

ZOROASTER

Biography

- Born about 628 BCE in Persia (Iran), but anywhere 1500 BCE to 500 BCE is possible

Date determination:

∞ 1500 BCE to 1000 BCE – based on linguistic similarities between Zoroaster-related Sanskrit/texts and the known language in the region

∞ 522 BCE to 650 BCE – dates rooted in connecting Zoroaster texts to historical peoples or events (ie, mythical person mentioned in text might be representative of a King)

∞ A medieval-era historian suggested there were two Zoroaster's, living 1000 years apart

Age 77 when died



- Origins are clouded in myth.

By any modern standard of historiography, no evidence can place him into a fixed period and the historicization surrounding him may be a part of a trend from before the 10th century AD that historicizes legends and myths

- Yoda sayings!
- Literature suggests 3 wives and 6-7 children. Likely inaccurate, as large families were the norm. These numbers might reflect living children
- Life was difficult. Very harsh (people stoned; skinned alive)

Zoroaster's beliefs – known as Zoroastrianism – last as a religious faith for centuries, until about 650 CE when Islam overtakes the region.

↳ The religion is all but eliminated (it now exists only in parts of India)

Philosophy (major Ideas)

One God philosophy (a rival with Judaism)

∞ He believed in the God Ahura-Mazda

∞ To Zoroaster, Ahura-Mazda is the only true God

∞ To others, Ahura-Mazda is one of many Gods

Zoroaster emphasized the freedom of the individual to choose right or wrong and individual responsibility for one's deeds. This personal choice to accept good and shun bad is one's own decision and not a dictate of Ahura-Mazda.

The person is a battleground, wherein good and evil struggle for power.

He says ALL people ponder decisions which may lead to good or evil.

Evil is a necessary contrast to demonstrate the degree of good
Suffering is important.

“How can we enjoy rest when we know not work?”

All behavior must have the opposite extremes for balance. This is **dualism**.