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## **GENOCIDE & ETHNIC CLEANSING OF THE ZARATHUSHTIS**

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The whole world knows of the Holocaust where 6 million Jews were killed. Similarly, the world has recognized the Genocide of the 6 hundred thousand Armenians by the Turks. People are in the process of learning about the Genocide committed against the Natives of North America. But not many have heard of the GENOCIDE & ETHNIC CLEANSING OF THE ZARATHUSHTIS, whereby over 30 million <sup>1</sup> Zarathushtis were massacred over a continuous period of 1400 lunar years. While the rest were forcefully converted to Islam to the extent that by 1854 CE the heirs of the Persian Empire were reduced to only 7711 Zarathushtis as recorded by Maneckji Limji Hatari <sup>2</sup> and a French Ambassador to Iran. As late as 1977, a year before the Islamic revolution Zarathushti girls in Yazd were abducted and forcefully married to Muslims with the blessings of the late Ayatollah Sadughi. The fact that about 40 thousand Zarathushtis born in Iran exist today is a miracle and shows the determination and steadfastness and sacrifice of the 7711 who had survived and were rescued by Maneckji Limiji Hataria.

The difference between the Genocide of the Zarathushtis and that of the Holocaust and the Genocide of the Armenians was that in the Genocide of the Zarathushtis, God's instructions were being followed.

All Human Beings are born equal it is God that differentiates between them through his Prophets. Allah in the Quran requires his followers to fight the unbelievers till they embrace Islam and if they are believers in an alternative book (Sura 9:29) make them pay the "Jizyah" until they feel SUBDUED.

***Fight against those who (1) believe not in Allah, (2) nor in the Last Day, (3) nor forbid that which has been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger (4) and those who acknowledge not the religion of truth (i.e. Islam) among the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), until they pay the Jizyah with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.***" <sup>3</sup>

In case it is forgotten or there is doubt, the Quran repeats it over and over again.

***"Thus you are ordered by Allah to continue in carrying out Jihad against the disbelievers till they embrace Islam."*** <sup>4</sup>

That is exactly what His followers were doing who cannot be blamed for it. They had already given the benefit of the doubt by considering the Zoroastrians as *People of the Book*. The Jizyah had to be so high to subdue the non-believer into submission. The results were positive, except for the last 7711 non-believers who had for over 1200 years resisted and suffered, the rest had fled or submitted or were killed.

History is written by the victors and they have painted a rosy picture of Persians welcoming the Arabs with open arms, and accepting Islam as their saviours. They blame the Sassanians and the Mobeds for creating an atmosphere where the people awaited a saviour. Today even Zarathushti scholars who are on the payroll of the Arabs funded Western Universities <sup>5</sup> promote such narratives.

The fact is that, although the state religion was Zoroastrianism the Sassanians were quite liberal. Mani (274 CE) and Mazdak (528 CE) claimed to be prophets during the Sassanian reign and they were allowed the freedom to preach, even King Ghobad became a follower of Mazdak but his son saw the Mazdaki movement as a political rival and got rid of them.

The Sasanian emperor; Khusraw I (r. 531–578), had a Christian wife. Khusraw II (r. 590–628) had two Christian wives from different branches: Maryam, the daughter of Byzantine emperor Maurice, and Shirin, an Armenian Christian. The freedom of religion in the Sasanian Empire was reflected in a saying attributed to king Hormazd IV (579–590), reported by the historian Tabari. Hormazd compared the different religions of the Empire to the four legs of the throne: deleting one of them would lead to the collapse of the entire structure.<sup>6</sup>

When Yazdgerd III was murdered by the miller in Marv it was the Christian Bishop of Marv who out of gratitude for the freedom of religion afforded to them by the Sassanians, buried Yazdgerd and built a tomb for him.<sup>7</sup>

Islam was in no way superior to Zoroastrianism to entice the Persians towards it. In fact, it was a religion that promoted ignorance by proclaiming God as All-Knowing and human destiny as preplanned by Allah. Thus, not requiring any effort towards progress. They burnt books and converted libraries into mosques. Based on the same ideology, the Muslim population keeps on growing at an unbelievable rate, for they believe that, “He who gives the teeth will also provide the bread.” (هر که دندان دهد نان دهد)

