

ZARVAN

THE CREATOR OF GOD

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GOD CREATED MAN IN HIS OWN IMAGE
MAN BEING A GENTLEMAN RECIPROCATED

SHORT HISTORY OF GOD

Humans have always looked at the mysteries of the universe and wondered about its origin, and visualized its creator. In our short documented history we can see that God has taken various forms. In the ancient days when communication and travel were limited each civilization had its own set of gods. They fought their neighbours for having a different God, they even sacrificed their own child to the God in order to earn respect and favour with that God. While people lived in thatched houses and in poverty, all the national resources were put towards building huge temples to house the gods and these temples have outlasted those civilizations. They sacrificed their best food to the Gods while they themselves slept hungry. *(We humans of the modern era cannot distance ourselves from such guilt for it happens even today. While the Muslims in Bangladesh and Africa die of hunger each year mountains of sheep, goats, cows and camels are sacrificed during the Hajj in Mecca and left to rot.)*

The Egyptians had their unique system of beliefs and gods, for them death and after life was more important than life. The Sumerians, Elamians and Babylonians each had a different set of gods; they would fight each other in the name of their gods and the gods of the defeated nation would lose its Godliness. The victor would take the various attributes of the defeated God and give it to its own God. The Babylonian God Marduk had 51 such attributes when Cyrus the Great of Persia conquered Babylonia, and for the first time in history a victor did not destroy the temples and the gods but instead restored it to its glory and paid homage to it. He did that for the Jews too who had a different God

from that of the Babylonians. Cyrus was a true follower of the philosophy and teachings of Zarathushtra, which was based on truth and reality.

Zarathushtra who lived around 1750 BCE is unanimously attributed with the title of the creator of Monotheism. He called his God "THE CREATOR OF WISDOM" Ahura Mazda. His God did not create the world in seven days but rather created the "WISDOM IN CREATION" Mazda-Ahura. The universe is formed according to this Wisdom in Creation (the truth in nature) by way of evolution. Today we know that it takes billions of years for a galaxy to form.

The God of Zarathushtra is unique and as such the most misunderstood God even among his present day followers. According to the Gathas of Zarathushtra this God "Ahura Mazda" is not to be blamed for the things that happens to us humans. He says it is ASHA (the Laws of Nature) that is at work and it can hurt us if we do not use our mind to be out of its path and protect ourselves against it.

These, you, not Ahura Mazda
Asha(em) also brings fury

And that Mind is the best
Which strives' to give good guidance
For you to be worthy
Mighty, satisfied, also worthy of praise
Zarathushtra - Gatha - Yasna HA 28.9 (FR)

And how true, earthquake is an good example of the fury in nature, it is the course that nature takes and can hurt humans very badly, but today the people in Japan have learned to live with it. They have rules and guidance's, which have been formed with the help of the GOOD MIND and by understanding nature, where these rules are followed there is minimum damage to life and property when there is an earthquake. The people of Japan have knowingly or unknowingly followed the ancient teachings of Zarathushtra.

Under the God of Zarathushtra, man is master of his fate. We see the effects of this belief during the 220 years (550-330 BCE) that the Persian Empire was a super power. During that period human history takes a different course, there is progress all around, the Persians did not built

temples but instead they built a 1500-mile long highway connecting Sush to Sardis near the Mediterranean and kept it safe for trade and commerce. They connected the Mediterranean to the Red Sea a forerunner to the Suez Canal. They mapped the waterways from Ganges to the Red Sea. They wrote the first charter of Human Rights.....

THE ADVENT OF ZARVAN THE CREATOR OF GOD

In 438 BCE Ardeshir II the king of kings signed a peace treaty with Rome the other super power who had as many gods as there were conceivable powers in nature. Trade commerce and exchange of ideas flowed between the two powers. A new breed of thinkers emerged among the Greeks, which went against the very bases of the religious system of the Western civilizations. Most of the Greek philosophers lived during that century and the majority of them were born in the Persian Empire and latter settled in Athens. Knowledge and wisdom flourished but not with ease, Socrates who understood Zarathushtra was put to death for believing in powers alien to the Roman Gods.

