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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

## TRUTH, HARMONY, AND THE GOOD LIFE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF AVESTAN AND DAOIST PHILOSOPHY

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### Abstract

This study explores the idea of perfection and the good life in the *Zend Avesta* through a comparative engagement with Daoist thought. In Zoroastrianism, human life is understood as a progressive journey from imperfection toward perfection through moral discipline, purity, and participation in cosmic order. The paper examines how the Avestan tradition develops this vision through the ethical principles of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, along with virtues associated with truth, harmony, responsibility, and spiritual refinement. The study further analyses the role of free will, social ethics, environmental responsibility, and religious practices in shaping the ideal human condition. In dialogue with Daoist perspectives on harmony, natural order, simplicity, and self-cultivation, the paper highlights both convergences and differences between the two traditions. While Zoroastrianism emphasizes active moral participation in the triumph of good over evil through the principle of *Asha*, Daoism stresses alignment with the *Dao* through balance, spontaneity, and harmonious living. Despite their distinct metaphysical and ethical orientations, both traditions present human perfection as a transformative process connecting individual life with cosmic order. The study argues that a comparative reading of Avestan and Daoist ideals contributes to a broader understanding of religious ethics, self-cultivation, and the search for meaningful existence.

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### 1. Introduction:-

Zoroastrianism, founded by Zarathustra in ancient Persia, is among the oldest prophetic religious traditions in the world. Its teachings are preserved primarily in the *Zend Avesta*, which contains hymns, prayers, rituals, and ethical instructions that guide human beings toward righteous and meaningful living. A central concern of the Avestan tradition is the gradual movement of human life from imperfection toward perfection through moral discipline, spiritual awareness, and participation in cosmic order. Human existence is understood within the framework of an ongoing conflict between truth and falsehood, goodness and evil, where every individual bears the responsibility of choosing righteousness through good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. The path toward perfection therefore requires continuous ethical effort and conscious self-transformation. Within Avestan ethics, perfection signifies far

more than the absence of faults or weaknesses. It refers to a state of complete fulfilment characterized by truth, harmony, peace, order, and immortality. Such perfection represents the victory of righteousness over destructive forces that disturb both human life and the world. The *Zend Avesta* expresses this ideal in eschatological terms: "And when perfection shall have been attained, then shall the blow of destruction fall upon the Demon of Falsehood, and her adherents shall perish with her..."<sup>1</sup> The attainment of perfection is thus inseparable from the practice of righteousness and the rejection of evil influences that create disorder and suffering. This vision of harmony and fulfilment may also be meaningfully examined alongside Daoism, which similarly emphasizes the relation between human life and cosmic order. Daoism presents the *Dao* as the ultimate principle underlying existence and teaches that human fulfilment emerges through harmony with the natural order of the universe. While Zoroastrianism approaches perfection through moral struggle and ethical responsibility grounded in the principle of *Asha*, Daoism stresses simplicity, balance, spontaneity, and alignment with the *Dao*.

Despite their different metaphysical foundations, both traditions regard human life as a transformative process directed toward harmony and fulfilment. The Avestan understanding of perfection extends beyond individual moral development and includes the welfare of the entire creation. Human beings contribute to cosmic harmony through righteous conduct, and the progress of humanity is closely connected with the renewal of the world itself. R.P. Masani observes, "Not only man, the entire creation has to rise from the abyss of imperfection to the summit of perfection."<sup>2</sup> A similar concern for harmony between humanity and the wider cosmos is also visible in Daoist thought, particularly in its emphasis on balance, natural order, and harmonious coexistence with nature. Both traditions therefore connect ethical self-cultivation with the establishment of a peaceful and ordered world. At the same time, the present world remains marked by disorder and imperfection. In Zoroastrianism, this condition arises from the influence of Angra Mainyu, whose destructive power introduces chaos, suffering, and falsehood into creation. Human beings frequently become influenced by selfishness, hatred, and moral weakness, which obstruct their movement toward perfection. Daoism likewise recognizes that disharmony emerges when individuals become separated from the natural order through excessive desire, artificial social structures, and imbalance. In both traditions, the restoration of harmony requires inner transformation and disciplined living.

