



A Comparative Study of the Resurrection in Islam and Zoroastrianism

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A Comparative Study of the Resurrection in Islam and Zoroastrianism

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Abstract

Since belief in the resurrection in the divine religions is considered as a genuine belief, addressing the issue of resurrection and comparing it in different religions is very important. This paper compares the resurrection in the two religions of Islam and Zoroastrians, their similarities and differences in subjects such as the time of resurrection, the way and place of rising from death, the duration of torment, physical resurrection, public assembling, the embodiment of the actions, the duration of resurrection, the test of fire or passing through the molten material, divine judgment, and Saoshyant with Dābā-al-Ardh in the Qur'an. It can be used both for believers to discriminate the right beliefs and for the researchers in the field of history, culture and sociology. In addition, it can be a positive step towards the approximation of the followers of religions and the unity of the human community.

Keywords: Islam, Zoroastrians, Resurrection, Ghiamah



Introduction

The belief in resurrection and Day of Judgment is one of the noble beliefs of humans, which dates back to the very beginning of humankind creation and can be considered as human being's doppelganger. Religions, both divine and non-divine, have presented different views on the subject of resurrection, which have many common and different points. Addressing this issue can be important in many ways. From a non-religious point of view, and for someone who does not believe in religion, it can deal with this issue from a historical, cultural and social perspective. From a religious point of view and one who believes in religion, it can help him to identify the right way of life and true belief. In addition to reliance on commonalities, it can be regarded as a positive step in creating universal unity and the approximation of religions. In this regard, this article addresses this fundamental issue in the two religions of Islam and Zoroastrianism.

Research background

The similar topics of this article, which have already been written and decorated, are as follows:

Books:

1. Resurrection and eschatology in religions of ancient Iran, Hashem Razi, First Edition, Behjat Publishing
2. Death and the Universe after it from the Viewpoint of Islam and Zoroastrianism Author: Dr. Zahra Ghanbarpour, Tehran, Pelikan Publication, First edition, 2013
3. The Perspective of Resurrection in the Past Religions and Quran, Sayed Qutb, Translator: Gholamreza Khosravi, Tehran: Mortazavi

Articles:

1. Comparative Study of Islamic and Zoroastrian Eschatology, Mojtaba Alaghi, Haft Aseman Magazine, Autumn 2007, No35
2. The Other World and Hereafter in Zoroastrianism, Vida Nadaf and Maryam Shahbazi, Erfaniat Magazine in Persian Literature, Autumn 2012, 3rd year, No12
3. Susan Al Rasool, Fatemeh Shirzad Rad Jalali, The Final Existence in Zoroastrianism and Comparison with Quranic Teachings, Religious Knowledge, Spring 2013, 4th year, No14

Resurrection (Ghiamah) from the Islamic point of view

Ghiamah is derived from the term "Ghoum" that means rising, which is defined by Raghieb as follows:

Ghiamah means rising in resurrection as discussed in

وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ (12/ روم)

And at the time when the Hour shall come... (Room,12).

Ghiamah originally means a state and an uprising that suddenly happens in a man and the end of the word emphasizes the sudden state of behavior (Isfahani Ragheb et al.,2005; Tahavieva & Nigmatullina, 2017).

Considering the Islamic sources, Ghiamah is a huge event that occurs at the end of this world. In the first stage, the ruling order in the present world is disrupted, the world becomes different and all human beings die. In the second stage, all human beings rise to appear in the divine



court of justice for the purpose of examining their actions and it will be determined who deserves paradise or hell.

At the beginning of Ghiamah, there are widespread changes in the earth and in the sky that many verses of the Qur'an, such as the following verse, refer to these changes.

يَوْمَ تُبَدَّلُ الْأَرْضُ غَيْرَ الْأَرْضِ وَالسَّمَاوَاتُ (ابراهيم/48)

On the day when the earth shall be changed into a different earth, and the heaven (as well) (Ibrahim 48)

Example Commentary states that:

The verses... imply that the present system of the world will not remain this way and it will be destroyed (Makarem Shirazi N et al.,1995; Khasheva et al, 2017).

The events that occur at the onset of Ghiamah are as follows:

Severe earthquake, splinting of the sky, extinction of the sun and other stars, explosions in the seas...

