

1 **Truth, Harmony, and the Good Life: A Comparative Study of Avestan and Daoist**
2 **Philosophy.**

3
4
5 **Abstract**

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

23 **Keywords:** *Zend Avesta*; Zoroastrianism; Daoism; Perfection; Good Life; *Asha*; *Dao*; Self-
24 Cultivation; Religious Ethics; Harmony

25 **1. Introduction**

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

35 requires continuous ethical effort and conscious self-transformation. Within Avestan ethics,
36 perfection signifies far more than the absence of faults or weaknesses. It refers to a state of
37 complete fulfilment characterized by truth, harmony, peace, order, and immortality. Such
38 perfection represents the victory of righteousness over destructive forces that disturb both
39 human life and the world. The *Zend Avesta* expresses this ideal in eschatological terms: “And
40 when perfection shall have been attained, then shall the blow of destruction fall upon the
41 Demon of Falsehood, and her adherents shall perish with her...”¹ The attainment of perfection
42 is thus inseparable from the practice of righteousness and the rejection of evil influences that
43 create disorder and suffering. This vision of harmony and fulfilment may also be
44 meaningfully examined alongside Daoism, which similarly emphasizes the relation between
45 human life and cosmic order. Daoism presents the *Dao* as the ultimate principle underlying
46 existence and teaches that human fulfilment emerges through harmony with the natural order
47 of the universe. While Zoroastrianism approaches perfection through moral struggle and
48 ethical responsibility grounded in the principle of *Asha*, Daoism stresses simplicity, balance,
49 spontaneity, and alignment with the *Dao*. Despite their different metaphysical foundations,
50 both traditions regard human life as a transformative process directed toward harmony and
51 fulfilment. The Avestan understanding of perfection extends beyond individual moral
52 development and includes the welfare of the entire creation. Human beings contribute to
53 cosmic harmony through righteous conduct, and the progress of humanity is closely
54 connected with the renewal of the world itself. R.P. Masani observes, “Not only man, the
55 entire creation has to rise from the abyss of imperfection to the summit of perfection.”² A
56 similar concern for harmony between humanity and the wider cosmos is also visible in Daoist
57 thought, particularly in its emphasis on balance, natural order, and harmonious coexistence
58 with nature. Both traditions therefore connect ethical self-cultivation with the establishment of
59 a peaceful and ordered world. At the same time, the present world remains marked by disorder
60 and imperfection. In Zoroastrianism, this condition arises from the influence of Angra
61 Mainyu, whose destructive power introduces chaos, suffering, and falsehood into creation.
62 Human beings frequently become influenced by selfishness, hatred, and moral weakness,
63 which obstruct their movement toward perfection. Daoism likewise recognizes that
64 disharmony emerges when individuals become separated from the natural order through
65 excessive desire, artificial social structures, and imbalance. In both traditions, the restoration
66 of harmony requires inner transformation and disciplined living.

¹Zend Avesta III, Yasna XXX:10.

²Masani, R.P. *The Religion of Good Life*, p. 98.

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

74 **2. Literature Review**

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

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

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

91 R.P. Masani, in *The Religion of Good Life*, presents Zoroastrianism as a religion deeply
92 concerned with ethical fulfilment and practical morality. He discusses the significance of
93 good thoughts, good words, and good deeds, along with the virtues associated with the
94 Amesha Spentas, showing how ethical discipline guides individuals toward the attainment of
95 a meaningful and perfected life.

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

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

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

109 Wing-tsit Chan, in *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, provides important interpretations
110 of Daoist philosophy and explains how Daoism understands self-cultivation, harmony, and
111 the relationship between humanity and nature. His work helps clarify the ethical and
112 metaphysical foundations of Daoist thought in relation to the good life.

113 These studies collectively demonstrate that both Zoroastrianism and Daoism place significant
114 emphasis upon harmony, ethical living, and self-cultivation as essential aspects of human
115 fulfilment. However, most existing works examine these traditions independently rather than
116 comparatively. The concept of perfection and the good life as understood through the ethical
117 framework of the *Zend Avesta* and Daoist philosophy has not been sufficiently explored in a
118 comparative manner. Therefore, the present study seeks to analyse the similarities and
119 differences between Avestan and Daoist perspectives on harmony, moral responsibility, self-
120 cultivation, and perfection, while also examining their continuing relevance in the
121 contemporary world.

122 **3. Objectives**

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

130 In addition, the study seeks to investigate how both traditions connect ethical self-cultivation
131 with social and cosmic well-being, and how their teachings contribute to a broader
132 understanding of harmony, moral responsibility, and meaningful existence. It also aims to

133 highlight the contemporary relevance of Avestan and Daoist perspectives in addressing issues
134 related to ethical living, inner balance, environmental awareness, and the search for human
135 fulfilment in the modern world.

136 **4. Analysis**

137 **4.1 Cosmic Order and the Foundation of the Good Life**

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

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

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

161 **4.2 Human Nature, Free Will, and Ethical Responsibility**

162 In the Avestan worldview, human beings occupy a central place within creation because they
163 possess both spiritual awareness and moral freedom. Human life is not passive; individuals
164 are expected to participate actively in the preservation of cosmic harmony through ethical
165 choice. The significance of human existence therefore lies in the ability to choose between
166 truth and falsehood. The famous Avestan triad of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds

167 expresses this ethical responsibility by emphasizing harmony between mind, speech, and
168 action. Moral perfection is achieved only when inner intention and outward conduct remain
169 united with Asha.

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

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

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

194 **4.3 The Amesha Spentas and the Cultivation of Virtue**

195 The Avestan understanding of perfection is further developed through the doctrine of the
196 Amesha Spentas, often translated as the “Bounteous Immortals.” These are divine attributes
197 or emanations associated with Ahura Mazda that represent the highest ethical and spiritual
198 virtues necessary for human perfection. Rather than functioning merely as abstract

³Jackson, A.V.W. *Zoroastrian Studies*, p. 133.