The success of the Arabs was due to the eight-year war between Rome and Iran which had exhausted both armies and the treasury. While the warring Arab tribes had recently been united by Prophet Mohammad. Mohammad fought 28 battles in 23 years, in 8 of which Allah is involved as mentioned in the Quran. The Arab economy was based on war as it was the only industry. The Nobles among them took pride in their illiteracy<sup>8</sup> and even the Prophet of God was proudly illiterate. Moreover, Allah has promised them Paradise if killed in a war so they embraced death and fought without fear.

The first success of the Arabs was against the Romans (Byzantines). In Palestine, the Arabs attacked the Romans at Ajnadayna in 634 CE and when they made a dent, they called in reinforcement to be able to hold ground. In 637, they conquered Syria, and in 639 haphazardly managed to conquer Egypt with a force of just 3500 men and later called in the enforcement of 8000 men from Medina under Zubayr.

The Arabs did not have an organized army and had no food with them so wherever they camped they robbed and drove the local farmers from their lands into the forts. The people sent a message to Yazdgerd the king informing him that. “The Arabs are camping at Qadisiyyah in a warlike manner. Nothing can endure their action since they have ruined everything between them and the Euphrates. Nobody remains in the area except in the forts.”<sup>9</sup> In the meantime, Umar had sent a group of Arab chieftains to Yazdgerd inviting him to convert to Islam. Yazdgerd sent Umar the now famous reply that, while the Arabs were eating lizards and burying their daughter alive the Persians believed in a monotheistic God and does not need to follow a backward Arab religion.<sup>10</sup>

In 636 CE, the emboldened Arabs under Omar finally attacked the Persian army at Ghadesiyeh in modern-day Iraq and managed to kill Rostam the commander in chief of the army in guerilla type warfare; the loss demoralized the Persian army and led to its defeat. The Iranians under young Yazdgerd mustered up an army and stood against the advancing Arabs at Nahavand, but seven years later, in 642 CE the Persians were defeated and the centralized Sassanian government lost control. Sixteen years after the start of the

Arab invasion, in 651 CE Yazdgerd was killed and thereafter without centralized leadership, the people resisted the Arabs in small pockets wherever they could. The Arabs went on a killing rampage.

*“Zuhrah ordered his men to follow; they were not to pass by any Persian whom they caught up with without killing him.”*<sup>11</sup>

The Arabs set up garrisons outside Persian towns and controlled the towns from there. Whenever they saw resistance, they captured and killed all able-bodied Iranians. As reported by Balkhi<sup>12</sup> in his book "Parsnameh", when the people of Taleghan in Khorasan<sup>13</sup> revolted and killed the Arab governor, Abdollah Ben Amir, the Arab Khalifeh ordered that Iranians be hanged on both sides of the road for a distance of 24 kilometres (4 farsangs). Similarly, when the people of Estakhr in Pars revolted, 40,000 men were killed and with their blood, the watermill was made to run. Biruni<sup>14</sup> in his book "Asar al Baghiyeh" has recorded many such incidents, where the Arabs shed as much Iranian blood as was necessary to be able to run the water mills with it. There is a story that once so many were beheaded that the blood went thick and they had to add water to help it flow and turn the mills. Biruni also records how Qutaybah the Arab ruler ordered the killing of all scholars and the learned people in the province of Kharazm and had their books burnt. It was common practice to burn scholars in the pyre of their books or to cut or burn their figures so they could no longer write. In the city of Ghom, the Arabs one day rounded up 70 of the leading citizens and beheaded them in the city square.

