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Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society / Volume 32 / Issue 04 / October 1900, pp 623 - 635

DOI: 10.1017/S0035869X00028161, Published online: 15 March 2011

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0035869X00028161

How to cite this article:

M. Gaster (1900). Art. XXIV.—“*The Twelve Dreams of Sehachi.*”. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 32, pp 623-635 doi:10.1017/S0035869X00028161

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JOURNAL

OF

THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

ART. XXIV.—“*The Twelve Dreams of Sehachi.*”
By M. GASTER.

AMONG the tales that make up the well-known Kalilah and Dimnah cycle, or the Fables of Bidpai, there is one which has a history of its own. In the Syriac version published by Bickell, probably the oldest text available, it is called the “Gate of Bilar” (German translation, p. 93 ff.). In the Arabic recension, and in the Syriac which rests upon it, it is called similarly, “The Story of the Wise Bilar.” A full account of this text, together with an English rendering, has been given by I. G. N. Keith-Falconer (“Kalilah and Dimnah,” Cambridge, 1885, p. xxxi ff., 219 ff., and notes p. 301 ff.). By referring the reader to these “notes” I can dispense with any lengthy discourse on the history of this chapter within the frame of the Panchatantra. In one form or another it has travelled, together with the rest of the book, from one country to another, always forming an integral portion of it. The curious point about this chapter is, that hitherto no Sanscrit text of it has as yet come to light. The reason assigned for its disappearance has been, that it is of a pronounced Buddhist character and that a humiliating position is given to the Brahmins in this tale. The Brahmins, not being able to modify it by some

slight eliminations, have suppressed it entirely. To Schiefner is due the merit of discovering a Tibetan counterpart of it, thus making the Indian origin and Buddhist character of the tale perfectly clear.

The discovery of this independent Tibetan version is of special value, for apart from the fact that it proves a Buddhist origin, it shows conclusively that this tale circulated also independently of the book. I have often contended in my folkloristic studies, that single tales have been detached from larger collections and have led a distinct and separate life of their own. Some enjoyed greater popularity and spread much farther than the others which remained in the collection and travelled only with it. They developed often in a strange way, being more directly subjected to the operation of popular imagination. They were adapted to suit local or temporal purposes, and were treated similar to the old apocryphal and pseudo-epigraphical writings. They were made to serve dogmatic purposes when this was the requirement of the hour, and had to submit to strange transformations. None, e.g., is more curious than the change which created a "Barlaam and Josaphat" legend. Christian elements were introduced and gave the Buddhist Jataka the character of one of the *Vitae Sanctorum*.

The same has happened to the chapter of the Panchatantra which I intend investigating in connection with the publication of the Rumanian version from an unique, though modern, manuscript. It will become evident that this tale must have been taken up at a very early period, by the same agency which transformed Buddha into Barlaam, and subjected to a similar transformation. For it is now a tale with a distinct eschatological tendency, whose purpose is to be a premonitory warning of the "End of Days." The individual element has disappeared. The dreams seen by the king are no longer portents of coming good or evil as far as he personally is concerned, but warnings to the world on the things that are to be expected on the approaching period of the Last Days before the final Judgment takes place. From the time of the Sibyllinian

Oracles onwards more than one vaticination describing coming events appear in the Byzantine literature. They are mostly of Oriental origin, and are ascribed either to the prophet Daniel or to Bishop Methodius of Patara, to Leon the Philosopher, and to others (v. Krummbacher, "Byzantinische Litteraturgeschichte," 2nd ed., p. 628 f.). These prophecies were introduced into other writings of a similar character, especially into descriptions of dreams. Nothing could serve the purpose of telling the future better than to connect them with dreams, which play so important a rôle in the Bible. The transition was therefore easy from a Buddhist series of dreams, and their personal interpretation, to a Christian similar series of dreams, but with a Christian eschatological interpretation. The framework was retained as the best vehicle for transmission; the miraculous and mysterious is always sure to appeal to the people, only the interpretation had to be changed to make this non-Christian book thoroughly orthodox.