Against this background, the present study examines the concept of perfection and the good life in the *Zend Avesta* through a comparative engagement with Daoist thought. It explores how the Avestan ideal of perfection through *Asha* may be understood alongside the Daoist pursuit of harmony through the *Dao*. The study further investigates the ethical, spiritual, and cosmic dimensions of these traditions and highlights their continuing significance in promoting moral responsibility, harmony, ecological sensitivity, and meaningful human existence in the contemporary world.

## **2. Literature Review:-**

A number of scholars have examined Zoroastrianism from ethical, theological, and philosophical perspectives, particularly focusing on its understanding of cosmic order, moral responsibility, and the ideal of righteous living. However, comparatively fewer studies have explored these ideas in relation to Daoist thought or analysed the concept of perfection and the good life through a comparative ethical framework. Existing scholarship nevertheless provides important foundations for understanding both traditions and their approaches toward harmony, self-cultivation, and fulfilment.

John W. Waterhouse, in *Zoroastrianism*, explains the central teachings of Zoroaster, particularly the role of Ahura Mazda, the principle of *Asha*, and the ethical responsibility of human beings. His study highlights the importance of moral choice and righteous conduct in maintaining cosmic order, thereby presenting Zoroastrianism as an ethically oriented religion centred upon truth and harmony.

A.V. William Jackson, in *Zoroastrian Studies*, examines the moral and spiritual dimensions of Zoroastrianism, especially the role of free will, ethical struggle, and the human participation in the triumph of good over evil. His interpretation emphasizes that human perfection in the Avestan tradition is inseparable from conscious moral effort and responsibility.

R.P. Masani, in *The Religion of Good Life*, presents Zoroastrianism as a religion deeply concerned with ethical fulfilment and practical morality. He discusses the significance of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds,

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<sup>1</sup>Zend Avesta III, Yasna XXX:10.

<sup>2</sup>Masani, R.P. *The Religion of Good Life*, p. 98.

along with the virtues associated with the Amesha Spentas, showing how ethical discipline guides individuals toward the attainment of a meaningful and perfected life.

George Foot Moore, in his article *Zoroastrianism*, analyses the ethical and religious foundations of the tradition, particularly the importance of purity, righteousness, and religious discipline in overcoming evil and preserving harmony within creation. His work contributes to understanding the practical and spiritual dimensions of Avestan ethics.

On the Daoist side, Laozi's *Dao De Jing* remains one of the foundational texts for understanding Daoist philosophy. It emphasizes harmony with the *Dao*, simplicity, humility, moderation, and the principle of wuwei (non-forceful action). The text presents fulfilment not through struggle or domination but through balance and alignment with the natural order of existence.

Zhuangzi, in the *Zhuangzi*, further develops Daoist ideas of spontaneity, freedom, and harmony with nature. His philosophical reflections critique artificial social structures and excessive attachment to rigid moral systems, encouraging instead a life grounded in naturalness and inner balance.

Wing-tsit Chan, in *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, provides important interpretations of Daoist philosophy and explains how Daoism understands self-cultivation, harmony, and the relationship between humanity and nature. His work helps clarify the ethical and metaphysical foundations of Daoist thought in relation to the good life. These studies collectively demonstrate that both Zoroastrianism and Daoism place significant emphasis upon harmony, ethical living, and self-cultivation as essential aspects of human fulfilment. However, most existing works examine these traditions independently rather than comparatively. The concept of perfection and the good life as understood through the ethical framework of the *Zend Avesta* and Daoist philosophy has not been sufficiently explored in a comparative manner. Therefore, the present study seeks to analyse the similarities and differences between Avestan and Daoist perspectives on harmony, moral responsibility, self-cultivation, and perfection, while also examining their continuing relevance in the contemporary world.

### **3. Objectives:-**

The present study seeks to explore the concept of perfection and the good life in the *Zend Avesta* through a comparative engagement with Daoism. It aims to analyse how the Avestan tradition understands human fulfilment through moral discipline, righteousness, and participation in cosmic order, while Daoist thought approaches fulfilment through harmony, balance, and alignment with the *Dao*. The study further intends to examine the relation between *Asha* and *Dao* as principles of order that guide human existence toward harmony and transformation.

