



## Zoroastrianism:

# It was formed in the culture of the Persians and is still strongly present among them

Zoroaster is described in history books as a Persian clergyman and the original founder of Zoroastrianism, which spread in ancient Persia and survived until the first Islamic century, as it disappeared and vanished after Islam entered Persia. However, its influences and philosophy continued to occupy a large part of the culture of Persian society and affected their religious perceptions, especially on those who live in Iran and its surroundings, as Iran is the cradle of the ancient Zoroastrianism.

Zoroaster lived in areas between Azerbaijan, Kurdistan and present-day Iran, and his teachings and religion remained dominant over large areas in Persia and its space in Central Asia and its historical center of influence.

Understanding the origin of the founder of Zoroastrianism before its expansion and understanding his mentality also requires understanding its effects on Persia and other affected peoples, as it extended and became active in the history of the Persians until the Muslims' victory over them in the Battle of Qadisiyah in (15 AH) (636 AD). With that victory, the legend of the ancient Persian Empire ended forever.

Despite the end of the Persian Empire, their teachings and culture remained in control of the mentality of many of them, especially Zoroastrianism, which symbolizes purity and serenity in the modern Iranian language. The word Zarathustra is made up of two words: (Zarath, ustra) meaning gold and beauty. That is why orientalist translated it as "the owner of the golden beauty". Others interpreted it as meaning light and luminosity, and accordingly the full name was translated as "The one with golden light and luminosity" or (the divine aura).

As for Zoroaster, he is the son of Yorshab from Septyama tribe in Azerbaijan, and his mother is Persian from present-day Iran. He was born in the sixth century BC, and the sources were unable to determine the exact date of his birth, but it is certain that he was born at the time of the spread of barbaric tribes in Iran. This was the time when idolatry spread and witches and charlatans dominated the minds of the simple people. Although Azerbaijan is the birthplace of Zoroaster, he moved to several regions and met some Israelites during his research trip. He got to know their religion and then returned to Azerbaijan, but he did not feel comfortable with Judaism.

The character of Zoroaster was not devoid of legends that gave him a lot of sanctity among his followers who attributed to him the book (Amenista) and its commentary (Zindavista). In the Amnesia, Zoroaster included his philosophy in his divisions of soul, body, and existence, and that the world rests on light and darkness, or good and evil. This is on the grounds that the world is based on the permanent conflict between two opposing powers, the good represented by the god of light (Ahuramazda) and the evil represented by the god of darkness (Ahriman). At the end of time, this struggle between light and darkness ends with the victory of the god of light. Therefore, Zoroastrianism is sometimes called Mazdaism. Muslims called it Magianism, which is the name of the religion of the worshipers of fire, and it is one of the religious rituals that was used by Zoroaster in worship.

Persian historical accounts describe Zoroaster as a brilliant and wise physician and philosopher who tried to access the secret of the universe through mental contemplation. Because his society was pagan and steeped in idolatry and witchcraft, he was persecuted at the outset of his call. The accounts say that his luck changed when the king's horse fell ill, as Zoroaster was summoned to treat him, and after his success, the king rewarded him by spreading his religion. When a statesman married his daughter, he rewarded him by imposing his religion on the neighboring peoples.

Osama Adnan, author of the book (Zoroastrianism: Notes and Opinions), says: "Zoroaster divided the gods that he and his followers worshiped into three gods in various ranks, the highest among them was Ahuramazda, and the middle was Amesha spanda, and the third and least among them were a group of gods that he called the Yazidis. Zoroaster called his followers to pray to the various gods, but he also ordered them to make offerings to them of money, animals, and blood, and considered this an important part of proving slavery. This is very similar to offering sacrifices to saints and righteous people in some of the present-day Persia".

There is an important question about the mixing of (Iranian Islam) with Zoroastrianism and the creation of new concepts in which the values of Islam were mixed with some Zoroastrian customs. It is true that Iranian Islam is dominant today among most of the Persian population, but many of the rituals that have been mixed with it are basically ancient Zoroastrian teachings or philosophy that have been mixed with Islam and have become as if they are Islamic rituals, and pure Islam is completely innocent of them.

“The ancient Zoroastrian teachings were mixed with Persian Islam and imposed their thought, rituals and teachings on it until today”

In addition, the Lebanese researcher Jad Mhaidli says in his post: "There are two main groups of Zoroastrians, the Iranians and the Parsis. The Iranian Zoroastrians are those who remained in Iran following the Arab conquest that eventually made Islam the majority religion in the country. Although they preserved their religion for many centuries, only tens of thousands of them remain, and their religion is recognized by the current Iranian state, and they are represented by a Zoroastrian parliamentarian, especially after the Iranian revolution in 1979, which paved the way for the establishment of the current Islamic Republic. Therefore, there was a high wave of interest in ancient Persian history, and in Zoroastrianism in particular". The researcher points out that Zoroastrianism is witnessing a revival among many Iranians who wish to express dissatisfaction with the current teachings in Iran. As for the Parsis, they migrated from Persia to India after the Islamic conquest and settled in there, where they could practice their rituals.

Since the Sassanid state adopted Zoroastrianism as its official religion before the Islamic conquest, its owners believed in the existence of two gods, one of them: (Ahuramazda), a god of good, and the other: (Ahriman), a god of evil, based on the philosopher Zoroaster's division of the world into light and darkness. He called his followers to worship everything related to the light and the matter developed until the Persians eventually worshiped the fire.

Therefore, their religion became based on the worship of fire and the division of the world into one world of darkness and another of light. Zoroaster also claimed that the light of God is in everything that shines and blazes in the universe, and he commanded to turn to the direction of the sun and fire at the time of their worship because the light in his claim is a symbol of God. He commanded that the four elements should not be desecrated: fire, air, soil and water. After that, other people came and enacted various laws for the Zoroastrians, forbidding them to engage in things that require fire, so they limited their work to agriculture and trade. Starting from this glorification of fire and turning towards it in worship, people gradually began to worship it. The matter reached the point that they were clearly worshipping it in public and building temples for it, and every belief and religion other than the worship of fire became extinct.

Zoroastrianism reached a level of moral decadence that no other religion on earth had ever reached. Researcher Mustafa Al-Ansari says: "Since the fire did not reveal a law to those who worshiped it, did not send a messenger, did not interfere in their lives, and did not punish sinners and criminals, the religion of the Zoroastrians became a form of rituals and traditions that they performed in special places and at specific hours. As for outside the temples, or in their homes and the circles of their rule, they used to do what they liked or what served their interests. When everything became permissible for anyone, the foundation of morals became shaken. The relative taboos forbidden by the temperate natures of the people of the provinces became a matter of dispute".

in "The Story of Civilization", Will Durant talks about the Persians saying that the brother was marrying his sister, the father was marrying his daughter and the mother was marrying her son. The matter reached the point that the Persian King Yazdegerd II, who ruled in the late fifth century AD, married his daughter and then killed her, and King Bahram Jobin was married to his sister in the sixth century.

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