Following the example of Barlaam, we must look out for a Syriac and Greek text of these dreams, but none has yet been discovered. It may be that the attention now directed to this legend will help to stimulate a new search and will bring eventually such texts to light. Hitherto the "Dreams" were known only in Russia. Professor A. N. Vesselofsky, than whom there is no more competent scholar in that direction, has devoted a special study to the "Twelve Dreams of Shahaisha," as they are called in Slavonic ("Slovo o dvênadtzati snahŭ Shahaishi," St. Petersburg, 1879). With his usual thoroughness he not only published a critical edition of a fifteenth-century text, but he goes into minute details concerning the history of this text, and the influence it has exercised upon Russian and mediaeval European literature. He finds traces of these dreams in the cycle of Solomonic legends, in the Quest of the Graal by Chrestien de Troyes, in other romances, and also in popular Russian tales. These dreams exist in Slavonic in at least two redactions, one a more modern and more enlarged in its eschatological element, found among the "Raskolniks,"

the general term used for heretical sects in Russia, and another somewhat shorter and evidently older. In both we find, however, already traces of the Prophecies of Methodius of Patara, one of the old Slavonic apocryphal books, and a remarkable similarity with the Tibetan version, inasmuch as this also partakes of the eschatological character in the interpretation of the dreams. In these Slavono-Russian MSS., of which a fairly good number is known, the name of the king is called, with slight variations, "Shahaisha," and the philosopher who interprets the dreams, "Mamer." Professor Vesselofsky sees in the former the Persian "Shahinsha," "the Emperor," and finds "Mamer" in "Mor-olf," "Memer-olt" of the old German legend of Solomon (pp. 21, 22); and he concludes that the tale, for which no parallels are found in European literature, must have come to Russia straight from Asia, the same way as the tale of the Judge "Shemyakin," whose peculiar cases and judgments sound like riddles. They form part of the Shylock cycle, and have been treated by me in my "Beitraege zur vergleichenden Sagen und Maerchenkunde," 1883, p. 16 ff.

But a Slavonic text of the fifteenth century, though not yet found among the Southern Slavs, is of greater antiquity than anything yet which has been proved to be due in Russian directly to Oriental sources. The stories of Shemyakin are comparatively modern, whilst all the texts of a somewhat religious character rest ultimately on Byzantine originals. Whether these are forthcoming or not is merely a matter of chance. The negative argument that none are known to exist can at any time be upset by the discovery of such a missing text. We have a case in point in the story of Aḥīkar and another in this very tale of the Dreams; for the discovery of a Rumanian text sets all doubts at rest. The old apocryphal Rumanian literature is based almost exclusively on South and Old Slavonic originals, which, as remarked, in their turn point to Greek sources. I had suspected the existence of a Rumanian version from a curt note of the late Canonicus

Cipariu (Gaster, "Liter. pop. romana," p. 58), but short of seeing the MS. in question the surmise, based only on the title, could not be changed into a positive fact. Since the death of the owner the MS. has disappeared; may be it is now the property of the Rumanian Academy of Science and hidden away in their cellars, which have become the catacombs of Rumanian literature. Fortunately I learned from the Rev. Canonicus Voileanu, of Sibiu, in Transylvania, that he possessed a number of MSS. written in the last century by his forefather Voileanu, and with a liberality which it is a privilege to acknowledge here, placed them all at my disposal. Among these I discovered also the text of the twelve dreams, written in the year 1786. As all the MSS. written by Voileanu have proved to be copies of much older texts, I have no hesitancy to recognize in the present text a copy of a much older manuscript. In many places it is evidently corrupt. By comparing it with the old and with the more recent Slavonic, both published by Vesselofsky (loc. cit., pp. 4-13), the absolute similarity cannot be gainsaid. They are clearly derived from one old text common to all, which had its origin among the Slavonians of the South.