In addition, the study seeks to investigate how both traditions connect ethical self-cultivation with social and cosmic well-being, and how their teachings contribute to a broader understanding of harmony, moral responsibility, and meaningful existence. It also aims to highlight the contemporary relevance of Avestan and Daoist perspectives in addressing issues related to ethical living, inner balance, environmental awareness, and the search for human fulfilment in the modern world.

### **4. Methodology:-**

The present study follows a descriptive and philosophical methodology to examine the concept of perfection and the good life in Avestan and Daoist traditions. The study is primarily based on the textual analysis of primary sources, including the *Zend Avesta* and relevant *Pahlavi texts* for understanding Zoroastrian concepts such as *Asha*, human responsibility, moral perfection, purity, and the ultimate destiny of creation. In relation to Daoist philosophy, foundational texts such as the *Dao De Jing* and the *Zhuangzi* are examined to explore the concepts of *Dao*, harmony, self-cultivation, simplicity, and natural balance. The study adopts a comparative philosophical approach to analyse the similarities and differences between Avestan and Daoist perspectives on cosmic order, ethical transformation, human fulfilment, and the relationship between humanity and nature. The analysis focuses on major themes such as truth and harmony, moral responsibility, virtue, self-cultivation, ecological awareness, and the attainment of the good life. The study also utilizes secondary sources to provide broader philosophical and interpretative perspectives on both traditions. Through textual interpretation and thematic analysis, the research seeks to understand the distinct approaches of Zoroastrianism and Daoism toward human perfection and meaningful existence. It does not aim to establish the superiority of one tradition over the other but attempts to highlight their unique contributions to the understanding of ethical living, harmony, and human flourishing.

## 5. Analysis:-

### 5.1 Cosmic Order and the Foundation of the Good Life:-

The ethical vision of the *Zend Avesta* presents human life as a gradual movement from disorder toward harmony, fulfilment, and perfection through conscious ethical living. In Avestan thought, the universe is not understood as accidental or morally neutral; rather, it is viewed as a meaningful and purposeful creation established by Ahura Mazda, the supreme source of wisdom, truth, and goodness. The order governing creation is expressed through the principle of *Asha*, which signifies truth, righteousness, harmony, justice, and cosmic balance. Human beings attain the good life only when they live in accordance with *Asha* and actively contribute to the preservation of order within both personal life and the wider world.

A similar concern with cosmic harmony appears in Daoism through the concept of the *Dao*. The *Dao* is understood as the underlying “Way” or principle that sustains the natural flow of existence. Like *Asha*, it represents a universal order that maintains balance within the cosmos. Yet the two concepts emerge from different philosophical foundations. In Zoroastrianism, *Asha* possesses a strongly moral character because it stands in opposition to *Druj*, the principle of falsehood, chaos, and disorder. Existence therefore becomes the arena of an ethical struggle between truth and falsehood, good and evil. Daoism, however, generally does not interpret the world through a dualistic conflict between opposing moral powers. Disorder arises not from an evil cosmic force but from imbalance, excessive desire, artificiality, and separation from the natural rhythm of the *Dao*.

This distinction reveals two different understandings of harmony. Zoroastrianism approaches harmony through moral responsibility and conscious resistance to evil, while Daoism seeks harmony through balance, simplicity, moderation, and alignment with nature. Nevertheless, both traditions agree that fulfilment becomes possible only when human beings live in accordance with the deeper order governing existence.

### 5.2 Human Nature, Free Will, and Ethical Responsibility:-

In the Avestan worldview, human beings occupy a central place within creation because they possess both spiritual awareness and moral freedom. Human life is not passive; individuals are expected to participate actively in the preservation of cosmic harmony through ethical choice. The significance of human existence therefore lies in the ability to choose between truth and falsehood. The famous Avestan triad of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds expresses this ethical responsibility by emphasizing harmony between mind, speech, and action. Moral perfection is achieved only when inner intention and outward conduct remain united with *Asha*.

