. He is treated sometimes as the personification of Matter, sometimes as its chief manifestation.

By chance the Devil came to the boundary between hell and heaven, and saw, desired, and invaded the Light. To protect his realm, and to preserve its eternal peace, the Father of Greatness evoked by word Emanations of himself, to do battle with the powers of Darkness. These

Emanations are the gods of Manichaeism. Being essentially the same, they are distinguished from one another mainly by their functions.

There are three separate "Creations" of gods. Those of the First Creation are the Mother of Life, who evokes in turn her "son", the First Man; and he evokes as his "sons" the Five Light Elements, from the substance of the Paradise of Light. With these he goes forth to do battle with the devils, the first warrior of Light. The Light Elements are also called his "armour", and his "bait", which, overwhelmed by the powers of Darkness, he is forced to throw them to distract them from Paradise. The devils swallow the Light Elements, are appeased, and cease their invasion. By this act a part of the Light has become absorbed in Darkness. This lost Light is smothered by the Matter which has devoured it, suffers, and forgets its divine nature. Matter itself rejoices in the Light it has obtained, and grows to depend upon it.

The First Man, overwhelmed in the deeps of hell, remains unconscious on the battlefield. Recovering his senses, he cries out for help; and his Mother, hearing him, pleads with the Father of Greatness, who evokes the Second Creation of gods for his aid : the Friend of the Lights (whose function is obscure), the Great Builder, and the Living Spirit with his five Sons, the Keeper of Splendour, the King of Honour, the Adamas of Light, the King of Glory, and Atlas. The Living Spirit goes to the edge of the abyss and utters a call, and the First Man answers from the depths. Call and Answer themselves are made gods, the Sixth Sons of the Living Spirit and the First Man respectively. They symbolise the yearning of the gods for the defeated Light, and the response of that Light to their summons. The rescue of the First Man is a pattern for the redemption thereafter of all individual souls; for, awakened from his unconsciousness, he rises up from the pit, and is led back to Paradise by the Mother of Life and the Living Spirit.

**The creation of the world:** The Living Spirit then attacks and defeats the powers of Darkness. From the bodies of the demons he has killed he makes 8 earths, from their skins 10 skies. Others, their chiefs or Archons, he fetters, living, in the firmament. From a portion of the swallowed Light that is still undefiled he makes sun and moon, and from Light that is slightly defiled, the stars, which are set in an eleventh sky, i.e. the one which is seen from this earth. For the redemption of the Light retained by Matter he makes Three Wheels, of Fire, Water and Wind, controlled by the King of Glory. The Keeper of Splendour holds up the 10 heavens from above, and Atlas, standing on the fifth earth, supports on his shoulders the three upper earths.

**The process of redemption:** The world at this point is motionless and without life, the sun standing still in the sky. The Father then evokes the Third Creation, that of the redeeming gods. The first of these is the Third Messenger; he evokes in turn the Maiden of Light (who sometimes also appears as the Twelve Maidens). The two divinities show themselves naked to the Archons chained in the sky. Beholding them, the males ejaculate, and with their seed there falls to earth the Light in their bodies. Part of the seed falls into the water and becomes a huge sea-monster, which is overcome by the Adamas of Light. Part falls on land and forms the trees and plants. The female devils, pregnant from unions in hell, miscarry, and their abortions, containing less Light than the male semen, fall to earth and people it with the five kinds of living creatures, which correspond with the five species of demons.

The Great Builder (from the Second Creation of gods) then makes the New Paradise or New Aeon, which is of the same substance as the Paradise of Light, and also eternal, but which has a separate existence during the time of mixture; its function is to be a home for the gods and for the redeemed Light, so that the Eternal Paradise may remain remote and untroubled during the struggle. The ruler of the New Paradise is the First Man.

The third god of the redeeming Creation is the Column of Glory, who is both a god, and the path by which the redeemed Light ascends to the sky (its visible appearance is the Milky Way). By this path the souls pass to the moon at its time of waxing, and thence to the sun, from which they go to the New Paradise. The sun and the moon are variously described as “ships” and “chariots”, and also as walled “fortresses”, containing the thrones of the gods. The other gods of the Third Creation, in order of evocation, are Jesus the Splendour, the Great Nous (or Great Mind), and the Just Justice. The Great Nous has as his five “limbs” the five powers of the mind, which make up the being of god, and of the soul: Mind, Thought, Reflection, Intelligence and Reason.

The thrones of the chief gods of all three Creations are distributed as follows between the sun and moon:

*Sun*

Third Messenger

Mother of Life

Living Spirit

*Moon*

Jesus the Splendour

Maiden of Light

First Man

The sun and moon are set in motion by the Third Messenger, and

with the change of seasons there begins the physical redemption of Light, through dew, rain etc.