Resurrection in Zoroastrian sources

According to Zoroastrian sources, the twelve thousand years of the present universe ends with the advent of the last Saoshyant three thousand years after Zoroaster is born (Tofighi H.,2010,p.65-66). At that moment, there are huge events in the world, the souls of the dead again return to the mortal body (the later body) and the world becomes new, which is the same as the resurrection. Contrary to the Qur'an, which discusses Ghiamah in detail, this fundamental and important issue is very brief and obscure in Avesta. However, there are more details about this great incident in other Zoroastrian sources.

The encyclopedia of Mazdisana has meant the resurrection as:

The term resurrection (Rastakhiz) comes from the term (Irist) in Pahlavi and the terms (Risistak), (Rista) and (Rist) mean the dead and Rastakhiz (Rist+Khiz) means the rising of the dead. Saoshyant will also renovate the universe again".(Oshidiri J., 2015, p.297).

In the Zoroastrian religion, Rastakhiz is also called Ferashkard. Dr. Asadullah Azhir writes in his article: "Frashokerti in the new Avesta and Ferashkard in Pahlavi texts means renovation or brilliance, which is used in the Zoroastrian tradition to be equivalent to the renovation of material world".(Azhir A., 2006,p.145-168).

The Avesta in Yasht 19 paragraphs 11 and 12, which seems to be the most complete and clearest Avesta story about the resurrection, reads as follows:

"So that they would renovate the world: The world is immortal, indestructible, eternal, and everlasting. When men rise again and become immortal, Saoshyant emerges and renovates the world on his own will. Therefore, the Ashe follower (Follower the right way) world becomes indestructible, Dorouj nasuš will be driven to where the damage to Ashavans (Followers the right way) has come, and will be destroyed".(Doostkhah J.,2012,p.487).

In this context, there is no discussion about judging the acts, which is the main purpose of the resurrection in Islam and only the evolution of the world, and eternal life is discussed.



Comparison of the Avesta and the Quran in terms of resurrection

The statements of Yasht 15 (Zamyad Yasht) in the Avesta as the most complete text of the Avesta on resurrection can be adapted to Qur'anic verses to some extent. Here, first, the Avesta phrases and then the Qur'an verse are presented.

A) To renovate the world

يَوْمَ تُبَدَّلُ الْأَرْضُ غَيْرَ الْأَرْضِ وَالسَّمَاوَاتُ (ابراهيم/48)

On the day when the earth shall be changed into a different earth, and the heaven) as well (Ibrahim (48))

B) The world is ever young, Immortal, Inexhaustible, Insolent, Everlasting, Everlasting, and Successful

Concerning the permanence and immortality of the hereafter, the Qur'an has spoken repeatedly which is discussed here:

يُنَشِّرُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنْهُ وَرِضْوَانٍ وَجَنَّاتٍ لَهُمْ فِيهَا نَعِيمٌ مُقِيمٌ * خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا (توبه/21-22)

Their Lord gives them good news of mercy from Himself and (His) good pleasure and gardens, wherein lasting blessings shall be theirs (21) Abiding therein forever... (Toubeh, 22)

C) "Immortality" (absence of death)

لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا الْمَوْتَ إِلَّا الْمَوْتَةَ الْأُولَى (دخان/56)

They shall not taste therein death except the first death... (Dukhan / 56)

D) Successful: The Qur'an also emphasizes the salvation and happiness of paradise dwellers

... خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ (نساء/13)

To abide in them and this is the great achievement (Nesa, 13)

The time of resurrection

According to the verses of the Qur'an, the time of resurrection is not known to anyone other than Allah, even the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) is not aware of it,

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَاهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ رَبِّي لَا يُجَلِّئُهَا لِوَفْتِهَا إِلَّا هُوَ تَقُلْتُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا تَأْتِيكُمْ إِلَّا بَغْتَةً (اعراف/187)

"They ask you about the Hour, when will be its taking place? Say: The knowledge of it is only with my Lord None but He shall manifest it at its time It will be momentous in the heavens and the earth It will not come on you but of a sudden" (A'raf, 187).

Among the differences between the Zoroastrian and Islam is the time of the resurrection, the Qur'an considers the knowledge of resurrection specific to Allah; the "Comparative Study of Islamic and Zoroastrian Eschatology" says:

"... It can be said that Resurrection, like the eternal event of the emergence of Islam, is an unexpected event that suddenly appears in the human landscape. On the contrary, Ferashkard, as the eternal event of Zoroastrian, is an expected event that has been modeled in the essence of the creation of the universe(Aghaei M.,2007,p.87).