The Rumanian text is the shortest of the three, and in many instances more archaic even than the fifteenth-century Slavonic version. Noteworthy among the differences is the name of the king, who is called in Rumanian "Sehachi," without a trace of the other form "Shahaishah," due no doubt to later popular etymology. With the disappearance of this Persian form disappears also one of the most potent arguments of Professor Vesselofsky for the immediate Oriental origin of the Russian versions. I see further in the name "Mamer," the philosopher, a corruption from the Syriac form "Bilar," due by careless writing of the letters *b* and *l* in Syriac, or to the Byzantine transliteration $\mu\pi\iota\lambda\alpha\rho = Mpilar$. A glance at K. Falconer's table (p. 303) will show how profoundly the names have been changed in the various versions of the Panchatantra.

The following is a faithful translation from the unique

MS. of the Rumanian version, to which I have appended a carefully transliterated copy of the MS. written originally by Voileanu, with the old Slavonic letters in use in Rumania up to fifty years ago. The text has become a mystical treatise, and is called :

A teaching concerning the End of Days.

"In a place called Vaihon there ruled a king called Sehachi. He once dreamed in a night twelve dreams, and there was none who could interpret them to him, until at last they found a man, by name Mamer, who was a great scholar and a philosopher. So he went to the king and said : 'My lord Sehachi, these dreams do not portend any evil concerning thee, but God has shown thee what will happen at the end of days. Tell me, then, what hast thou seen in thy first dream.' And the king replied : 'I have seen a golden pillar reaching from earth to heaven.' And Mamer replied : 'When the last days approach much evil will there be in the world. In that time justice will disappear and good thoughts, and no one will utter goodly words, only vile, and the old will become dotards, and all will fall into grave sins and not repent. There will be many famines, and the autumn will last all through the winter, and the winter will be prolonged beyond the middle of the summer; men will sow at all seasons, and one seed-time will miss the other (i.e. none will be at the proper time); they will sow much and reap little. At that time children will not respect their parents, and they will marry near relations (within the forbidden degrees), they will not beware of sin, and harlots will have children, not knowing who their fathers are. At that time kings and princes will act violently towards the poor. Many will forsake their faith and embrace another. The sun will get darkened, and the moon will not shine, the days will be short, and many signs will be seen. Priests will not be distinguishable from laymen, they will tell lies, and truth and justice will perish. This dream is an example for all !'

“The philosopher said : ‘How was the second dream which thou didst dream, O king?’ And the king said : ‘I saw a woman holding in her hand a towel that reached from heaven to earth.’ And the philosopher said : ‘When the last days will be near the people will forsake their true faith and will begin to hold another, and no one will think of worshipping God. They will refuse to have any intercourse with their poor relations, and they will pass their time with strangers.’

“And the philosopher said : ‘How was the third dream which thou didst dream?’ And the king replied : ‘I saw three kettles boiling over a big fire, one filled with fat, the other with water, and the third with oil ; some of the fat was running into the oil and some of the oil into the fat, but none fell into the water, which boiled by itself alone.’ The philosopher replied : ‘At the end of days men will plant villages in places where such villages had never been thought of before, and at one end of the village a rich man will live and at the other another rich man, and all the poor will live in the middle. And the one rich man will invite the other to feast with him, but he will ignore all the poor, even if there be a brother among them. All will be hypocrites, they will neglect their own relations, they will hate their parents and brothers and love only the wife’s family. Women will leave their husbands and will run away with other men. Old women will marry young men and old men will marry young girls, for then shame will have disappeared from among men, and there will not be found a single pure woman.’

“And the philosopher said : ‘How was the fourth dream which thou didst dream?’ And the king replied : ‘I saw an old mare chewing some hay and the foal neighing within its belly.’ The philosopher replied : ‘When the end of days approaches mothers will act immodestly and join their daughters with strangers with whom they will closet them, and they will be shameless.’

