

Abortion and Zoroastrianism

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Abstract

The righteousness or unrighteousness of abortion is evaluated in this article. For a more précised look, this study has been performed in two separate domains: In the ancient tradition of Zoroastrianism which is a collection of the teachings of Zoroaster mixed with ancient mythical notions and perceptions and the other is the domain in which the pure teachings of Zoroaster which specifically have been passed down in Gathas or the holy songs of Zarathustra or Zoroaster. Abortion has been counted as unrighteous in the ancient traditions of Zoroastrian teachings, as this act is both a deliberate murderous act and it also pollutes the Earth with a cadaver. However, in pure Zoroaster's teachings, there is no direct mention of the legalities of abortion such as its righteousness or unrighteousness. However, what is quite fascinating in his teachings, is a profound outlook and a very ethical view towards human beings. The comprehension and realization of Zoroaster's position towards abortion is possible only when one looks at this issue from the common sense prevalent in his teachings. Zoroaster sees the world as a pervasive battlefield between the bad and the good and he believes that the best deeds or actions, originate from Asha, which can be interpreted as righteousness, purity or chastity and the fundamental order governing the universe. In Zoroaster's beliefs, all creatures of the universe, including man, are the creations of Ahura Mazda and they rotate around Asha in their self and therefore deserve reverence. In this system, the starting or departure point for the mien or manner of any human that steps in to this world, is nothing but virtue and purity; and (s)he is so free and unfettered that (s)he can egress its orbit around Asha, against it celestial self, and turn to evil and wickedness or vice versa and step onto the path of Asha and renovate or rejuvenate the universe by each deed. Therefore, one can easily see that in the views of Zoroaster, abortion is the destruction of a being of derive entity in his/her self that can widen the boundaries and strength of goodness in the world. This means that, in Zoroastrianism's outlook abortion swings between two boundaries: Either an innately celestial being has been murdered or a being, which according to his/her innate, could have become more celestial, which both acts are obscene and denounced. According to these statements, in Zoroaster's teachings there is always a recommendation to the application of the principles of rationality in all matters, which based on this rationality one can allow abortion under some circumstances that are indicated by the achievements of science. In other words, in Zoroastrian's religion outlooks, whenever the contemporary science indicates an action, we should follow that and it is not approved to evade it, by excuses such as commitment to (unwise and insensible) traditions.

Key Word: Abortion, Zoroastrianism, Gathas, Teachings, Rationality, Righteousness, Unrighteousness, Science, Tradition.

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