199 theological concepts, the Amesha Spentas provide a moral framework through which
200 individuals gradually cultivate divine qualities within themselves.

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

202 Ahura Mazda signifies Divine Wisdom.

203 Vohu Manah (Good Mind) signifies virtuous thinking.

204 Asha Vahishta represents truth, righteousness, and perfect order.

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

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

207 Haurvatat signifies wholeness, well-being, and completeness.

208 Ameretat represents immortality and enduring fulfilment.

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

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

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

221 **4.4 Ethical Discipline and the Transformation of Life**

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

228 Moral purification is further developed through the practice of good thoughts, good words,
229 and good deeds. R.P. Masani remarks, “The great triad not only establishes its purity after
230 word and deed, but also gives its precedence as the source of all good words and good

⁴Zend Avesta I, Vendîdâd V:21.

231 deeds.”⁵These principles integrate inner intention with outward conduct and establish
232 harmony between thought, speech, and action. Ethical perfection therefore involves complete
233 transformation of character rather than isolated moral acts.

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

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

246 **4.5 Social Ethics, Nature, and Harmony with the World**

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

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

259 Daoism likewise stresses harmony with nature, though from a somewhat different
260 perspective. Nature is valued because it expresses the spontaneous wisdom of the *Dao*.
261 Human suffering increases when people attempt to dominate or manipulate the natural order

⁵Masani, R.P. *The Religion of Good Life*, p. 105.

262 excessively. Daoism therefore encourages simplicity, ecological balance, moderation, and
263 harmonious coexistence with the natural world.

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

269 **4.6 Perfection, Fulfilment, and the Destiny of Human Life**

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

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

291 Despite these philosophical and ethical differences, both Zoroastrianism and Daoism share a
292 profound concern for the transformation and fulfilment of human life. Neither tradition
293 regards the good life as dependent merely upon material prosperity, social status, political

⁶Pahlavi Texts I, Bahman Yast III:63.

⁷Jackson, A.V.W. *Zoroastrian Studies*, p. 133.

294 power, or external achievement. Instead, both maintain that true fulfilment arises through the
295 cultivation of the self and the establishment of harmony between the individual and the larger
296 cosmic order. Human beings are not viewed as isolated entities pursuing private satisfaction;
297 rather, they are understood as deeply connected with the structure and balance of the universe
298 itself. Consequently, inner disorder inevitably produces disorder within society and the
299 natural world, while inner harmony contributes to wider balance and stability.

300 In the Avestan tradition, this transformation is understood primarily through the framework of
301 moral responsibility and active participation in the preservation of Asha, the principle of
302 truth, righteousness, and cosmic order. Human life acquires meaning through the conscious
303 struggle against falsehood, injustice, impurity, and destructive forces associated with *Druj*.
304 Ethical discipline therefore becomes a sacred duty. Through good thoughts, good words, and
305 good deeds, individuals gradually refine their character, strengthen harmony within creation,
306 and participate in the eventual triumph of good over evil. The cultivation of virtues associated
307 with the Amesha Spentas further directs individuals toward wisdom, self-control, devotion,
308 justice, wholeness, and spiritual fulfilment. In this way, Zoroastrianism presents the good life
309 as an active ethical journey in which human beings cooperate with Ahura Mazda in the
310 realization of a morally perfected world.

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

322 Although their methods differ, both traditions ultimately affirm that self-cultivation is
323 essential for the attainment of the good life. Both insist that ethical and spiritual
324 transformation must begin within the individual before harmony can emerge within society
325 and the wider world. Zoroastrianism emphasizes disciplined moral effort, righteous action,
326 and conscious participation in cosmic renewal, while Daoism stresses naturalness, inward
327 balance, moderation, and harmonious coexistence with the *Dao*. One tradition approaches

328 fulfilment through active ethical responsibility and defence of order; the other approaches it
329 through simplicity and integration with the natural flow of existence. Yet both traditions
330 converge in their belief that human fulfilment depends upon overcoming disorder within the
331 self and establishing harmony with the greater cosmic reality.

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

340 **5. Conclusion**

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

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

361 it emerges through disciplined transformation of the self and harmonious participation in the
362 larger order of existence.

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

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

389 Another important contribution of both traditions lies in their holistic understanding of human
390 fulfilment. Neither tradition separates ethical life from spiritual awareness, nor individual
391 well-being from social and cosmic harmony. Instead, both affirm that personal
392 transformation, social stability, ecological balance, and spiritual fulfilment are deeply
393 interconnected. The cultivation of virtue, discipline of the self, and harmony with the wider
394 order of existence become essential conditions for attaining a meaningful and fulfilled life. In

395 this respect, the comparative study of the *Zend Avesta* and Daoism contributes not only to the
396 academic understanding of religious ethics but also to broader contemporary discussions
397 concerning morality, environmental responsibility, self-cultivation, and human flourishing.
398 Ultimately, the *Zend Avesta* and Daoism present two distinct yet complementary visions of
399 perfection and the good life. One emphasizes the active preservation of moral order through
400 righteous action and conscious ethical struggle, while the other stresses harmony with the
401 natural rhythm of existence through simplicity, balance, and non-forceful living. Despite their
402 differences, both traditions affirm that true fulfilment cannot be attained through material
403 achievement alone, but through the disciplined transformation of the self in relation to the
404 larger cosmic order. Together, they continue to provide profound ethical and spiritual insights
405 for contemporary humanity and for the continuing search for harmony, peace, responsibility,
406 and completeness in human life.

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