“And the philosopher said : ‘How was the fifth dream which thou didst see?’ And the king said : ‘I saw a bitch

lying in a pond and the puppies were barking within her belly.' And the philosopher replied: 'During the last days fathers will teach their sons properly, but the sons will not listen, and will say, "You have grown old and have lost your senses, and you do not know what you are talking about"; and the parents will be put to shame, and will keep silent.'

"And the philosopher said: 'How was the sixth dream?'" And the king replied: 'I saw a large number of priests standing in a mire up to their necks.' The philosopher replied: 'At the time of the end of days the priests will teach the people God's word, but they themselves will not observe it, and will only be gathering riches to themselves, and by this they will bring their souls to the everlasting fire.'

"And the philosopher said: 'How was the seventh dream?'" And the king replied: 'I saw a beautiful horse with two heads, with one in front and the other at the back; with the first it fed upon the grass and with the second it drank water.' And the philosopher replied: 'When the end of days comes near they will deliver wrong judgment, accepting bribery, and the bishops will appoint ignorant priests—a thing which ought not to happen—only because they will be paid for it. There will be many priests, but few good among them; they will have neither fear of God, nor shame of men, and will not think that they will go down to the torment of hell.'

"And the philosopher said: 'How was the eighth dream?'" And the king replied: 'I saw a quantity of pearls strewn upon the face of the earth, and fire fell from heaven and burned everything.' And the philosopher replied: 'At the end of days all will become traders, and the rich will make the poor out to be liars, and will take away by wrong means everything from the poor; by so doing they will lose their souls.'

"And the philosopher said: 'How about the ninth dream?'" And Sehaicha said: 'I saw a large number of people working together in one spot.' And Mamer replied: 'At the end of days men will bring their riches

and put into other people's keeping. They will receive them with love, but when they will be asked to return the riches they will deny it, and say: "We do not know what you ask for, nor that you have left anything with us," even when the people will claim their property under oath. For doing which they will lose their souls.'

"And the philosopher said: 'How about the tenth dream which thou didst see?' And the king replied: 'I saw a large number of men and women standing together upon the earth.' And the philosopher said: 'At the end of days people will practise trickery, and will pride themselves on it; by so doing they will lose their souls.'

"And the philosopher said: 'How about the eleventh dream?' And the king replied: 'I saw men wearing beautiful flowers on their heads.' And the philosopher said: 'At the end of days men will be slanderers and misers and libertines, and no word of truth will be found among them; brother will be cruel to brother, and if a poor man says anything wise they will all laugh at him, but if a rich man says however stupid a thing all will exclaim, "Hark! that great man is speaking," and all will say, "The master speaks well." For this they will go to the torment of hell.'

"And Mamer said: 'How about the twelfth dream which thou didst see?' And he replied: 'I saw a multitude of men with terrible eyes, and with wild (hard) hair, with nails like eagle's claws, and with long legs.' And Mamer said: 'At the end of days the rich will strangle the poor, and the poor will say, "Happy those that have died before us, for they have not fallen upon such evil days."'

"Mamer, the philosopher, made then his obeisance before the king and said: 'I am the servant of you all, and I say again to you, my lord, that there will be great trouble at the end of days.'"

Thus far the Rumanian version. The interpretation, in which the Rumanian agrees in the main with the Slavonic version, does apparently not fit in with the dreams. The

incongruity between the image, as given by the dream, and the interpretation, which ought to show some similarity, can only be explained by the distance of time which separates us from the original form. In the course of transmission the interpretation, no longer corresponding with any actual need or not answering any longer any immediate dogmatic purpose, may have been changed almost beyond recognition. An intimate connection between dream and interpretation must have existed originally. The Tibetan version shows it clearly. In the change from a Buddhist to a Christian tale the eschatological character has been profoundly modified, and we can now only here and there find a trace of this connection. May be the dreams have also been somewhat curtailed, which would increase the difficulty of recognizing the relation between symbol and interpretation. Older Greek and Oriental texts alone will solve satisfactorily this problem.

Invătătura la vrêmê de apoi.