The length of the torment

The length of the torment in the Giamah and the Hereafter has been three days in Zoroastrian sources, which seems to be as long as nine thousand years. In Pahlavi's narrative, Section 48,



it reads, "For any sin [suicide] they have committed, they will be decapitated once and taken to the Hell for three days and their torment shall last nine thousand years for them. On the third day, Sepandarmaz rises and says, "Enough torment". They shall punish other sinners who have not been guilty of suicide as well" (Mirfakhraei M.,1988,p.61).

"Professor Hashem Razi says:"... After the rise of the dead and the physical resurrection, everyone enters a public Paradise" (RaziH,2015,p287). (Razi, H ,2015,p.287).

If, as in Zoroastrian sources, like the Pahlavi narrative of section 48, everyone goes to Paradise and the wicked only suffer limbo and three days in the hell, the hereafter will lose its philosophy and God's righteousness will not be realized.

The rise of the dead in resurrection

In the Qur'an the rise of the dead is carried out simultaneously by blowing on the trumpet by Israfil. Although the name "Israfel" does not appear in the Quran, in the Zoroastrian sources, the rise of the dead is related to Saoshyant. Based on the Islamic sources the rise of the dead happens at the same time but based on Zoroastrian sources, the incident will take place in stages (Mirfakhraei M.,1988,p.61).

Incarnation in resurrection

Although the physical incarnation cannot be clearly recognized in the Avesta, other Zoroastrian sources, such as Islamic sources, believe in the reunion of the soul and body in the resurrection but there are inconsistencies about its place.

In Zad-e-Separm chapter 34, it reads: Zarathushtra asked Ahura Mazda:" The great men who die on the earth and re-settled in the Ferashkard will they have body or just will be souls? Ahura Mazda said "They will have body and rise again" (Rashed Mohassel MT.,1987,p.57).

But the Qur'an considers the place of incarnation as the graves.

و نَفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَإِذَا هُمْ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَنْسِلُونَ (يس/51)

And the trumpet shall be blown, when lo! From their graves they shall hasten on to their Lord (Yasin 51).

In the nineteenth chapter of Bundahishn as one of the oldest sources of Zoroastrians, a comprehensive description of the resurrection is presented that the phrases of Bundahishn are then compared with the Qur'an.

The physical resurrection and the power of the Lord on the re-creation of the human body:

Bundahishn: "Zarathushtra asks Ahura Mazda "as you exposed the body to water and wind, where does it reincarnate and how the resurrection is?" He replied ...As I created and maintained the child in mother's womb. First, they rise Kiumars' bone and then Mashya and Mashyana and they shall raise the rest of people" (Dadegi F.,2016, P.P.145-146).

The Qur'an also answers to the question of rebuilding the body by referring to the original creation of man:

قَالَ مَنْ يُحْيِي الْعِظَامَ وَ هِيَ رَمِيمٌ * قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنْشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَ هُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ (يس/79)



Says he: Who will give life to the bones when they are rotten?(78) Say: He will give life to them who brought them into existence at first And He is Cognizant of all creation(Yasin, 79). Also, the Qur'an refers to the endless power of the Lord, like Bundahishn

بلى قادرين على أن نسوي بنانه (قيامت/4)

Yea! We are able to make complete his very fingertips(Ghiamah, 4)

Nevertheless, from the point of Bundahishn, the first human being, Kimuars and then Mashya and Mashyana i.e. Adam and Eve are revived. However, the Quran brings forth the rebirth of all human beings.

Public assembling

Bundahishn: “For fifty-seven years Saoshyant will raise the dead until he rises all people righteous or devious (Dadegi F.,2016, P.146).

This text, like the Qur'an, refers to the general rise of the human beings, which is carried out by blowing the trumpet

ثُمَّ نُفِخُ فِيهِ أُخْرَى فَإِذَا هُمْ قِيَامٌ يَنْظُرُونَ (زمر/68)

then lo! they shall stand up awaiting (Zumar, 68)

Example Commentary states that:

At the end of the world and the beginning of the resurrection, there are two sudden incidents: in the first incident, all living beings die instantly, and in the second event, which occurs later, all human beings suddenly revive, rise and wait for judgment. The Holy Qur'an has interpreted these two accidents as “blowing the trumpet” (Nafkh-e-Soor) which is a proper interpretation of sudden and simultaneous events, since " Nafkh” means blowing and “Soor” means trumpet or an empty horn that is usually used to move or stop the army or caravan (3). (Makarem Shirazi N et al.,1995, P.P.534-535).

