

The Persians!



THE IRANIANS

The Persians

- Who are the Persians?
- What is Zoroastrianism?
- What is the *Shahnameh*?



Who are the Persians?

- They were **Indo-Europeans** nomadic people migrated from **Central Asia** and **southern Russia** ca. 1200 - 1000 B.C.E.
- They settled on the **high land**, east of the **Mesopotamian** land and **northern India**.
- They were **horse breeders** and traveled with large herds of livestock.



Persians / Aryans / Iranians

Who are the Persians?

- ▶ Persians are **Aryans**.
- ▶ It was the Ancient Greeks who called the whole land **Persia**.
- ▶ **Parsi** – Persis a region of southern Iran
- ▶ **Arabs** called Fars
- ▶ Their language is called **Farsi**
- ▶ Today, they called their country **Iran**, which means: “**Land of the Aryans.**”



The Palace of Peace and the Tomb of Cyrus the Great of Persia



Black Sea

Caspian Sea

Mediterranean Sea

Persian Empire

Persian Gulf

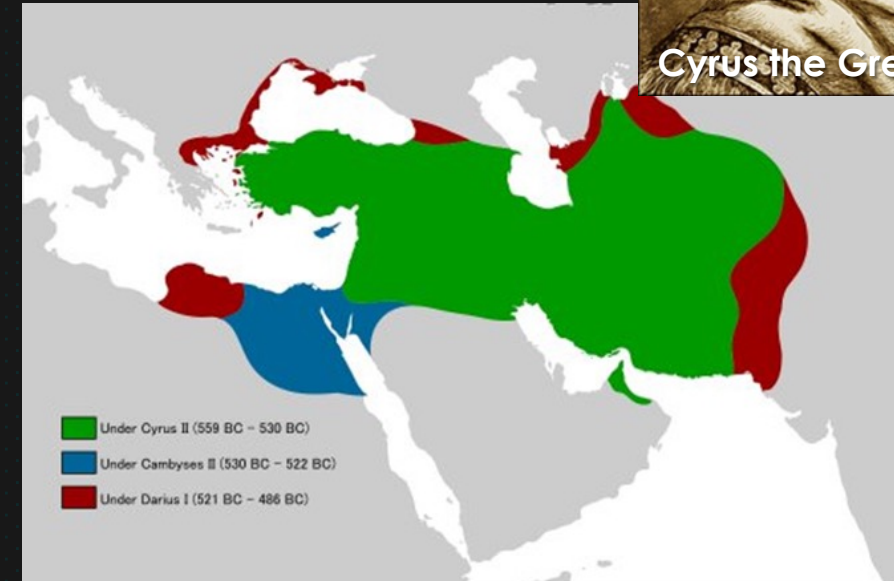
Red Sea

Persian Empire 6 C. BCE

The Persian (Achaemenid) Empire 550-330 BCE

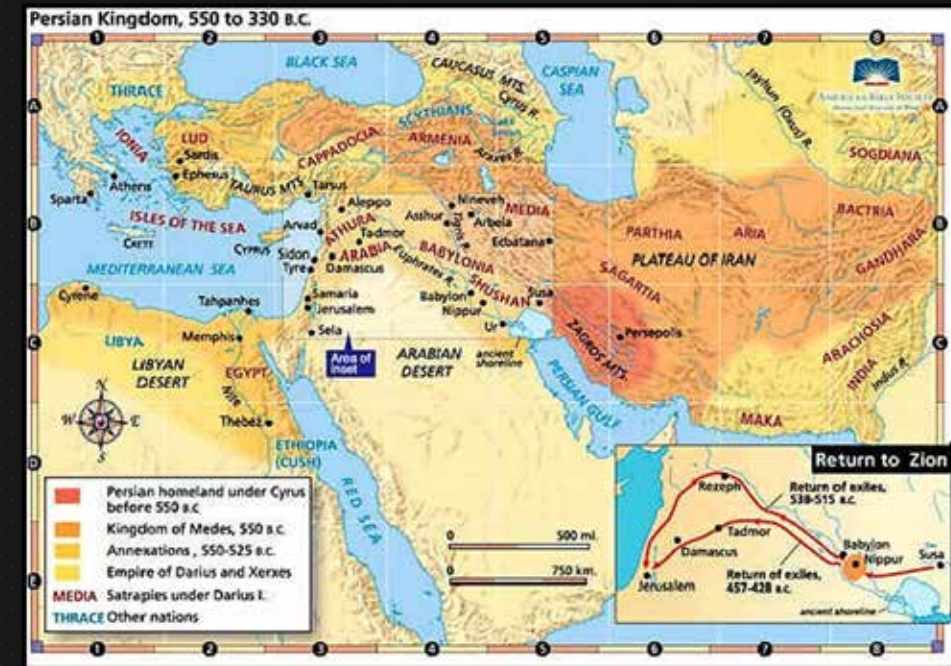


- ▶ It was the first Persian Empire on Western Asia.
- ▶ The Empire's territory was vast stretching 3000 miles from the Balkan peninsula in the west to the Indus River valley in the east.
