

Sociology

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Zoroastrianism

February 1st, 2023

Note: The concepts being presented are provided in-contrast with our mother-religion **Islam**.

Concept of God

Zoroastrianism is an ancient religion that was founded by the prophet Zoroaster in ancient Persia. It recognizes one God known as Ahura Mazda who is considered to be the creator of the world and everything in it. Ahura Mazda is an all-knowing, all-powerful and just deity who is benevolent and kind. He is seen as the source of all good things and the enemy of evil. The central tenet of Zoroastrianism is the dualism of good and evil, with Ahura Mazda as the source of all good and Angra Mainyu as the source of all evil.

In Islam, the concept of God is similar in that there is only one God recognized as Allah, who is considered to be the all-powerful, all-knowing and just deity who created the world and everything in it. However, there are some key differences between the two concepts. In Islam, Allah is considered to be above all things, transcendent and unique, and is not limited by time, space or any other human concept. Unlike Ahura Mazda, Allah is not seen as a dualistic force in the world but rather as the ultimate source of all good and evil. Muslims also reject the idea of a personal devil or evil deity and believe that evil is a result of human actions and decisions.

Rituals

1. **Yasna:** Yasna is a ritual in which prayers and offerings are made to the divine beings. It typically involves the recitation of hymns and the use of sacred objects such as fire, incense, and haoma (a ritual drink).

2. **Atash Behram:** Atash Behram is a ritual in which a sacred fire is consecrated and installed in a fire temple. The fire is considered to be a symbol of Ahura Mazda and is used in many other rituals.
3. **Navjote:** Navjote is a coming-of-age ceremony in which a child is initiated into the Zoroastrian faith. It typically involves the recitation of prayers and the donning of the sacred shirt and cord (sudra).
4. **Farvardin Yasht:** Farvardin Yasht is a ritual in which offerings are made to the divine beings for the protection of the community. It typically involves the recitation of hymns and the use of sacred objects such as fire, incense, and haoma.
5. **Frashokereti:** Frashokereti is a ritual that marks the end of the world and the arrival of the next one. It is believed to be a time of renewal and is symbolized by the cleansing of the world with fire.
6. **Vendidad:** Vendidad is a collection of texts that are recited during purification rituals. It lays out the laws and customs of the Zoroastrian faith, and is used to promote good thoughts, words, and deeds.
7. **Dron:** Dron is a ritual in which offerings are made to the divine beings for the protection of livestock and crops. It typically involves the recitation of prayers and hymns, and the use of sacred objects such as fire, incense, and haoma.
8. **Baj:** Baj is a ritual in which offerings are made to the divine beings for the protection of travelers. It typically involves the recitation of prayers and hymns, and the use of sacred objects such as fire, incense, and haoma.
9. **Bareshnum:** Bareshnum is a purification ritual in which a person is cleansed of physical and spiritual impurities. It typically involves the recitation of prayers and the use of sacred objects such as fire, water, and holy basil.

Relationship with God

In Zoroastrianism, the relationship between people and God is one of partnership, in which people are seen as co-creators with Ahura Mazda in maintaining truth, justice, and order in the

world. People are expected to live their lives according to the principles of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, and to participate in rituals and ceremonies that help to connect them with the divine.

In Islam, the relationship between people and God is one of submission and obedience. Muslims are expected to surrender their will to Allah and to live their lives according to his commandments as revealed in the Qur'an. The goal of the Muslim life is to achieve closeness to Allah and to attain his favor in the afterlife.

In both Zoroastrianism and Islam, people are seen as accountable for their actions, and are believed to be judged by the divine after death. However, in Zoroastrianism, the emphasis is on personal responsibility and the importance of individual choice, while in Islam, the emphasis is on the submission of the individual will to the will of Allah.

Overall, while both religions emphasize the importance of the relationship between people and the divine, they differ in their understanding of the nature of that relationship and the role of the individual in it.

Purpose of Existence

In Zoroastrianism, the belief of the purpose of existence is to support the cosmic struggle between good and evil. People are expected to use their free will to choose to live a life aligned with truth, justice, and order, and to assist in the ultimate triumph of good over evil. This can be achieved through leading a life of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, participating in rituals and ceremonies, and helping others to do the same.

In Islam, the purpose of existence is to worship and serve Allah. Muslims believe that everything in the world has been created by Allah, and that the ultimate goal of human life is to attain closeness to Allah and to attain his favor in the afterlife. This can be achieved by following the commandments of Allah as revealed in the Qur'an, and by living a life of righteousness and obedience.

In both Zoroastrianism and Islam, the ultimate purpose of existence is tied to the idea of life after death and the belief in judgment by the divine. However, in Zoroastrianism the emphasis is

on the cosmic struggle between good and evil, while in Islam the emphasis is on the worship and service of Allah.

Concept of Life-Hereafter

In Zoroastrianism, the belief of the life hereafter is that the soul of the deceased will undergo a judgment to determine its ultimate fate. The soul will be weighed against a feather, symbolizing the good deeds done in life, and if found worthy, will go to a place of joy and light called "Fravashi" or "Chinvat Bridge". If the soul is found unworthy, it will be consigned to a place of darkness and suffering called "Duzakh". The soul may also be reborn in a new body, either on earth or in the spiritual realm, to continue its journey towards enlightenment.

In Islam, the belief of the life hereafter is that after death, the soul will be immediately judged by Allah. The righteous will go to paradise, a place of joy, beauty, and reward, while the wicked will go to hell, a place of punishment and suffering. The ultimate goal of the Muslim life is to attain closeness to Allah and to attain his favor in the afterlife.

In both Zoroastrianism and Islam, the belief in the life hereafter is tied to the idea of judgment by the divine based on one's actions in this life. However, in Zoroastrianism, the idea of reincarnation and the possibility of progress towards enlightenment in subsequent lives is central to the belief, while in Islam there is no belief in reincarnation. Instead, the focus is on the attainment of paradise or the avoidance of hell in the afterlife.