The place of the resurrection of human beings

Bundahishn: Everyone rises from where he lost his life or fell onto the ground (Dadegi F.,2016, P.P.146 and MazdapurK., 1990, P.228-229).

The Qur'an considers the place of human rebirth as the grave, the place where the dead is buried, not where he has been consumed by death.

و نُفِخُ فِي الصُّورِ فَإِذَا هُم مِّنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَنْسِلُونَ. (يس/51)

And the trumpet shall be blown, when lo! from their graves they shall hasten on to their Lord (Yasin, 51).

The embodiment of actions

Bundahishn: then, the Istostran assembly will take place where all people stand on the earth. In this assembly, everyone will see his good performance (Dadegi F.,2016, P.P.146).

The Qur'an also refers to the fact that anyone sees his actions in resurrection and his deeds are embodied in some way.

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصُدُّرُ النَّاسُ أَشْتَاتًا لِّيُرَوْا أَعْمَالَهُمْ (زلزله/6)

On that day, men shall come forth in sundry bodies that they may be shown their works (Zelzele, 6)



Knowing the sinners by their faces

Bundahishn: The righteous will be detectable from the devious as the white sheep against the black (DadegiF.,2016, P.P.146).

In the Qur'an it is also mentioned that the righteous are bright and the sinners are known by their faces.

يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَسْعَى نُورُهُمْ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَ بِأَيْمَانِهِمْ (حديد/12)

On that day you will see the faithful men and the faithful women their light running before them and on their right...(Hadid 12).

يُعْرَفُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيمَاهُمْ (الرحمن/41)

The guilty shall be recognized by their marks (Al-Rahman 41)

The separation between the righteous and devious

Bundahishn: So the righteous shall be separated from the devious. The righteous will be taken to Groudman (divine dwelling) and the devious will be taken back to the hell(DadegiF.,2016, P.P.146).One of the names of the Day of Judgment in the Quran, is “Youm-ol-Fasl” which means the day of separation. That is, the righteous and devious are separated.

هَذَا يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ (صافات/21)

This is the day of the judgment which you called a lie(Safat, 21)

Duration of resurrection

Bundahishn: For three days and nights, the devious shall be in the Hell and punished. The righteous shall be happy in the Groudman(Dadegi F.,2016, P.P.146 and (Villalobos, 2016).Here, Bundahishn considers the period of resurrection and torment three days, which has a fundamental difference with Islamic sources. Because the Qur'an considers the Day of Resurrection a long day and since the Sun would have been destroyed at that time and there is no day and night in the common sense, it seems that the Quran's purpose of the “Youm ” is a period of time equivalent to one thousand or fifty thousand years of the world.

فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ مِمَّا تَعُدُّونَ (سجده/ 5)

in a day the measure of which is a thousand years of what you count(Sojdeh 5).

فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ (معارج/4)

in a day the measure of which is fifty thousand years(M`arej 4)

Imam Sadiq (as) interprets the above verse as follow: there are 50 stops in Ghiamah, each stop lasts a thousand year as you now...(Mofid MM, 1413 AH), P.274).

A narration from the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) states that the duration of the resurrection for a believer is considered as long as saying a prayer(Bahrani S.H.S.,1995,p.487).

Therefore, it is relative and it does not pass the same for everyone.

Test of fire or passing through the molten material

Bundahishn: “Then, all people shall be burnt in molten metal and purged. The righteous will think of it as warm milk”(Dadegi F.,2016, P.P.147).



Pahlavi's Narratives, section 48 has similar statements,

Test of molten material, which is one of the stages of the resurrection in the Avesta and other Zoroastrian texts, seems to be similar to the following verse. However, in the Qur'an there is a discussion about passing through hell and fire, but in Zoroastrian sources, it is about molten metal.

وَإِنْ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا كَانَ عَلَى رَبِّكَ حَتْمًا مَقْضِيًّا (71) ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَنَذُرُ الظَّالِمِينَ فِيهَا جِثِّيًّا (مريم/72)

And there is not one of you but shall come to it This is an unavoidable decree of your Lord (71) And We will deliver those who guarded(against evil), and We will leave the unjust therein on their knees(Maryam, 72).

Jaber ibn Abdullah has narrated about Prophet Muhammad that all human beings, pious or devious, pass through the hell but there will be no harm to the pious (Majlesi MB, 1403 AH, P.249).

Flattening the ground

Bundahishn: It also says that the earth loses its unevenness and becomes a plain and will no longer have mountains and valleys".(Dadeqi F.,2016, P.P.148).