The *Avesta* further explains human ethical development through spiritual faculties such as *Daēnā* (conscience or spiritual insight), *Baodha* (understanding), *Urvan* (soul), and *Fravashi* (guardian spirit). These dimensions of human existence enable individuals to distinguish righteousness from falsehood and to direct life toward moral fulfilment. Ethical living therefore becomes both a personal discipline and a cosmic responsibility.

The importance of free will occupies a particularly central position within Zoroastrian ethics. Human beings are regarded as free agents capable of strengthening either *Asha* or *Druj* through their actions. Evil persists because individuals may misuse their freedom and contribute to disorder through selfishness, hatred, violence, and falsehood. Moral growth therefore becomes meaningful precisely because goodness must be consciously chosen. “Man is Ormazd’s creature, and by birth right he belongs to the kingdom of Good; but created as a free agent, he has the right to choose. Upon that choice, however, his own salvation and his share in the ultimate triumph of good over or evil in the world depend.”<sup>3</sup> Human beings thus become active participants in shaping both their own destiny and the future of creation.

Daoism approaches human fulfilment differently. Although it also values self-cultivation, it places less emphasis upon moral choice within a cosmic struggle between good and evil. Instead, Daoism stresses inward awareness, simplicity, spontaneity, and intuitive harmony with the *Dao*. The Daoist sage seeks fulfilment not through moral combat but through freedom from excessive desire, ambition, and artificial control. From the Daoist perspective, many forms of suffering arise because individuals separate themselves from the simplicity and balance of nature. Thus, whereas Zoroastrian ethics emphasizes conscious ethical effort and responsibility, Daoism often seeks harmony through release from tension and return to natural balance. Despite these differences, both traditions agree that human fulfilment depends upon self-cultivation and disciplined transformation of life.

<sup>3</sup>Jackson, A.V.W. Zoroastrian Studies, p. 133.

### **5.3 The Amesha Spentas and the Cultivation of Virtue:-**

The Avestan understanding of perfection is further developed through the doctrine of the Amesha Spentas, often translated as the “Bounteous Immortals.” These are divine attributes or emanations associated with Ahura Mazda that represent the highest ethical and spiritual virtues necessary for human perfection. Rather than functioning merely as abstract theological concepts, the Amesha Spentas provide a moral framework through which individuals gradually cultivate divine qualities within themselves.

Each Amesha Spenta represents a specific dimension of ethical and spiritual perfection:

Ahura Mazda signifies Divine Wisdom.

Vohu Manah (Good Mind) signifies virtuous thinking.

Asha Vahishta represents truth, righteousness, and perfect order.

Khshathra Vairya symbolizes ideal sovereignty, strength, and self-control.

Spenta Armaiti expresses piety, devotion, humility, patience, and harmony.

Haurvatat signifies wholeness, well-being, and completeness.

Ameretat represents immortality and enduring fulfilment.

Through the cultivation of these virtues, individuals gradually overcome disorder within themselves and strengthen their connection with Ahura Mazda. Human perfection is therefore not merely intellectual but moral, spiritual, and practical.

Daoism also emphasizes the cultivation of virtue, though in a different manner. Daoist virtues include humility, gentleness, simplicity, moderation, compassion, and naturalness. Unlike the Amesha Spentas, these virtues are not personified as divine attributes engaged in a cosmic moral struggle. Rather, they emerge naturally through harmony with the *Dao*. The Daoist sage avoids pride, aggression, greed, and excessive ambition because such tendencies disturb balance and create suffering.

Thus, while both traditions regard virtue as essential for fulfilment, Zoroastrianism grounds virtue within a moral cosmic struggle directed against evil, whereas Daoism grounds virtue within harmonious participation in the spontaneous flow of existence.

### **5.4 Ethical Discipline and the Transformation of Life:-**

The ethical system of the *Zend Avesta* extends beyond abstract moral principles into practical disciplines intended to transform everyday life. Physical purity occupies an important place because purity is regarded not merely as external cleanliness but as a condition necessary for moral and spiritual development. The Avesta mentions thus, “Purity is for man, next to life, the greatest good...”<sup>4</sup> Disorder and impurity are understood as openings through which destructive influences spread imbalance within creation.