- ▶ It was founded by **Cyrus the Great.** (559–530 B.C.E)
- ▶ from He freed the Jews & returned them back to Jerusalem.
- ▶ He helped them to restore the Jewish Temple.
- ▶ He was tolerant with all cultures & religions.



Remarkable Figures in ancient Persian history

- The Persian Empire was founded by **Cyrus the Great ca. (559–530 B.C.E)**
- King Cyrus conquered all Mesopotamia and defeated the Babylonians.
- He **freed** the **Jews** and returned them back to Jerusalem and helped them to **restore the Jewish Temple**.
- He was **tolerant** with all **cultures & religions**.



The Persian Religion

Zoroastrianism



Zoroaster

The Persian Religion

- Zoroastrianism - Monotheism/Dualism
 - Ahura Mazda (Wise Lord) – Forces of Good
 - Angra Mainyu/Ahriman (Destructive Spirit)– Forces of Evil
 - Light vs Dark
 - Asha vs Druj (Order vs Chaos)
 - Faravahar: the Threefold Path of **Asha**
 - Good Thoughts
 - Good Words
 - Good Deeds
 - Bad Thoughts
 - Bad words
 - Bad Deeds



Zoroaster



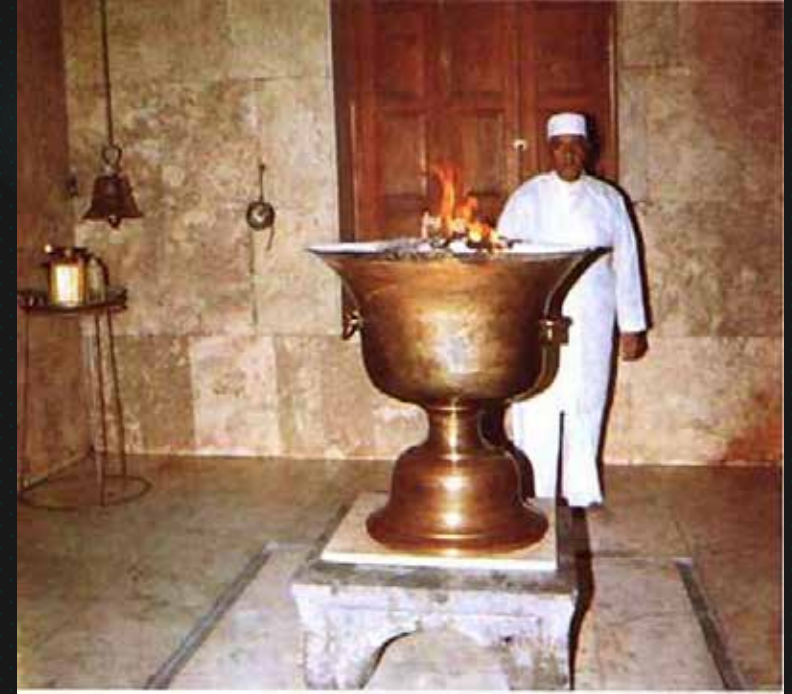
Zoroastrianism

□ Ahura Mazda is:

- All Knowing
- All powerful
- Is everywhere (Omnipresent)
- Impossible for humans to conceive
- Unchanging
- The Creator of life
- The Source of all goodness and happiness.