Discrimination by the Arabs continued against the Iranians even when they converted to Islam. Iranian Muslims were called Mavalis and were considered second grade to Arabs. They were not allowed to sit in the presence of an Arab and they had to walk one step behind an Arab. The Iranian Muslims were given unique Arabic names to distinguish them from Arabs. We still have among Iranian Muslims the names like Gholam Reza, Gholam Ali, Abdul Reza etc. These names are not used among Arabs for they know the meaning. Gholam means a young slave who is used for homosexual purposes. Gholam Hussein means the boy who belongs to Hussein. Similarly, Abd means slave but a regular one. Among Arabs, you will only find Abdallah meaning slave to Allah, but among Iranians it is Abdul Hamid, Abdul Reza etc, meaning the slave belonging to Hamid and Reza.

Persian resistance against the Arabs was a continuous affair. The people of Tabarestan, Gillan and Dailamon on the shores of the Caspian Sea resisted the forces of the Arabs, who were not able to conquer that part of Iran. But, they had to sign peace treaties and pay ransoms to avoid war. In fact, they were forced to accept Islam long after the fall of the Arabs, by the Safavid dynasty in 1587, who also made Shiaism the official religion of the Iranians.

Tabari has reported an incident that shows Arab brutality and trickery.

*“Then Saed came to Tamisah, which is situated between Tabaristan and Jurjan; it is a city on the shore [of the Caspian] Sea, at the boundaries of Jurjan. Tamisah inhabitants fought him until he performed the prayer of fear. He had said to Hudhayfah, "How did the Messenger of God pray?" (Hudhayfah) told him, and Saed performed there the prayer of fear while they were fighting. On that day Saed smote one of the polytheists on the sinews of his shoulder and his sword emerged below (the man's) elbow. He besieged them and they sought safe conduct (aman). He granted it to them with the condition **that he would not kill one man** among them. Then they threw open the fortress **and he put them all to death save One Man. (Thereby observing the letter of the peace terms.)** He seized the contents of the fortress.”*<sup>15</sup>

In 697 CE Arabic was made the official language of Iran. Anyone found speaking Persian was hanged by the tongue, or their tongue was pulled out of their mouth. It was customary for poets to recite poetry and get rewarded. Once an Iranian poet recited poetry in honour of the Khalifa who liked it and honoured him with gold and silver and then orders that his tongue be cut. The poet pleaded and asked what he did wrong that after being honoured with gold and silver his tongue is being cut. The Khalifa said, "that is for reciting that beautiful verse in Persian".

Many Iranians led the fight against the Arabs. The first one was Phiroze Nahavandi who killed the second Kalifa Umar Ib Khattab. Behzadan son of Vandad Hormoz, also known as Abu Moslem was among the early leaders of the resistance. In 814 CE an Iranian by the name of Taheri killed Amin the ruler of Bagdad. Then there were leaders like Babak-e-Khoramdin who engaged the Arabs in guerilla warfare for 20 years from 816 to 837 CE but finally an Iranian by the name of Afshin, who in his own way was serving the resistance, betrayed him. Babak was taken as a prisoner to the Khalifa in Sammara near Bagdad who ordered the Arab henchman to cut his limbs. Babak is said to have drenched his face with his bleeding arms to deprive the Arabs of seeing his face turn pale due to loss of blood.

Other heroes were Yagub Lais an Iranian ruler who traced his ancestors to Garshasp the Zarathushti ruler; he revolted against the Arabs 240 years after the Arab invasion, in 879 CE. The Samanians, who traced their ancestors to Bahram Chobin the Sasanian Vazir (minister), and the Dailamians were other Iranian rulers who fought the Arabs. Barsis, Behafarid, Sanbaad (Sinbad) and the Barmaki were some of the many Iranians who led revolts against the Arabs.

According to the historian "Tabari", the people of Pars & Kerman stood up against the Arab governor and the representative of Ali the son in law of Prophet Mohammad, by not paying the infidel tax (Jaziyeh). The governor fled out of fear for his life and Ali ibn Abu Taleb who today the Iranians worship, dispatched "Ziyad" with a large army to put down the rebellion and extract the taxes from the Iranians.<sup>16</sup>

For two hundred years, the Arabs terrorized the ancient civilized world (Persia, Egypt, Assyria, Armenia, Lydia and Philistine); they forced Islam and the Arabic language upon them. In these two hundred years, they reversed the clock of progress in the Middle East and the world. The once centre of civilization, where they measured the depth of oceans, who had calculated the Natural Meridian of the earth, who knew the earth was not the centre of the universe, and who followed the solar calendar, were told all that is wrong and against the will of God. Their books were burnt and replaced by the Quran. Their solar calendar was replaced by a lunar calendar and their medicines and science were replaced by prayers. The people who did not know the difference between camphor and salt<sup>17</sup> believed they knew everything that was to know, for God had given them all the required knowledge in the Quran.

