



## Zoroastrian Statement on the Environment

*This statement was prepared by the Athravan Education Trust and Zoroastrian Studies, the two main institutions of the Zoroastrian faith for theological developments and study.*

“Whoever teaches care for all these seven creations, does well and pleases the Bounteous Immortals; then his soul will never arrive at kinship with the Hostile Spirit. When he has cared for the creations, the care of these Bounteous Immortals is for him, and he must teach this to all mankind in the material world.”  
Shayasht ne Shayast (15:6)

“The most important Zoroastrian ceremony is the Yasna ceremony, a moment of cosmic harmony.”

These actions, according to Zoroastrianism, will lead toward “making the world wonderful,” when the world will be restored to a perfect state. In this state the material world will never grow old, never die, never decay, will be ever living and ever increasing and master of its wish. The dead will rise, life and immortality will come, and the world will be restored to a perfect state in accordance with the Will of Ahura Mazda (Lord of Wisdom).]

### The Seven Bounteous Creations

The role of mankind in the world is to serve and honor not just the Wise Lord but the Seven Bounteous Creations of the sky, water, earth, plants, animals, man, and fire—gifts of God on High to mankind on earth.

The great strength of the Zoroastrian faith is that it enjoins the caring of the physical world not merely to seek spiritual salvation, but because human beings, as the purposeful creation of God, are seen as the natural motivators or overseers of the Seven Creations. As the only conscious creation, mankind has the ultimate task of caring for the universe.

The faith endorses the caring of Seven Creations, as part of a symbiotic relationship. Zoroastrianism sees the physical world as a natural matrix of Seven Creations in which life and growth are interdependent if harmony and perfection is to be the final goal.

The Zoroastrian texts recount the destruction of the sky is restored, waters are purified, and the primordial chaos is transformed toward a new order. The forces of nature are restored to harmony.

This goal is to be achieved by recreating the primeval unity of a perfect world, unpolluted and unsullied Ahura Mazda, the Wise Lord.

## An Ethical and Righteous Path

In helping to bring about a state of perfection in this world and in the Seven Creations, Zarathushtra an ethical and righteous path.

This is to be accomplished by integrating in one's life the divine attributes imbued by Ahura Mazda in For Zoroastrians, it is essential to recognize the essence of wisdom (spirit of man) and through it assi (the good mind symbolically represented by the cow and in turn the animal kingdom) in order to prom righteousness (the personification of truth as fire). This in turn will help one to exercise proper soverei sky) over life, the world, and the universe.

The proper exercise of sovereignty (best power) will create a just order, which in turn will result in exte earth) to the Seven Creations, creating perfection (of the blessed waters) and making the world wond plants) for all times to come.

This is only possible if one shows responsibility toward the Wise Lord's creations. Those who perpetr defilement of all that is natural and good in the world are antithetical to the creations and to the Wise I world is made for the benefit of all who exist and live in the world. They must keep the Wise Lord's wc to the fullest and participating in the goodness of the Seven Creations.

## A Fundamental Dualism

Zarathushtra also recognized the existence of a fundamental dualism operating in the relative world, a cosmic struggle. The Bounteous Spirit, Spenta Mainyu, guardian of the sky, upheld the foremost seen as the life-giving force, bringing light and righteousness into the world. In antagonism to the Bc existence in the relative world of the agency of excess and deficiency, a malevolent, hostile Evil Spirit negating force, bringing disorder and death, for its innate nature is to seek to destroy the Good C world is seen to be in eternal conflict that will eventually resolve in the triumph of Good over Evil at fulfilment of a firm promise made by Ahura Mazda.

Mankind is commanded to play an active role in this struggle, to assist Ahura Mazda in annihilating ev eventual triumph of Good is achieved through the constant use of the ethical principle of good though deeds, the baseline from which all actions of a Zoroastrian must spring.

## Cumulative Actions

A further injunction imposes an even greater responsibility: the cumulative righteous actions of a strengthen the power of Ahura Mazda and diminish the power of the Evil Spirit, Ahriman. This implementation of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds is necessary in the present world to strengthening of Ahura Mazda is required in order to make God truly omnipotent at the end of li vanquished forever.

## Ritual Practice

The Zoroastrian devotion to the creations is not only brought to the fore in the form of litanies of praise but is inextricably woven into the ritual practice of the faith.

The most frequently performed Zoroastrian ritual is the jashan ceremony, which is a thanksgiving ceremony at the moment of creation, when all was harmony. It is interesting to note that in the elaborate layout of the ritual which the ceremony is performed is seen as representing the sacred earth, and the other six creation animals, man, and fire are symbolically represented on it. The ceremony propitiates the Seven Creations, making the faithful conscious of the responsibilities toward reestablishing the pristine order of the universe as created by Ahura Mazda.

The Zoroastrian concern for regarding the earth as sacred extends beyond life into the practices relating to death. In Zoroastrian tradition, death is not seen as the work of God but as the temporary triumph of the Evil Spirit. An eschatological understanding has given rise to a unique system. The method used for disposal of the dead is based on the religious view. The corpse, seen as being afflicted by Evil and therefore polluted, is neither interred nor buried but is exposed to the elements and birds of prey in a roofless stone tower. Thus, there is little despoiling of the earth.

## The Prophet Zarathustra

The Zoroastrian Prophet Spitaman Zarathushtra (Greek Zoroaster) lived and preached in the great Iran, near the Aral Sea. The Prophet in his divinely inspired hymns, the Gathas, spoke of a perfect world created by Ahura Mazda, God, whom he recognized as Ahura Mazda, the Lord of Wisdom. He perceived Ahura Mazda in his own image: Wholly Wise, Good, and Just. Zarathushtra saw God to be perfect and ethically excellent.

In Zoroastrianism, Ahura Mazda is seen as the first cause of all things Good in the universe. The universe is created with the concept of Asha, an ordered Truth, governed by Righteousness. In the Gathas, Zarathushtra sees Ahura Mazda as the Father of Asha, who has established the course of the sun, moon, and stars in the heavens. It is He who sustains the waters, the plants, the winds, and the clouds. He is the Creator of Righteousness. Aiding Ahura Mazda in ensuring the welfare of the universe is the guardian spirit of the Fravashis that Ahura Mazda is said to have set in order the physical world, and the world is kept in motion.

As part of the message of revelation, Zarathushtra defines in the Gathas the best existence for all mankind. Righteousness, through righteousness, holds in his spirit the force which heals existence and is beneficent unto all (Y.44.2).

Moreover, there is assurance that fury will be suppressed, violence put down and that righteousness will triumph over the Evil Spirit (Y.48.7). His followers are promised that a future Savior will be sent to redeem the world. Ahura Mazda's world was created with an ordered moral purpose of ultimately engineering the defeat of the Evil Spirit's functions to ensure the best existence by removing all that is evil.

## The Story of Creation

The Zoroastrian Story of Creation recounts the malicious assaults of destruction by the Hostile Spirit apart; the waters and earth are despoiled; the primordial plant withers; the good cow along with m vices of all kinds; and into fire, the seventh creation, is mingled darkness and smoke.

The primeval despoiling of the world created with a good purpose mirrors society's role today, and this seeks to reverse. The religion uniquely attributes all that brings misery, hatred, vice, and pollution not Divine Being but to the unthinking attack of a malicious and hostile spirit whose innate nature is to de mankind must strive toward a perfect world by combating the forces of Evil through a process of resto

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