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**Zoroastrianism**,[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) or more natively **Mazdayasna**,[[1]](#cite_note-1) While Ahura Mazda created the universe and humankind, Angra Mainyu, whose instinct is to destroy, miscreated demons, evil *yazads*, and noxious creatures (*khrafstar*) such as snakes, ants, and flies. Angra Mainyu created an opposite, evil being for each good being, except for humans, which he found he could not match. Angra Mainyu invaded the universe through the base of the sky, inflicting [Gayomard](/wiki/Keyumars) and the bull with suffering and death. However, the evil forces were trapped in the universe and could not retreat. The dying primordial man and bull emitted seeds. From the bull's seed grew all beneficial plants and animals of the world, and from the man's seed grew a plant whose leaves became the first human couple. Humans thus struggle in a two-fold universe trapped with evil. The evils of this physical world are not products of an inherent weakness, but are the fault of Angra Mainyu's assault on creation. This assault turned the perfectly flat, peaceful, and ever day-lit world into a mountainous, violent place that is half night.<ref name=Cavendish/>

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### Renovation and judgment[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Zoroastrianism also includes beliefs about the [renovation of the world](/wiki/Eschatology) and individual judgment (cf. [general](/wiki/General_judgment) and [particular judgment](/wiki/Particular_judgment)), including the [resurrection of the dead](/wiki/Resurrection_of_the_dead).

Individual judgment at death is by the [Bridge of Judgment](/wiki/Chinvat_Bridge), which each human must cross, facing a spiritual judgment. Humans' actions under their free will determine the outcome. One is either greeted at the bridge by a beautiful, sweet-smelling maiden or by an ugly, foul-smelling old woman. The maiden leads the dead safely across the bridge to the [Amesha Spenta](/wiki/Amesha_Spenta) Good Mind, who carries the dead to paradise. The old woman leads the dead down a bridge that narrows until the departed falls off into the abyss of hell.<ref name=Cavendish/>

Zoroastrian hell is reformative; punishments fit the crimes, and souls do not rest in eternal damnation. Hell contains foul smells and evil food, and souls are packed tightly together although they believe they are in total isolation.<ref name=Cavendish/>

In [Zoroastrian eschatology](/wiki/Frashokereti), a 3,000-year struggle between good and evil will be fought, punctuated by evil's final assault. During the final assault, the sun and moon will darken and humankind will lose its reverence for religion, family, and elders. The world will fall into winter, and Angra Mainyu's most fearsome miscreant, [Azi Dahaka](/wiki/Azi_Dahaka), will break free and terrorize the world.<ref name=Cavendish/>

The final savior of the world, [Saoshyant](/wiki/Saoshyant), will be born to a virgin impregnated by the seed of Zoroaster while bathing in a lake. Saoshyant will raise the dead – including those in both heaven and hell – for final judgment, returning the wicked to hell to be purged of bodily sin. Next, all will wade through a river of molten metal in which the righteous will not burn. Heavenly forces will ultimately triumph over evil, rendering it forever impotent. Saoshyant and Ahura Mazda will offer a bull as a final sacrifice for all time, and all humans will become immortal. Mountains will again flatten and valleys will rise; heaven will descend to the moon, and the earth will rise to meet them both.<ref name=Cavendish/>

Humanity requires two judgments because there are as many aspects to our being: spiritual (*menog*) and physical (*getig*).<ref name=Cavendish/>

### Head covering[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

The Zarathushtri also practice traditional head covering ritual similar to that of Judaism. It is vital to the practice, and according to Hoshang Bhadha,[Template:Year needed](/wiki/Template:Year_needed)[Template:Unreliable source?](/wiki/Template:Unreliable_source?) [Template:Quotation](/wiki/Template:Quotation)

## Demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

[thumb|right|The Zoroastrian](/wiki/File:Ateshkadeh_yazd.jpg) [Atash Behram](/wiki/Fire_temple#Atash_Behram) of [Yazd](/wiki/Yazd), [Iran](/wiki/Iran). [Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further) Zoroastrian communities comprise two main groups of people: those of [South Asian](/wiki/South_Asian) Zoroastrian background known as [Parsis](/wiki/Parsi_people) (or Parsees), and those of Central Asian background. According to a survey in 2004 by the Zoroastrian Associations of North America, the number of Zoroastrians worldwide was estimated at between 124,000 and 190,000. The number is imprecise because of wildly diverging counts in Iran.<ref name=nyt>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> India's 2001 Census found 69,601 Parsi Zoroastrians.

Small Zoroastrian communities may be found all over the world, with a continuing concentration in Western India, Central Iran, and Southern Pakistan. Zoroastrians of the [diaspora](/wiki/Diaspora) are primarily located in [Great Britain](/wiki/Great_Britain) and the former British colonies, particularly [Canada](/wiki/Canada) and [Australia](/wiki/Australia), as well as in the [American](/wiki/United_States_of_America) state of [California](/wiki/California) where they form part of the [Iranian American](/wiki/Iranian_American) community there.