The Arabs lived in tents Art and Architecture were not known to them and if they saw any they destroyed them just like they were told by God to destroy the statues of gods in Mecca.<sup>18</sup>

Similarly, the Egyptians who once built pyramids were brought down to the level of Arabs and the Arabs were on their way to Europe, where in Spain they met stiff resistance and their days of conquest came to an end. Only to be revived in the 21st century in the guise of refugees while Erdogan of Turkey has planned the rival of the Ottoman Kalifate to complete the conquest of Europe this time taking advantage of the awakening of the West in the doctrine of Human Rights.

Islam used non-spiritual methods to convert people. A non-Muslim was an infidel and had to pay a heavy tax called Jaziyeh in addition to the normal taxes, the non-payment would lead to confiscation of not only their property but also their wife and children. To spare themselves from such a catastrophe the easiest solution was Submission to Islam as desired by God. Once converted they had to attend public prayers and follow the religion publicly, usually the first generation would do it outwardly, but the second and third generation would be lost to Islam and gradually the population would know nothing better. Education was limited to the study of the Quran and within a few generations, among the sons of the forced converts, Islamic fanaticism replaced nationalism.

Only four million Zarathushtis had survived up to the time of the Safavids in the 1500s. The Safavids embraced Shiaism and made it a state religion. During that turmoil when even Sunni Muslims were not spared, the rest of the Zarathushtis were either massacred or forced into Islam. Shah Abbas Safavi dispatched his army to the last stronghold of the Zarathushtis ruled by the Zarathushti dynasty of "Padouspanian" in the Caspian Sea region and coerced them into Islam. Some that resisted were, under the guise of protection, moved along with the Armenians from the north of Iran to Esfahan the capital, to live in ghetto conditions where most of them died due to sickness and the rest were massacred and some fled to Yazd.

The final blow came under Shah Sultan Hossein (1694 -1722). It is estimated that at least a million Zarathushtis had survived until then when Shah Sultan Hossein ordered the massacre of those Zarathushtis who would not convert. Hundreds of thousands were massacred and many, to save themselves, converted. Even today, we notice in places like Naein, Kashan, Anarak, Abiyaneh and other villages between Yazd and Esfahan that have preserved the Dari language, the customs and dress despite being Muslims.

Taimur Lang (lame) the Mongolian despot who killed an estimated 17 million people, in his biography has mentioned his encounter with the Zarathuasties in the mountains of Pars.

The Zarathushti population was still a few million when Taimur Lang (Timor lame) the Mogul emperor conquered Iran in the 1200s. He had appointed one of his sons as governor of Shiraz, who was attacked and killed by a group of people who lived in the mountains of Shiraz (Modern day Kougiluyeh and Boyer Ahmad). When the news reached Taimur he came at the head of an army to punish the killers of his son. He led his army into the mountains where the attackers lived. When he entered the narrow mountain pass, all of a sudden, every leaf of the trees became active and showered arrows on the Mogul army. After heavy losses, Taimur retreated but promised to come back and wipe them out. He ordered gunpowder from China, reorganized his army and launched a second attack this time he blasted his way with gunpowder through the pass. Taimur saw some of the warriors had something tied to their backs while fighting and wanted very much to find out what they carried when all of a sudden one of them attacked Taimur but he was very quick and beheaded the Iranian warrior. He then went over to the body to see what was in the backpack and found that the warrior was a lady and she carried her baby on her back. Here Taimur realized that all those with backpacks who were fighting his army were women with their children on their backs. Latter Taimur sees a building in the heart of the mountain from whose chimney smoke was coming out, on inquiry he finds out that it is a fire temple then he approaches it and finds some old Mobeds (priests) tending to the fire and he learned that these people were all Zarathushties.<sup>19</sup>

The Arabs and the Mongols were merciless even to their people and tribes but armed with Islam they became even more dangerous.

