

survives among the Parsees of Bombay, India, as the purest form of monotheism.

The sacred books of Persia (the Zend-Avesta) were twenty-one in number and contained all the religious and scientific literature of the ancient Persian empire. Of these twenty-one books only four are now in existence, the greater portion of the remainder having been destroyed by the powerful barbarian of Macedonia, Alexander the Great.

In the examination of the great religions of the world the one thing that strikes the student is the remarkable similarity of their fundamental doctrines. Of course, if one accepts the theosophical view that all these founders of religion are merely the pupils of one great school of Initiates, Prophets, Servants of the Lord, then the reason of this similarity is quite apparent. These various religions then are seen to be but the several branches of the one tree of religious and scientific knowledge. The one vital principle permeates each. The variation of their manifestation is due to difference in race, climate, stage of mental and moral development—to all those local surroundings which serve to distinguish one man or one set of men from another.

If one rejects the Theosophic teachings upon this question of the fundamental identity of all religions, the fact of the similarity of their doctrines may still be interesting. The leading tenet was: There is but One God, not many gods. But within that one God, the Absolute, there were two forces opposed to each other, one being Good, the other Evil. In later teachings of His followers this conflict between good and evil became so magnified that the Oneness behind was to some extent lost sight of and these two principles became deified as Ormuzd, the Supreme God of Wisdom, and Ahriman, the Spirit Enemy. Both spirits possess creative power, which manifests itself, in the one positively, in the other negatively. Call one spirit and the other matter, and the philosophy of Zoroaster's religion becomes at once apparent; and in the metaphysical world name the one spirituality and the other materialism, and you get a point of observation which more nearly approaches his. Ormuzd is Light and Life and all that is pure and good; in the ethical world, law, order and truth; the antithesis is dark-

ness, death, and all that is evil. These two principles are represented in another place as twin sons proceeding from the fundamental principle of all, named as Zeruana Akarana, or limitless time. These two spirits had until then counter-balanced each other; to assist in the ultimate triumph of the good was the object, and that its ultimate triumph was certain was the essence of Zoroaster's revelation.

Ormuzd was endowed with the attributes of personality much more than Ahriman. Within the world of the Good, Ormuzd is Lord and God alone. There were no other gods beside him, but he was in conjunction with himself seven 'immortal holy ones,' personifications of ethical ideas, his instruments, creatures, and servants. These are identical with the seven Elohim of the Jewish scriptures.

Zoroaster taught that the world was the field of battle for these two forces of Good and Evil, and the history of their conflict is the history of the world. All creation divides itself into that which is spiritual or Ormuzd, and that which is material or Ahriman. In the centre of battle is man. His soul is the object of the war. Man is a creation of Ormuzd, but he was created free in his will and his actions.

Man takes part in this conflict through all his life acts in this world. By a true confession of faith, by every good deed, by continually keeping pure his body and his soul he impairs the power of the evil one and strengthens the might of goodness. By a false confession, by every wrong act or thought, he increases the evil and renders service to Satan.

Zoroaster divided the life of man into two parts—its earthly portion and that which is lived beyond the grave. No other religion has grasped and taught more clearly than his, the idea of guilt and merit, cause and effect; and the immutability of the Laws of the Universe. Zoroaster taught that man's life in the other world was the result and consequence of his life upon earth. Wicked actions cannot be undone, but in the heavenly account can be counter-balanced by a surplus of good works. It is only in this sense that a wicked deed can be atoned for by a good one. Of a remission of sins the doctrine of Zoroaster knows nothing. The course of God's inexorable Law cannot be turned aside

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