Moral purification is further developed through the practice of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. R.P. Masani remarks, “The great triad not only establishes its purity after word and deed, but also gives its precedence as the source of all good words and good deeds.”<sup>5</sup> These principles integrate inner intention with outward conduct and establish harmony between thought, speech, and action. Ethical perfection therefore involves complete transformation of character rather than isolated moral acts.

Daoism also connects fulfilment with disciplined living, though it interprets discipline differently. Daoist self-cultivation emphasizes simplicity, moderation, inward tranquillity, and freedom from excessive social and psychological burdens. The principle of *wuwei* (non-forceful action) illustrates this orientation. *Wuwei* does not imply passivity but acting in accordance with the natural flow of existence rather than through rigid control or excessive force. Daoism therefore critiques the tendency of human beings to impose artificial structures upon life, whereas Zoroastrianism emphasizes active moral effort in defence of order.

The contrast between the two traditions reveals two complementary paths toward fulfilment. Zoroastrianism stresses disciplined ethical struggle against falsehood and disorder, while Daoism seeks harmony through simplicity, spontaneity, and natural balance. Yet both traditions agree that human perfection requires transformation of the self through ethical discipline.

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<sup>4</sup>Zend Avesta I, Vendidad V:21.

<sup>5</sup>Masani, R.P. The Religion of Good Life, p. 105.

### **5.5 Social Ethics, Nature, and Harmony with the World:-**

Avestan ethics strongly emphasizes that moral responsibility extends into social and environmental life. Ethical principles are not confined to individual spirituality but must shape family life, economic activity, social relationships, and communal order. Honesty, justice, fulfilment of promises, responsible labour, and care for society are all regarded as necessary for preserving harmony within the world. Marriage and social responsibility are similarly viewed as ethical institutions that strengthen stability and continuity within human life.

The *Avesta* also presents nature as sacred because it forms part of the good creation established by Ahura Mazda. Earth, water, fire, plants, and living beings participate in cosmic order, and human beings therefore bear moral responsibility for preserving their purity and balance. Environmental care becomes an ethical obligation because corruption of nature strengthens disorder within creation itself.

Daoism likewise stresses harmony with nature, though from a somewhat different perspective. Nature is valued because it expresses the spontaneous wisdom of the *Dao*. Human suffering increases when people attempt to dominate or manipulate the natural order excessively. Daoism therefore encourages simplicity, ecological balance, moderation, and harmonious coexistence with the natural world.

An important difference nevertheless remains. Zoroastrianism approaches environmental care through sacred duty and moral responsibility within a cosmic struggle between order and disorder. Daoism approaches nature more through balance and non-interference, warning against excessive control and artificial complexity. Despite these distinctions, both traditions recognize that human fulfilment cannot be separated from harmony with the wider world.

### **5.6 Perfection, Fulfilment, and the Destiny of Human Life:-**

The Avestan understanding of perfection ultimately extends beyond earthly existence into the destiny of the soul and the future renewal of creation. Individuals who live according to truth and righteousness are believed to attain peace and happiness after death, while those who reject goodness experience suffering and separation from divine harmony. Yet the *Avesta* does not regard heaven itself as the final stage of perfection so long as evil continues to exist within creation. Ultimate fulfilment is realized only through the final renewal of the world, where evil, suffering, and disorder are completely removed and harmony universally prevails. *Bahman Yast* states thus, "May the end be in peace, pleasure and joy, by the will of God! So may it be! Even more so may it be!"<sup>6</sup> This perfected state culminates in immortality, peace, wholeness, and the restoration of creation. Human ethical effort therefore contributes directly to the larger cosmic destiny of the world. A.V. William Jackson points out, "Man is Ormazd's creature, and by birth right he belongs to the kingdom of Good; but created as a free agent, he has the right to choose. Upon that choice, however, his own salvation and his share in the ultimate triumph of good over or evil in the world depend."<sup>7</sup> Zoroastrian perfection possesses a dynamic and teleological character directed toward the eventual triumph of goodness over evil.