The condition of the Zarathushtis in the 1800s has been written by Napier Malcolm which is a separate attachment.

History is written by the victors and the atrocities committed by the Arabs against the Persians are not fully recorded and those that were recorded are missing to a great extent. But the atrocities committed by the Arabs among themselves are widely available from many sources including Tabari, Baladhuri, Biruni and many others. These records reveal the character and behaviour of the Arabs among themselves, so one can imagine their behaviour when they confronted an outsider or any other race or religion. No doubt the population of the Zarathushtis who once ruled the Persians Empire that stretched from the Black Sea to the Himalayan mountains was reduced to a mere 7711 heads by 1854 CE as a result of over 1200 years of continuous Genocide and carnages. Here are a few quotes from the History of Tabari that shows the brutality even with innocent children. Each paragraph is about a separate incident.

## BRUTALITY BETWEEN THE ARABS

Muawiyah's mother 'Hind bt. Utbah' had accompanied Meccan forces to the battle of Uhud in 625 CE, as the women of a tribe often did in ancient Arabia. When the Prophet's uncle Hamzah was killed in the fighting she cut open his breast and bit off a piece of his liver-again a traditional gesture of revenge. <sup>20</sup> *(This is about the battle of Uhud fought between the Prophet and the tribe of Muawiyah to convert them to Islam. Muawiyah later became the 5<sup>th</sup> Khalif. His mother is famously called 'Hind the Liver Eater').*

"The youngsters of the Arab went to inspect the dead. They had with them, vessels of water. They gave water to the Muslims in whom there was a breath of life and killed the Persians in whom there was a breath of life. They came down from al-Udhayb at the time of the evening prayer." <sup>21</sup> *(Traditionally the families of the Arab army, where possible, travelled with them. This is what happened after the battle was called off around sunset).*

They killed the men captured the women and children and sold them in the slave markets of Mecca and Medina. <sup>22</sup>

***The Arabs had no mercy on the children and family members how could they have mercy on others.***

Busr continued onto Yemen, where 'Ubaydallah b. Abbas was governor on behalf of 'Ali. When Ubaydallah heard of his approach, he fled to al-Kufah, where he joined 'Ali, leaving behind as his deputy over Yemen 'Abdallah b. 'Abd al -Madan al-Harithi. Busr came and killed him together with his son. He also came across the baggage train of Ubaydallah b. Abbas, with which were two small sons of the latter. He slaughtered them both. <sup>23</sup>

Ibn Khazim swore that he would kill every captive brought to him before sunset. The last one to be brought to him was a man of the Banu Hanifah called Mahmiyah. Ibn Khazim was told, "The sun has set!" but he replied, "Finish the execution!" <sup>24</sup>

There was a great tamarisk tree there, and there were 'Anazahs. When the 'Anazah saw him, they said to one another, "Let us kill them, and in the morning take them to the amir; we will receive a generous reward ." They agreed on this, but the Banu Nasr, who was Fadalaha's mother's clan, said, "By God's life, we will not aid you in killing our son!" Nevertheless, the 'Anazah rode out against Fadalaha's men, fought them and killed them, and brought their heads to 'Abd al-Malik b.

Marwan. As a reward, 'Abd al-Malik let them move into Banigiya and assigned them stipends, something they had rarely had before.' <sup>25</sup>

He rode out with the thirty horsemen until he reached the 'Anazah and began killing them in one settlement after another until he came to a party of them that included his maternal aunt. She was bent over a son of hers, a boy in his adolescence; and she bared her breast to Salimah and said, "I adjure you by the blood ties of this, Salimah!" He replied, "No, by God! I have not seen Fadalah since he halted at the great tree of al-Shajarah"-meaning his brother-" Now stand away from him, or I will take my lance to your withered dug." At that, she stood aside from her son, and Salimah killed him. <sup>26</sup>