Fost-au într-o cetate ce să kema Vaihon un împărat ce-l kema Sehaci, și au văzut într-o noapte 12 visuri, și nu să afla nime să le dezlêge, dară aflară un om ce-i era numele : Mamer, și era cărturari mare și filosof. Dêcă mersă la împăratul, zisă : dîmne Sehaci ! visele tale nu ți-s de rău, ci dîmnezău au arătat ție ce va să fie la vrêmê de apoi. Ce-m spune visu dintăi cum l-ai văzut ? Zisă împăratul : Văzui un stâlp de aur din pămînt până la ceriu sta. Zisă Mamer : când va veni vrêmê de apoi, mult rău va fi preste toată lumê, și într'acêi vrême va peri dreptatê și gândurile cêle bune, și cuvinte dîmnezăești nime nu va grăi, ce tot drăcești ; și bătrânii vor fi în minte pruncască, și toți oameni vor cădê în păcate grêle și nu să vor pocăi. Și vor fi adêse ori foameți, și va băga toamna în iarna, iară iarna va fi până în miază-vară ; și vor sămăna oameni de toate sămînțălê (!), și sămînță până la sămînță nu va ajunge ; multe vor sămăna oameni dar puțin vor secera. Intr'acêa vrême fecori nu vor cinsti pre părinți săi, și nêam aproape să vor lua, de păcate nu vor gîndi, și curvele vor face prunci, și nu vor ști cine

le easte tată. Intr'acêa vrême dîmni și boeari vor lucra fără-de-lêge cu mișei, și mulți oameni vor lăsa lîgê lor și alta vor apuca a ține. Atuncê soarele să va întuneca, și luna nu'și va da lumina sa, zilele să vor mici, și multe seamne să vor arăta. Iară popii nu să vor cunoaște din oameni cei proști, ce vor fi mincinoși. Dereptatê și adevărul va peri. Acesta-i un vis de pildă la toți.

Iară al doilê vis zisă filosoful, cum l-ai (văzut?) înpărate? Și zisă înpăratul: Văzuiu o mueare țiindu o mănăstergură din ceri până în pămînt spînzurată. Și zisă filosoful: când va veni vrêmê de apoi lîgê dirîptă vor lăsa și alta vor apuca a ține, și toți oameni la slujba lui Dîmnezău nu vor gîndi, și de nîmul său cel mișel să vor lepăda, și cu streini vor petrêce.

Și iară zisă filosoful: al treilê vis cum l-ai văzut? Și zisă înpăratul: Văzuiu 3 căldări ferbând într'o pară de foc, într'una era său, într'alta era apă, într'alta era unt, și sârê din său în unt și din unt în său, iară în apă nu cădê, ce ferbe de sine. Zisă filosoful: când va veni vrêmê de apoi oameni vor face sate pe unde n'au mai fost sate, și într'un cap de sat va fi un bogat, și în cela cap de sat va fi alt bogat, în mijloc vor fi săraci; deci bogatul va chema pre bogat de-l va ospăta, iară pre cei mișei nu vor vedê macar i-ar fi frate. Și toți oameni vor fi fățarnici, nu-și vor căuta de nîmul său, ce-și vor urâ părinți și frați, și-ș vor îndrăgi nîmul mueri-și. Mueri îș vor lăsa bărbați și vor fugi cu alți, și muerilê bătrâne să vor mărita după cei tineri, și oameni bătrâni vor lua fête, că atuncê nu va fi rușine în oameni; și nice o mueare nu va fi bună.

Iară zisă filosoful: al patrulê vis cum l-ai văzut? Zisă înpăratul: văzui o iapă bătrână unde rodê niște fân iară mînzul rînceza dintr'ânsa. Iară zisă filosoful: când va veni vrêmê de apoi își va votri muma la fată să o mărite, și o va închide cu altul în casă și să vor înpresura (!), și de nime nu să vor rușina.

