

Zoroastrianism

Zoroastrianism is one of the primitive religions of the world, perhaps 2,500 to 3,000 years old. It has very few followers now. It is the religion of ancient Persia and Parsees all over the world even now practise this religion. Prophet Zarasthustra (Zoroaster in latin version) is called as the founder of this religion. Zendavesta or simply Avesta is its basic sacred text. This text is as oldest as Veda said by some scholars.

Basic features of Zoroastrianism as a religion

As a primitive religion like Hinduism the Zoroastrianism has some basic features.

- Zoroastrianism is a monotheistic religion having a kind of internal dualism.
- Ahura Mazda is the one supreme God and he is omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipervaded and omnibenevolent. He is also the creator, protector and ruler of the world.
- God is too subtle to be conceived and understood by ordinary people. However, he reveals himself to human beings in intervals through his archangels.
- The world is presented as a battlefield of two opposite

forces the force of goodness as represented by Spenta Mainya and the force of badness or evilness as represented by Angra Mainya or evil spirit, which is also called Ahriman. This battle will go on until the evil force vanishes away and goodness prevails over that of evil.

- Man has been granted the free-will to exercise by himself, but it depends upon him to utilise it either in good side or bad side of a thing and to support goodness over badness. To judge whether it is good or bad is not possible always for man, so it is better advised to choose the path of righteousness directed by Ahura Mazda in the Zendavesta.

- This ideology believes the life after death. The well-accomplisher will reside on heaven and the evil-doer will go to hell after death.

- Nevertheless damnation to hell is not forever and zoroastrianism promises a happy and good life ultimately to all which can be achieved by man through his deeds.

- The angels are there around the God to carry his commandments out on earth.

- Ahriman, the satanic force surrounded by evil spirits who spreads all type of evilness in the world.

- Giving not so importance to ceremonial rituals and customs it relies more on ethical purity, dedication, good thought, good word and good deed etc.

- Although the prayer is regarded as a way to God, but more emphasis is given to the cultivation of moral virtues.

- The fire is honoured as very sacred symbol of divine purity.