Daoism does not generally present a comparable eschatological vision centred upon a final cosmic victory or historical culmination. Fulfilment is experienced through present harmony with the *Dao* rather than through expectation of a future perfected world. Daoist perfection is therefore more cyclical and continuous, emphasizing balance within the ongoing flow of existence.

Despite these philosophical and ethical differences, both Zoroastrianism and Daoism share a profound concern for the transformation and fulfilment of human life. Neither tradition regards the good life as dependent merely upon material prosperity, social status, political power, or external achievement. Instead, both maintain that true fulfilment arises through the cultivation of the self and the establishment of harmony between the individual and the larger cosmic order. Human beings are not viewed as isolated entities pursuing private satisfaction; rather, they are understood as deeply connected with the structure and balance of the universe itself. Consequently, inner disorder inevitably produces disorder within society and the natural world, while inner harmony contributes to wider balance and stability.

In the Avestan tradition, this transformation is understood primarily through the framework of moral responsibility and active participation in the preservation of *Asha*, the principle of truth, righteousness, and cosmic order. Human

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<sup>6</sup>Pahlavi Texts I, Bahman Yast III:63.

<sup>7</sup>Jackson, A.V.W. Zoroastrian Studies, p. 133.

life acquires meaning through the conscious struggle against falsehood, injustice, impurity, and destructive forces associated with *Druj*. Ethical discipline therefore becomes a sacred duty. Through good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, individuals gradually refine their character, strengthen harmony within creation, and participate in the eventual triumph of good over evil. The cultivation of virtues associated with the Amesha Spentas further directs individuals toward wisdom, self-control, devotion, justice, wholeness, and spiritual fulfilment. In this way, Zoroastrianism presents the good life as an active ethical journey in which human beings cooperate with Ahura Mazda in the realization of a morally perfected world.

Daoism approaches human transformation from a different perspective, yet with a similar concern for harmony and fulfilment. Rather than emphasizing moral struggle against evil, Daoism seeks the restoration of balance through simplicity, humility, moderation, and harmony with the natural flow of the *Dao*. The Daoist ideal does not involve domination, excessive striving, or rigid control; instead, fulfilment emerges when individuals free themselves from artificial desires, unnecessary ambition, and disruptive forms of attachment. Through principles such as *wuwei* (non-forceful action), Daoism teaches that harmony is attained not through conflict or excessive interference but through alignment with the natural rhythm of existence. The Daoist sage therefore embodies spontaneity, flexibility, tranquillity, and inward balance, recognizing that peace arises when life flows in accordance with the deeper order of nature.

Although their methods differ, both traditions ultimately affirm that self-cultivation is essential for the attainment of the good life. Both insist that ethical and spiritual transformation must begin within the individual before harmony can emerge within society and the wider world. Zoroastrianism emphasizes disciplined moral effort, righteous action, and conscious participation in cosmic renewal, while Daoism stresses naturalness, inward balance, moderation, and harmonious coexistence with the *Dao*. One tradition approaches fulfilment through active ethical responsibility and defence of order; the other approaches it through simplicity and integration with the natural flow of existence. Yet both traditions converge in their belief that human fulfilment depends upon overcoming disorder within the self and establishing harmony with the greater cosmic reality.

Together, Zoroastrianism and Daoism therefore offer two distinct yet complementary visions of the good life. One presents perfection as the active preservation and realization of moral order through truth, responsibility, and righteous action, while the other presents fulfilment as harmony with the natural rhythm of existence through balance, simplicity, and non-forceful living. Despite their different metaphysical foundations, both traditions continue to provide profound ethical and spiritual insights into the nature of human fulfilment, demonstrating that lasting peace and completeness arise not from external accumulation but from the disciplined transformation of human life in relation to the wider cosmos.