Iară zisă filosoful: al cincilê vis cum l-ai văzut? Zisă înpăratul: văzuiu o cățê într'un lac zăcând iar cățai lătra dintr'ânsa. Iară zisă filosoful: la vrêmê de apoi atuncă va

învăța părintele pre fečor bine; iară fečori nu-i vor asculta, ce vor zice, îmbătrânit-ați și minte v-ați pierdut și nu știți ce grăiți, iară părinții să vor rușina și vor tăce.

Iară zisă filosoful: al 6 vis cum l-ai văzut. Zisă împăratul: văzui preoți mulți într'o tină până în grumazi. Zisă filosoful: la vrêmê de apoi învăța-vor preoți pre oameni în lîgê lui Dm̃nezău, iăra ei cu sine nu o vor ține, ce vor aduna avuții multe, și cu acêea își vor băga sufletelê în focul nestins.

Iară zisă filosoful: al 7 vis cum l-ai văzut? Zisă împăratul: văzui un cal frumos unde avê 2 capete, unul dinaintê, altul dinapoi, cu cel dinainte păștê, iară cu cel dinapoi be apă. Zisă filosoful: când va veni vrêmê de apoi atunci va judeca cu strâmbul pentru plată, și vlădici vor pune popi săi și fără de carte, care nu s-are cădê, numai pentru plata; și mulți popi vor fi, iară puțini buni și drepti. De Dm̃nezău nu le va fi frică, nici de oameni rușine, și nu-și vor aduce aminte că vor mêrge în munca iadului.

Iară zisă: al optulê vis cum l-ai văzut? Zisă împăratul: văzui preste toată lumê mult mărgăritariu vărsat pre pămînt, și căzu foc din ceriu și arsă tot. Și zisă filosoful: la vrêmê de apoi atunci toți oameni vor fi negoțatori, și cei bogați vor face mincinoși pre cei săraci, și vor lua cu strâmbul de la cei mișai, și cu acêea își vor pêrde sufletul.

Iară zisă Mamer: al 9 vis cum l-ai văzut? Zisă Săhaicê: văzui lucrători mulți unde lucra într'un loc. Zisă Mamer: când va veni vrêmê de apoi atunci vor duce oameni avuție la alți să o ție, și când o vor da, o vor primi cu drag, iară când va fi de alurê (*leg.* a o lua) o vor tăgădui și vor zice: nu știm (ce) ceri, și ce mîi dat; și cu jurămînt va să o ea înapoi. Și pentru acêea își vor pêrde sufletele.

Iară zisă filosoful: al 10 vis cum l-ai văzut? Zisă împăratul: văzui mueri multe și bărbați unde sta pre pămînt. Zisă filosoful: la vrêmê de apoi vor unbla oameni tot în vicleșuguri și trufindu-să, și pentru acêea încă își vor perde sufletul.

Iară zisă Mamer: al 11 vis cum l-ai văzut? Zisă împăratul: văzui niște oameni purtând flori în cap foarte

frumoasă. Zisă filosoful : la vrêmê de apoi, fi-vor oameni scunpi și clevetitori și cu(r)vari, și vorbă drêptă nu să (va) afla, și frate cătră frate nemilostiv va fi. Și de va grăi vre un mișăl cuvânt întălept, toți îl vor râde ; iară de va grăi vre un bogat v'un (cuvânt) și cam prost, toți vor zice : ascultați, ca grăește cel boeari ; și toți vor zice : bine grăește dñnul. Și pentru acêea vor mêrge în munca iadului.

Zisă Mamer : al 12 vis cum l-ai văzut ? Văzuiu mulți oameni cu ochi grozavi, și aspri la păr, și cu unghi de vultur, și cu picioare lungi. Iară zisă Mamer : când va fi vrêmê de apoi, bogați vor sugușa pre cei săraci, și vor zice săraci : ferice de cei ce muriră înaintê noastră de nu ajunsă (!) acêste zile rêle.

După acêea să închină Mamer filosoful înaintê împăratului și zisă : a tuturor sânt slugă acestora, ce spun mării tale, însă mult rău va fi atuncê în zilele cêlê de apoi.