Zarathushtra deals with the reality of life. He is more engrossed with the progress of humans towards perfection rather than heaven or hell or the attributes of God. He has less to say about God and more to say about the right use of the human mind. During the contact of the Persians with the west and in the height of philosophical discussions the question of "Who Created God" must have been up for discussion. The most likely answer to which is - he created himself out of nothing or he is self-created, but then the next question is; for him to create himself there has to be some sort of SPACE and TIME. A school of thought is therefore born which calls its theory ZARVANISM. Zarvan is the Eternal Time into which God is self-created.

Neither the God of Zarathushtra nor the freedom of thoughts and the discussion on Zarvanism last long for Alexander who was a forerunner of Hitler attacked the Persian Empire and systematically destroyed that noble culture by killing the old and learned and taking the youth to Greece and training them in Greek culture. A Greek historian writes, "30,000 Persian youth were taken to Greece and trained in the ways of the Greek and brought back and given important positions in the administration of Iran." He destroyed libraries and took the original copy of the "Avesta" to misuse it to the benefit of the oracles and pagan Gods. He destroyed Persepolis (Takht e Jamshid), which was a work of art and

architecture representing the united effort of a multicultural force of ***paid*** laborers and artists and had no military significance. His performance was worse than that of Hitler but since he was the victor, history is kind to him and even calls him "The Great" and the father of western civilization.

The freedom of discussing and defining God was taken away by Alexander. He reversed the trend. His first act of benevolence was to rebuilt pagan temples in Babylonia, which according to Herodotus people had stopped using. The Romans also helped revive Mithraism a pre-Zarathushti pagan religion, in North Western Iran. Mithra or Mehr the Sun God was worshiped and temples were built and called "Dar E Mehr". The more ancient Sun God - Mehr partially replaces the God of Zarathushtra and also pushed back philosophic theories such as the theory of Zarvan. The Roman garrisons that were left behind by Alexander to guard his empire soon became followers of Mithra and along with the Roman traders introduced the religion to Europe and very soon Mithraism was a European religion.

As time passed Persian philosophers once again became active with new theories and experimentation with human psychology became common in private circles. They looked at the teachings of Zarathushtra from a different angle.

Truly the knowledge derived
By the good mind
Never before known
Among the Wise and Creations
With it form good rule, never waning
And make society Righteous
Leading us towards perfection
Zarathushtra - Gatha - Yasna HA 28.3 (FR)

They were out to make the world righteous, with never waning rules. Persian presence and influence is seen all over the known world and in every important transformation. According to the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, Menahem a Magi is said to have greeted a young boy called Herod, slapped him on his backside and prophesied that he would be king of the Jews. Herod a half Jew ruled the Jews for 40 years.

According to the Dead Sea Scroll the Jews were expecting a prophet at the close of the millennium but nothing had happened. Then they were introduced to the solar calendar, which had more days in a year and so the millennium was extended and the time was made ripe for the advent of Jesus Christ.ⁱ Today the fact that the Magi's the Wise Men who took gifts for Baby Jesus were Persians is played down and the meaning of the gifts (Vohu-Mana, Asha-Vahista and Khash-Atra-Vairyu.ⁱⁱ) misinterpreted although the real meaning is available in the Bible by way of the three questions put to Jesus by the devil in the wilderness. Another important fact is about Simon Magus (Hebrew for Magi) being the head of the church in the days of Christ. This too is not widely discussed.ⁱⁱⁱ

Jesus introduces the God of Zarathushtra in the New Testament but the SEMITIC GOD of the Old Testament was firmly established in the human mind and became the ruling God. Although he is shown as a confused and feeble God, who creates the heaven and earth in seven days but then loses control of it. He repents and destroys his creation saving only Noah and a pair each from the rest of his creation. The next generation of Noah also does not live up to the wishes of this God who then sends Prophets to intervene. Powerless defenseless Prophets who are stoned and crucified.