□ Sacred Fire

- Fire is the Zoroastrian symbol, it represents God's light or wisdom
- Fire was fed 5x a day
- Prayers are 5x a day,
- Avesta & Agatha
Zoroastrian book of Holy Scriptures written in Avestan language.



The fire-temple



Zoroastrian Temple in CA-USA

[https://www.3cmediasolutions.org/lti/coursemedia/play?id=23204
&cid=33d7b1c2759e803456edd760be61f88c3183e8f9](https://www.3cmediasolutions.org/lti/coursemedia/play?id=23204&cid=33d7b1c2759e803456edd760be61f88c3183e8f9)

The Zoroastrian Religion

- They believe that they must follow only the good god and do all the rituals.
- They believe in the existence of Evil – Ahriman, the adversary of Ahura Mazda.
- The Zoroastrian faith centered on a dualistic cosmology of good and evil.
- Humans are responsible for their choices and carry the consequence.
- Zoroastrians believe in angels.
- They believe in Judgment Day and paradise & hell.
- They believe in the value of humans and life.



Zoroaster



Faravahar

The Shahnameh

What is the Shahnameh?

- ▶ **The Shahnameh** ("Book of Kings", composed 977-1010 CE) is a medieval epic written by the poet **Ferdowsi** (c. 940-1020 CE)
- ▶ It was written to preserve the myths, history, language, & culture of **ancient Persia**.
- ▶ The work covers the entire history of ancient Persia from the **creation** of the world to the Muslim Arab **conquest** of 651 CE.
- ▶ The epic is divided into **three** main sections one that describes a **mythical age** one that describes a **heroic age** and one that describes a **historical age**.



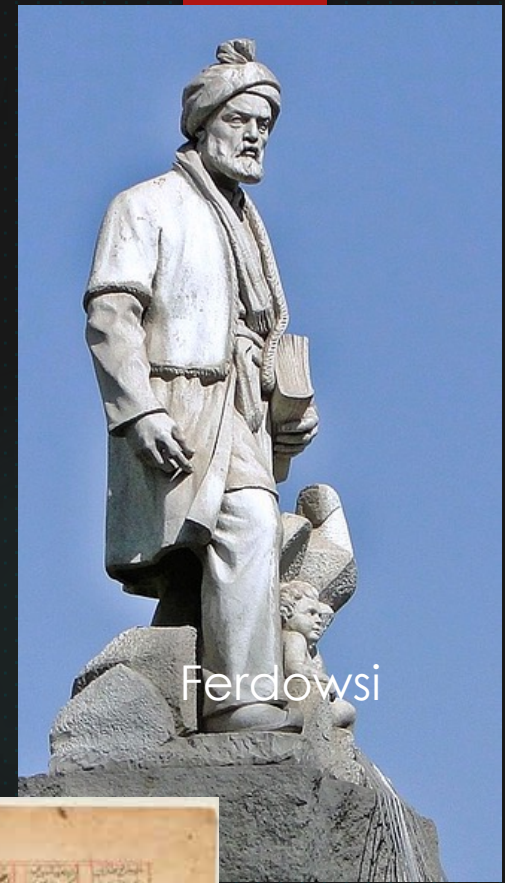
Ferdowsi



the shahnameh

What is the Shahnameh?

- ▶ It is a national epic that captures history and mythology simultaneously.
- ▶ The majority of the stories in the **Shahnama** involve battles and struggles between the forces of **good** and **evil**,
- ▶ other themes include love, humor, and the supernatural.
- ▶ One of the principal themes concerns **kingship and the relationship between sovereigns and their subjects.**



the Shahnameh

Shahnameh: The Epic Of The Persian Kings | The
Persians: A History Of Iran | BBC Select – 3 min

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kRNJt2a22xE>



What is Persia today?

Persia /Iran

- The ancient Greeks called the land **Persia**.
- The country of Persia became known as **Iran in 1935**.
- Iran is the native name of the country, which means “**Land of the Aryans**.”
- Iran (Persia) is the home to about **82 million** people, most of whom speak **Farsi** and are **Shi'a (Shiite) Muslims**.



Good luck!