This is also mentioned in the Qur'an:

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْجِبَالِ فَقُلْ يَنْسِفُهَا رَبِّي نَسْفًا (105) فَيَذَرُهَا قَاعًا صَفْصَفًا (106) لَا تَرَى فِيهَا عِوَجًا وَ لَّا أَمْتًا (107) (طه)

And they ask you about the mountains. Say: My Lord will carry them away from the roots(105)Then leave it a plain, smooth level(106)You shall not see therein any crookedness or unevenness(Taha, 107).

Divine judgment

There is also a discussion about judgment of human actions in Zoroastrian sources, as well as Islam. The article on "Zoroastrian Eschatology" describes this judgment as "Mazdayasna believe in two personal (initial and limbo) and final (secondary in the resurrection) judgments. Personal judgment occurs on the fourth day after death on the bridge of Chinood. In the personal judgment court, there is only one soul and there is nobody else.... The final judgment: In the final judgment, everyone is in front of Ahuramazda, and it lasts three days(Hassanzadeh M.,2010)".

Classifying people in Ghiamah

After the death, people have their own ranks in the Quran, Avesta and other Zoroastrian sources.

هُم دَرَجَاتٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ (آل عمران/163)

There are (varying)grades with Allah...(Al-e-Imran, 163)

Zoroastrian sources have divided humans into three categories of righteous, devious and those whose good and evil action are equal. The book "Spiritual of Wisdom" also divides the people into three categories in the hereafter "whoever has more good deeds shall dwell in heaven, whoever has equal good and evil shall dwell in limbo and whoever has more sins shall suffer in the hell"(TafazoliA.,1975 , P.26). (Mussabekova et al., 2018)



Of course, this categorization is valid in Zoroastrian sources until the resurrection, and then all human beings go to the public Paradise in stages.

However, the categorization of people in the Qur'an is different. Allameh Tabatabaei says: "In fact, there are three kinds of people in resurrection: infernal people, the people of paradise and the Arafats (Tabatabaei MH., 1995, P.153).

The classification of the Qur'an is not as limited as it is, but also refers to the fact that each of the groups of unbelievers and believers also has subsets. (Vaghea'h 10- 27) (Zumar 71-73)

Comparison of Saoshyant in Zoroastrian sources with Dābā-al-Ardh in the Qur'an

Avesta and other Zoroastrianism sources attribute the changes in the resurrection to the last promised (Saoshyant) who is compared with Dābā-al-Ardh in the Qur'an. The Qur'an says:

وَ إِذَا وَقَعَ الْقَوْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَخْرَجْنَا لَهُمْ دَابَّةً مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ تُكَلِّمُهُمْ أَنَّ النَّاسَ كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا لَا يُوقِنُونَ (نمل/ 82)

"And when the word shall come to pass against them, We shall bring forth for them a creature from the earth that shall wound them, because people did not believe in Our Communications" (Naml, 82)

Since the Qur'an has not provided much explanation about Dābā-al-Ardh, there are disagreements about it.

The Example Commentary of verse 82 of Naml Surah provides the following explanation:

Many details have been provided in Shia and Sunni narrations and narrations about the Dābā-al-Ardh. Generally, they can be summarized in two interpretations: 1-the group who has considered it as an unusual creature of a non-human species with a strange form,... 2- others consider it as human being, an extraordinary and animated man, that his main task is to separate Muslims from the hypocrites and mark them. In various narratives, Imam Ali (AS) is considered as Dābā-al-Ardh... The late Abu al-Fitwah Razi writes in his commentary under the verse of the Dābā-al-Ardh: According to the news that has been narrated from our companions, Dābā-al-Ardh refers to Mahdi Sahib Al Zaman (Razi Abu al Fath, HA,1408 AH,p.75 and Makarem Shirazi N et al.,1995, P.544-548).

Therefore, although it is impossible to distinguish between the last promised in the Zoroastrianism (Saoshyant) and Dābā-al-Ardh, they both refer to a powerful human or thing that plays an effective role in the provisions of the resurrection and its evolution and performing some actions.

Conclusions

There are many similarities between Islam and Zoroastrianism in terms of resurrection summarized as follows:

Both religions accept the principle of the resurrection, rise of the dead, and believe that changes will take place in the present world. It becomes an ideal world and everyone will be rewarded and punished for his deeds. However, there are obvious differences in some details including the difference in the torment of sinners and unbelievers.

Finally, one can conclude that Islam has a more complete, precise, and fair view of the resurrection.



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