In search of never waning rules Zarvanism once again becomes active. The son of light and darkness is discussed in the Dead Sea Scrolls^{iv}. In Iran at the beginning of the Sasanian dynasty Zarvanism reaches its height and later becomes the bases of the religion of Mani and Mazdak. The Sasanian mobeds ban Zarvanism, Mani and Mazdakism but their theories creep into Zoroastrianism Ahura Mazda becomes the creator of all that is good and Ahriman the creator of all that is bad. Unfortunately modern scholars while translating the Gathas have it at the back of their mind and have made the Gathas look dualistic with Zarathushtra professing the existence of two paths and the freedom to choose the evil path.

ZARVANISM

Zarvan or Zurvan means Time, and time is an important factor in the universe. Zarvanism or Zurvanism has no prophet known to us by name. It was a belief that was discussed among philosophers who were

discussing the origin of God. It could have started around 438 BCE when Persian philosophers and their Roman counterparts discussed the nature of God. The Romans had many gods while the Persian had only one whom they called Ahura Mazda. Roman gods were more of a super human type with all the human attributes. There were stories about their birth and life, they had failings and virtues, and they had a love life and also had enemies against whom they went to war. When it came to Ahura Mazda there were no such stories. Zarathushtra was more concerned with the real world and with how humans should progress and have a better life without going against the environment and nature.

To fill in the void someone somewhere must have come up with the explanation that before God came into being there had to be Time and Space into which God could come into being. They called it "Zarvan Akarneh" the Eternal Time. Then they wanted to examine the failing of Ahura Mazda and they saw that Zarathushtra had said that it is the human mind that creates happiness and pain. (Gatha 30.11) That it is the human mind that has to find ways to protect itself against the furies of nature. (Gatha 28.9) Since Ahura Mazda was not like the Roman gods and was all virtue and had no failings, they in their weakness of mind could not grasp and explain the phenomena so they came up with a counterpart and called it Ahri-Mana. It is important to note that the word Ahri-Mana or Zarvan does not appear in the Gathas at all.

The story of Zarvan giving birth to twins, is in the narrative style of the stories of Roman gods. The story goes that Zarvan was childless and that space was void. He then performs Yasht (prayers) to conceive a child who would create the universe. He prays for a year with no results and just when his prayers are about to be answered he starts to doubt and thinks he is striving in vain. In the process twins are conceived. One was the result of his prayers and patience, the other the result of his doubt. He promises himself that the one that is born first from among the two shall have power over the world. Knowing well that the result of his prayers will be the first-born. This information reaches the unborn children. The result of his doubt who was evil decides to take advantage of the situation and pushes his way past the other and becomes the first-born. When Zarvan sees the child he is shocked for he was anticipating a brilliant, clean and sweet smelling baby instead this child was a dirty and foul smelling one whom he names Ahriman. Next Ormazd is born who is clean and bright and with sweet scent. Zarvan has no choice but

to keep his promise, but knowing very well that after the remaining 9 thousand years of the initial 10 thousand years are over there will be a fight between the twins and Ormazd will win by destroying Ahriman and then rule the world forever in peace and tranquility. In this story Zarvan like the Roman gods does not have absolute power, although he is the God of God.

From a more serious theological point of view Zarvan the infinite time had to exist for God to self create himself. Time does not do any thing but facilitate the coming into existence of God. Zarvan is not the creator of the universe but necessary for the creation growth and progress of the universe. It is a delicate issue and the Bible does not tackle it in its creation story. In the Bundahisn and Denkart, which were thesis of the Sasanian era this topic has been discussed at length. The discussion of time and space is more of a science than religion at times in these theses. It also becomes the bases of the teachings of Mani and Mazdak.

ⁱ 'The Qumran sect rejected this seemingly artificial system and adopted instead a chronological reckoning, probably of priestly origin, based on the sun.' (The Dead Sea Scrolls in English By G Vermes III Edition 1987 Penguin Books. pg 47)

ⁱⁱ Mathew4 Check for meaning <http://www.ancientiran.com> Influence on other religions.

ⁱⁱⁱ "Jesus the man" by Barbara Thiring

^{iv} The Dead Sea Scrolls Qumran in Perspective By G Vermes Collins-London 1977