## **6. Conclusion:-**

The ethical vision presented in the *Zend Avesta* offers a comprehensive and deeply integrated understanding of the good life as a gradual movement toward harmony, fulfilment, and perfection through alignment with truth, righteousness, and cosmic order. Human existence is not viewed as separate from the wider structure of creation; rather, individuals are understood as conscious participants in sustaining the balance established by Ahura Mazda through the principle of *Asha*. In this worldview, the good life is not limited to personal happiness or material success but involves the cultivation of moral, spiritual, social, and ecological harmony. The study demonstrates that Avestan ethics extends beyond ritual observance into every sphere of human existence, including personal conduct, family life, social responsibility, economic honesty, care for nature, and spiritual discipline. Through the practice of physical and moral purity, the cultivation of virtues associated with the Amesha Spentas, and the exercise of free will through good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, individuals gradually move toward moral and spiritual fulfilment while also contributing to the preservation of cosmic order.

The comparative engagement with Daoism reveals both significant similarities and important distinctions between the two traditions. Both systems understand harmony as the foundation of the good life and regard self-cultivation as essential for human fulfilment. Both traditions also affirm that human beings are deeply interconnected with the wider cosmos and that inner disorder eventually affects social and natural harmony. In both Zoroastrianism and Daoism, fulfilment cannot be attained merely through external achievement, wealth, or power; rather, it emerges through disciplined transformation of the self and harmonious participation in the larger order of existence.

At the same time, the study highlights important philosophical and ethical differences between the two traditions. Zoroastrianism presents existence within the framework of a moral struggle between truth and falsehood, order and disorder, where human beings consciously participate in strengthening goodness through ethical action. The world is therefore understood as morally dynamic, and perfection is closely connected with the eventual triumph of good over evil. Daoism, by contrast, does not generally interpret existence through such a dualistic struggle. It approaches fulfilment through balance, simplicity, spontaneity, and harmony with the natural flow of the *Dao*. While Avestan ethics emphasizes active moral responsibility, ethical discipline, and conscious participation in the defence of cosmic order, Daoism often encourages moderation, humility, non-forceful action (*wuwei*), and freedom from artificial complexity. Thus, Zoroastrianism tends toward an ethically active and socially engaged path, whereas Daoism seeks harmony through natural balance and inward tranquillity.

The study further demonstrates that both traditions possess enduring relevance for the contemporary world. Modern society is increasingly affected by moral uncertainty, social fragmentation, ecological destruction, excessive materialism, psychological stress, and the loss of meaningful ethical direction. In such a context, the ethical teachings of the *Zend Avesta* continue to offer valuable guidance through their emphasis on truthfulness, responsibility, justice, self-discipline, social harmony, and respect for creation. The Avestan understanding that human beings bear moral responsibility for preserving harmony within society and nature remains highly significant in addressing contemporary ethical and environmental crises. Likewise, Daoist teachings concerning simplicity, moderation, inner balance, and harmonious coexistence with nature provide important insights for responding to the pressures, excesses, and anxieties of modern life. Daoism challenges the tendency toward excessive ambition, competition, and domination, encouraging instead a more balanced and sustainable way of living.

Another important contribution of both traditions lies in their holistic understanding of human fulfilment. Neither tradition separates ethical life from spiritual awareness, nor individual well-being from social and cosmic harmony. Instead, both affirm that personal transformation, social stability, ecological balance, and spiritual fulfilment are deeply interconnected. The cultivation of virtue, discipline of the self, and harmony with the wider order of existence become essential conditions for attaining a meaningful and fulfilled life. In this respect, the comparative study of the *Zend Avesta* and Daoism contributes not only to the academic understanding of religious ethics but also to broader contemporary discussions concerning morality, environmental responsibility, self-cultivation, and human flourishing.

Ultimately, the *Zend Avesta* and Daoism present two distinct yet complementary visions of perfection and the good life. One emphasizes the active preservation of moral order through righteous action and conscious ethical struggle, while the other stresses harmony with the natural rhythm of existence through simplicity, balance, and non-forceful living. Despite their differences, both traditions affirm that true fulfilment cannot be attained through material achievement alone, but through the disciplined transformation of the self in relation to the larger cosmic order. Together, they continue to provide profound ethical and spiritual insights for contemporary humanity and for the continuing search for harmony, peace, responsibility, and completeness in human life.

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