**The creation of man:** To defeat this process of redemption, Matter (personified as Greed or Desire) prompts two great demon-animals to devour the offspring of the other animals, and thus to absorb into their own two bodies all the Light which they possess. The pair then mate, and produce Adam and Eve, in the form of the gods (the Third Messenger and the Maiden of Light) seen by their parent-devils in the sky. The accumulated Light in their bodies is transmitted to the first human pair, and forms their souls. Imprisoned with the Light Soul in the human body is the Dark or Material Soul, made up of lust, greed, envy, hate etc. Lust ensures that humanity propagates itself, and so makes an enduring prison for a part of the swallowed Light.

The god Jesus the Splendour descends and awakens Adam to knowledge of the soul's origin. Adam resolves on chastity; but Eve, in whom there is less Light, is seduced by a demon, to whom she bears Cain and Abel. Later, having lain with Adam, she bears Seth. The human bondage of Light is thus perpetuated.

**Individual salvation:** The Light which makes up the human soul cannot be physically redeemed. Its salvation depends on a conscious effort for virtue by each individual. The Great Nous sends prophets to mankind, who bring gnosis to Adam's descendants, as Jesus the Splendour had done to Adam himself. With knowledge comes the will for redemption; but Matter always seeks to submerge the soul in oblivion, the "sleep of drunkenness". The unawakened soul Mani termed the "Old Man", the awakened soul, the "New Man" (the image is taken from St. Paul). Being itself of Light, and therefore essentially good, the soul can sin only through forgetfulness, by which it loses the strength to withstand the Dark Spirit with which it is shut into the "corpse" of the body. The atonement for sin is contrition, and a renewal of awareness and resolve.

**Fate of the individual soul at death:** Mani taught that the soul may be incarnated many times before it attains release through perfected virtue. There exist two accounts of its fate at death: 1) the soul goes before the Just Justice, and having been judged takes one of three paths, to "life" (the New Paradise), to "mixture" (back to the world) or to "death" (hell): 2) the righteous soul, leaving the body, is met by one of the redeeming gods, accompanied by three angels who bear the insignia of its victory, namely a garland, a diadem, and a heavenly robe. Having received these it ascends to the New Paradise by

the Column of Glory, the moon and the sun. Sometimes the redeeming god appears in the form of a Maiden of Light, reminiscent of the Zoroastrian *daēnā*.

**End of the world:** The end of the world will be presaged by the Great War, a time of conflict and bitterness and waning faith, since by then most of the Light will have been drawn out of the world. There will follow the Second Coming of Jesus, who will establish his judgment-seat and separate the righteous from the sinners. Thereafter the gods supporting the cosmos will abandon their tasks, the heavens and earths will collapse, and the Great Fire will break out, in which the last particles of Light will be freed and will ascend to the New Paradise as the Last God.

Matter will be imprisoned, and the prison will be sealed with a great stone; and finally the New Paradise will be joined again to the Paradise of Light, and its inhabitants, gods and the redeemed, will behold once more the face of the Father of Greatness, hidden from them since the struggle began.

**The gods of the Manichaean pantheon:** It was the custom among Manichaean missionaries (originating evidently with Mani himself) either to translate the Aramaic names of the divinities of his faith into the local language, or to identify these divinities with the divine beings of the dominant local religion, which in Iran was Zoroastrianism. The following are the English renderings of the names of Mani's gods (which have mostly come down to us in their Latin forms), with the Persian and Parthian translations and equivalences, as far as these are known. Mani may himself have been responsible for choosing the Persian ones, but the Parthian terms and identifications were presumably selected by Mar Ammō and his fellow-missionaries to the north-east of Iran.

	<i>Middle Persian</i>	<i>Parthian</i>
The Father of Greatness	Pid ī wuzurgī, Zurwān, Wahišt(āw) šahriyār	Pidar wuzurgift, Pidar rōšn, Pidar hasēnag, Srōšāw Yazd
The Great Spirit	Wāxš zīndag, Wāxš yōzdahr	

### The First Creation

The Mother of Life	Mādar ī zīndagān, Zīndagān Mādar,	Mād žīwandag, Ardāwān Mād, Mād rōšn,
The First Man	Ohrmizdbay Mād Ohrmizdbay	Ohrmizdbag Mād Ohrmizdbag, Mard hasēnag, Mardōhm naxwēn Panj rōšn
His five Sons (the five Elements)	(A)mahraspandān	
Ether	frāwahr	ardāw frawardīn
Wind	wād	wād
Light	rōšn	rōšn
Water	āb	āb
Fire	ādur	ādur
His sixth Son, the Answer-God		Padwāxtag Yazd
The Living Self (made up of the five Elements)	Grīw zīndag, Grīw rōšn	Grīw žīwandag, Grīw rōšn