### In South Asia[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|right|upright|](/wiki/File:Parsi-navjote-sitting.jpg)[Parsi](/wiki/Parsi_people) [*Navjote*](/wiki/Navjote) ceremony (rites of admission into the Zoroastrian faith) India is considered to be home to the largest Zoroastrian population in the world. When the Islamic armies, under the first Caliphs, invaded Persia, those locals who were unwilling to convert to Islam sought refuge, first in the mountains of Northern Iran, then the regions of Yazd and its surrounding villages. Later, in the ninth century CE, a group sought refuge in the western coastal region of India, and also scattered to other regions of the world. Following the fall of the [Sassanid Empire](/wiki/Sassanid_Empire) in 651 CE, many Zoroastrians migrated. Among them were several groups who ventured to [Gujarat](/wiki/Gujarat) on the western shores of the [Indian subcontinent](/wiki/Indian_subcontinent), where they finally settled. The descendants of those refugees are today known as the Parsis. The year of arrival on the subcontinent cannot be precisely established, and Parsi legend and tradition assigns various dates to the event.

In the Indian census of 2001, the Parsis numbered 69,601, representing about 0.006% of the total population of India, with a concentration in and around the city of [Mumbai](/wiki/Mumbai). Due to a low birth rate and high rate of [emigration](/wiki/Emigration), demographic trends project that by 2020 the Parsis will number only about 23,000 or 0.002% of the total population of India. The Parsis would then cease to be called a community and will be labeled a "tribe". By 2008, the birth-to-death ratio was 1:5; 200 births per year to 1,000 deaths.[[67]](#cite_note-67)In [Pakistan](/wiki/Pakistan), they number fewer than 1,700, mostly living in [Karachi](/wiki/Karachi).[[68]](#cite_note-68)

### Iran, Iraq and Central Asia[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Iran's figures of Zoroastrians have ranged widely; the last census (1974) before the [revolution of 1979](/wiki/Iranian_Revolution) revealed 21,400 Zoroastrians.<ref name=hins>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Some 10,000 adherents remain in the [Central Asian](/wiki/Central_Asia) regions that were once considered the traditional stronghold of Zoroastrianism, i.e., [Bactria](/wiki/Bactria) (see also [Balkh](/wiki/Balkh)), which is in Northern Afghanistan; [Sogdiana](/wiki/Sogdiana); [Margiana](/wiki/Margiana); and other areas close to [Zoroaster's homeland](/wiki/Zoroaster#Place). In Iran, emigration, out-marriage and low birth rates are likewise leading to a decline in the Zoroastrian population. Zoroastrian groups in Iran say their number is approximately 60,000.[[69]](#cite_note-69) According to the Iranian census data from 2011 the number of Zoroastrians in Iran was 25,271.[[70]](#cite_note-70) Communities exist in [Tehran](/wiki/Tehran), as well as in [Yazd](/wiki/Yazd), [Kerman](/wiki/Kerman) and [Kermanshah](/wiki/Kermanshah), where many still speak an Iranian language distinct from the usual [Persian](/wiki/Persian_language). They call their language [Dari](/wiki/Dari_(Zoroastrian)) (not to be confused with the [Dari of Afghanistan](/wiki/Dari_(Persian))). Their language is also called *Gavri* or *Behdini*, literally "of the Good Religion". Sometimes their language is named for the cities in which it is spoken, such as *Yazdi* or *Kermani*. Iranian Zoroastrians were historically called [*Gabr*s](/wiki/Gabr), originally without a pejorative connotation but in the present-day derogatorily applied to all non-Muslims.

More recently the Zoroastrian faith has gained strength among the [Kurds](/wiki/Kurds) in Iraq, claiming up to 100,000 adherents as of 2015.[[71]](#cite_note-71) Zoroastrians currently seek official status for their religion in [Iraqi Kurdistan](/wiki/Iraqi_Kurdistan).[[72]](#cite_note-72)

### Western world[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

[North America](/wiki/North_America) is thought to be home to 18,000–25,000 Zoroastrians of both [South Asian](/wiki/South_Asian) and [Iranian](/wiki/Iran) background. A further 3,500 live in [Australia](/wiki/Australia) (mainly in [Sydney](/wiki/Sydney)). In recent years, the United States has become a significant destination of Zoroastrian populations, holding the second largest population of Zoroastrians after India.

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

[Template:Portal](/wiki/Template:Portal)

* [Dualistic cosmology](/wiki/Dualistic_cosmology)
* [Iranian religions](/wiki/Iranian_religions)
* [Proto-Indo-European religion](/wiki/Proto-Indo-European_religion)

## Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

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* [Template:Citation](/wiki/Template:Citation) (note to catalogue searchers: the spine of this edition misprints the title "Zoroastrians" as "Zoroastians", and this may lead to catalogue errors)
* [Template:Citation](/wiki/Template:Citation)
* [Template:Citation](/wiki/Template:Citation)
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* [Saga of the Aryans](/wiki/Saga_of_the_Aryans), Historical novel on ancient Iranian migrations by Porus Homi Havewala, Published Mumbai, India (2005, 2010).

## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

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* [Template:Dmoz](/wiki/Template:Dmoz)
* [zoroastrian.org](http://www.zoroastrian.org)
  + [Good and Evil](http://www.zoroastrian.org/articles/Good%20and%20Evil%20in%20the%20Gathas.htm)
  + [God in the Gathas](http://www.zoroastrian.org/articles/God%20in%20the%20Gathas.htm)
* [Zoroastrianism: History, Beliefs, and Practices](http://www.theosophical.org/publications/1231)

[Template:Religion topics](/wiki/Template:Religion_topics)

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[Category:Zoroastrianism](/wiki/Category:Zoroastrianism) [Category:Iranian religions](/wiki/Category:Iranian_religions) [Category:Monotheistic religions](/wiki/Category:Monotheistic_religions) [Category:Religion in Asia](/wiki/Category:Religion_in_Asia) [Category:Religion in Iran](/wiki/Category:Religion_in_Iran)