Shabib said, "I am going to bring my mother and put her in my camp so she will never be parted from me until one of us dies." Meanwhile, two men of the Banu Taym b. Shayban, fearing for their lives, left the monastery and went out to join a group of their people who were camped at al-Jal, about an hour's journey from them by day. When Shabib led out that party of his there were twelve of them to meet his mother in the foothills, he unexpectedly ran into a group of the Banu Taym b. Shayban heedlessly encamped with their herds, not imagining that Shabib would pass their way, because of where they were, or be aware of them. But Shabib attacked them with these horsemen of his and killed thirty of their shaykhs, including Hawtharah b. Asad and Wabarah b. `Asim, who had left the monastery and joined those at al-Jal. Shabib then went on to fetch his mother from the foothills and brought her back with him. <sup>27</sup>

Ibn Muljam asked to marry her but she said, "I will not marry you until you give me what I want. He asked, "What will satisfy you?" and she answered, "Three thousand dirhams, a slave, a singing girl, and the killing of 'Ali b. Abi Talib." <sup>28</sup> (*Ibn Muljam was the one who then killed Ali and as a result, the Shia sect was born*).

These are just a few quotes, enough to give an idea of the culture of the people who chose to execute God's dictates as given in the Quran. In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the world has been witness to it. It is necessary to study history without political correctness so that history is not repeated.



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<sup>1</sup> 30 million over 1200 years averages to only about 25,000 per year.

<sup>2</sup> Shahmardan History of Zarathushtis after the fall of the Sassanians.

<sup>3</sup> Quran 9:29 translated by Mohsin Khan <https://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=9&verse=29>

<sup>4</sup> Quran 47:4 translated by Mohsin Khan <https://corpus.quran.com>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/arab-funding-of-american-universities-donors-recipients-and-impact#\\_Toc57043864](https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/arab-funding-of-american-universities-donors-recipients-and-impact#_Toc57043864)

<sup>6</sup> History of Tabari 991 Vol 5 p298

<sup>7</sup> History of Tabari 2884

<sup>8</sup> Mugadama ibn Khaldum vol-2 Chapter 3 sec 32 /11.6

<sup>9</sup> History by Tabari 2247 Vol 12

<sup>10</sup> History by Tabari 2240-41 Vol 12

<sup>11</sup> History of Tabari 2422

<sup>12</sup> Balkhi (1207-1273 CE) also known as Rumi, was a Persian scholar & poet of the Sufi school of thoughts

<sup>13</sup> In this year (709 CE) Qutaybah fell upon the people of al-Talagan, according to one of the collectors of historical reports (*al-Akhbar*), and killed them on a massive scale; he crucified them in two straight parallel rows four parasangs long. ( $6 \times 4 = 24$  Kilometers)

<sup>14</sup> Biruni (973 -1048 CE) was a Persian scholar & scientist.

<sup>15</sup> History of Tabari 2837

<sup>16</sup> History of Tabari Vol. 6 pg. 2657 and Vol. 1 pg. 228 & 333.

<sup>17</sup> Tabari Vol 12

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<sup>18</sup> The present generation saw how the Taliban in Afghanistan destroyed the statute of Buddha publicly, while in Iran the Mullahs quietly chiseled of the faces on the bas-reliefs at Takht Jamshid and now by building dams are trying to drown the rest of the country's pre-Islamic architecture and history.

<sup>19</sup> Paraphrased from منم تيمو جهان گشا biography of Timur Lang

<sup>20</sup> Ibn Ishaq, Sirah, 581; Guillaume transl., 385. (Tabari Pg 152 footnote 269 Vol -15)

<sup>21</sup> History of Tabari 2341 Battle of Qadisiya

<sup>22</sup> History of Tabari 2632 , 2422

<sup>23</sup> History of Tabari 3452

<sup>24</sup> History of Tabari Vol 20 496

<sup>25</sup> History of Tabari Vol 22 893

<sup>26</sup> History of Tabari Vol 22 894

<sup>27</sup> History of Tabari Vol 22 895

<sup>28</sup> History of Tabari 3458