### The Second Creation

The Friend of the Lights	Rōšnān xwārist	Frih rōšn
The Great Builder	Nōgšahrāfuryazd	Bāmyazd
The Living Spirit	Mīhr Yazd	Wād žīwandag
His five Sons		Panj puhrān
The Keeper of Splendour		
The King of Honour		
The Adamas of Light	Wisbed, Taskirbyazd	
The King of Glory	Wādahrāmyazd	
Atlas	Mānbed, Parmānagēn Yazd	
His sixth Son, the Call-God		Xrōšttag Yazd



### The Third Creation

The Third Messenger	Narisah Yazd,	Narisaf Yazd, Mihr Yazd,
	Rōšnšahryazd,	Rōšnšahryazd
	Zēnares bay	
Jesus the Splendour	Yišō' ziwā(h),	Yišō' ziwā(h),
	Yišō' ispixtān,	
	Xradēšahryazd	
The Maiden of Light	Kanīg rōšn	Kanīg rōšn
The Column of	Srōš-ahrāy,	
Glory	Kišwarwāryazd	Bāmistūn
The Great Nous	Wahman (wuzurg)	Manohmēd rōšn
His five Limbs		
Reason		Bām
Mind		Manohmēd
Intelligence		Uš
Thought		Andēšišn
Understanding		Parmānag
The Just Justice		
The Last God		Istomēn yazd

**Jesus in Manichaeism:** Mani appears to have recognized three entities under the name of Jesus: 1) Jesus the Splendour, the redeeming god; 2) the Suffering Jesus, the name given in western Manichaeism to the Living Self, i.e. to the sum of the Light suffering in Matter, "crucified" as Jesus was crucified on the cross; 3) Jesus the Messiah, prophet and "son of God", who had taken on the appearance of man, and had seemed to suffer death on the cross. (Mani, with his abhorrence of matter, rigidly opposed the doctrine of the real incarnation of Jesus and his actual crucifixion.) The three conceptions of Jesus are not always kept wholly distinct.

The prophet Jesus was regarded by Mani as his own immediate forerunner, whose apostle he himself was. Mani also honoured the Buddha and Zoroaster, but there is no evidence that he was directly familiar with their teachings in his formative years.

### The Manichaean ethic

Mani taught that virtue lay in saving the imprisoned Light in the

world, and in avoiding any injury to it. This doctrine he applied on both the moral and the physical plane. The Light which made up the soul could be redeemed through the virtues of brotherly love and faith, patience, wisdom, truth, peace and joy, kindness, temperance, chastity. The last was an essential virtue, since to perpetuate the human race was to perpetuate a prison for the Light. To eat meat was also wrong, since animals contained little Light, and their bodies were gross with Matter. Further, to kill an animal, or even to cull a plant, was a sin, for this gave pain on the physical level to such Light as was within them. Therefore, though the eating of vegetables was enjoined, since these contained more Light than animals (which would then accrue to the soul of one who ate them in reverence and virtue) yet even this act was not free from wrong-doing.

Strict virtue for the Manichaeans therefore involved necessarily withdrawal from the world. The community was accordingly divided into two groups: the Elect, who embraced a rigorous rule, and the Hearers, who led a more normal life and supported the Elect both by works and alms. Their charity to the Elect, termed in Middle Persian *ruwānagān* "that which concerns the soul", brought merit to the Hearers themselves. The Hearers took part in religious worship and observances, but also committed the necessary sins of tilling the earth, harvesting the corn, and preparing food. They were permitted to marry (monogamously), and might in certain circumstances eat meat (but not themselves take life). Only the Elect could, therefore, expect to attain Paradise at death. The Hearers could ordinarily hope for salvation only after re-incarnation as one of the Elect. The Elect, on the other hand, remained capable of sin; perpetual vigilance was necessary for them also.

### The community

At the head of the Manichaean community was its Leader, Mani's successor, with his seat in Babylon. Under him were five grades: 12 Teachers, 72 Bishops, 360 Elders, the general body of the Elect (to which women were admitted), and the Hearers. There were other distinctions among the Elect, such as that of preacher or scribe. The Elect, who were "sealed" with the three seals of mouth and hands and breast (ensuring virtue of speech and act and feeling), lived in monasteries, but also went on journeys to spread and strengthen the faith, travelling on foot, preaching. They ate only once a day, a meal