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Suhrawardi's belief on Light and Dark is so close to what has mentioned in Zoroastrian religion as two forces "Sepanta minoo" and "angere minoo". In this regard, the whole Iranian worldview was shaped based on the move from Dark to Light and this is what Suhrawardi considered based on the adaptation of Iranian worldview before and after Islam.

### The Quran

In Quran, light has been frequently mentioned in different verses. In general, light is considered as God and the manifestation of his almighty and the whole existence originates from his light. In addition, this light is regarded as a guide. As a whole, terms such as existence, guidance, faith, and life is used in Quran as Light (Alipour Monazah, 2009).

In 25 cases, the word "light" is used in the Quran, it is sometimes referred to as sensational light and sometimes as spiritual light. Sometime, it is used to an adjective for Quran, Torah, and Bible and sometimes light and dark are opposite terms. In addition, Light is stated as the believers' final destination. All believers find their way to light using their efforts; also, sun and moon are considered as light manifest. All these verses show, in a way, the important position of light in Islam (Allah – Verdi Zadeh, 2016).

Islam is Light and all believers are its manifestation. Light verse shows the fact that God Almighty possesses a general light with which earth and sky are shining and with that light all the truth in the world have unwrapped.

Regarding the move from Dark to light, Tabatabaee has mentioned that Dark means misleading and light means guidance if light is taken as guidance and Dark is taken as misleading, Light is used in singular form showing that is unique whereas Dark is in plural form shows that it misleading is not unique.

### Conclusion

In Iran, light has always been regarded as a precious element and plays an important role in Iranian lives. So that the sun is the source of mercy in Mitra ritual and in Zoroastrian era, it was formed with Dark and light dualism and light is always considered as grace and mercy.

After combining Islam with this culture, the divine aspect of light was still in Iran-Islam culture as a top position idea and even its meaning was deepened. In other words, the common concept of light in Quran and ancient Iran thoughts, especially Mazdak beliefs led to noticeable place of light in Iranian culture. The interpretation of God in Quran as a light helped this culture to the point that Iranian in whole history considered the sun as a spiritual matter.

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darkness and shined his own light for guidance and who did not receive the light, was distracted.

God is the main source of the light. He is the true light and other lights arise from the main source (Kashani, 1992). It means the universe has a base, which is the true and original light, and the light, which is common among people, called apparent light because they can see it by their eyes.

The light of the human eyes is not complete. This light can see any light rather than its light itself and just touches and understands the appearance of the objects and cannot see the thing very far or very close. It can see limited and definite things.

It probably sees the big, small or vice versa. However, there is another eye, which is free from this defect, which is “wisdom” or “spirit.

The human being can distinguish himself from others with the wisdom eye and understands all the mystery. In spite of all these perfections of wisdom, it is impossible to infer some facts, which can be understood just by God wisdom and this is Quran, which inform people more than anything else does – so Quran is the most valuable source of light (Ghazali, 2015).

Mulla Sadra by picturing the steps of natural spirit, vegetal, animal, and human, has regarded the spirit completion movement compatible with the movement growth of spirit in substance that starts from the substance and leads to beyond. The movement from darkness to brightness conveys the idea of the spirit motion from the demon wisdom to active sense. The forth step is the spiritual life that is the link with active sense or God spirit (Al-e Hashem et al., 2017).

### **Illuminationism**

In Islamic culture, whenever it comes to [divine] Light, the first name comes to mind is “Shahab ad-Din Suhrawardi” who is the most prominent figure in this matter. His school of thought is known as “Ishraqi” which literally means “morning

sunshine” and here it means “human wisdom” which has nothing to do with material issues. In his viewpoint, matter is intrinsically hidden and this is the [divine] Light, which makes it shining, and in away, Light is regarded as the manifestation of human knowledge of objects.

In fact, his wisdom originates from the word “Eshraq” which means illumination and the word “Mashreq” which means “East” where the sun rises. “Eshraq” wisdom is a spiritual sunrise. “Ishraqi” philosophers applied the word “Sharq” as the source of light. In his book, *Talvihat*, Suhrawardi considered “Sharq Asghar” or Small East as the world of self and “Sharq Akbar” or Great East as the world of wisdom and in contrast to those words, he took the word “Maqreb” as the world of darkness or the world of matter. This is pretty the same as what was believed in ancient Iranian wisdom (Ebrahimi Dinani, 2000).

In his struggle to establish the school of Illuminationism, Suhrawardi aimed to revive ancient Iranian wisdom together with ancient Greece wisdom in the Islamic culture. In addition, he noticed Zoroastrians thoughts of matters like Light and Dark and angelology. He used lots of ancient Iranian wisdom terminology and brought them into Islamic knowledge and wisdom.

Suhrawardi discovered illumination as what has surrounded Iranian kings. “khorneh” philosophy is the basis of Illuminationism. This originates from God and is the Light approved by his almighty. Suhrawardi believes that the highest level a sage, after rigors and sever struggles, could reach is to observe and perceive the divine Light. This can able the sage to see what others could not see (Corbin, 1992:227). Considering the Quran as the base, Suhrawardi strengthened his philosophy on two foundations namely Light and Dark, which was in line with Quran and Sonnat. Therefore, he called his wisdom as the wisdom of Light, which has frequently used in Quran and Sonnat. This

Avesta, there are some gods named specially Mitra. Therefore, there was no gap during all this time in worshipping and the rank of Mitra, and just the interpretations were deeper and more delicate.

However, this angel with all her power and expansive duties is like the biggest and main assistant of Ahura-mazda and is introduced as the most powerful angel.

Mitra in Avesta is the god of light that before the sunrise shines above the mountains peak and makes all lands and sky bright. Mitra is not the sun but is the light that pushes the darkness away and makes the nature refresh due to its warmth (Shariatmadari, 2013).

Therefore, Mitra has an important position in Zoroastrian religion and in all sources; the worship of Mitra is along with Ahura-Mazda. "Mitra was created by Ormazd" and you have to pray "three times a week standing in front of sun and Mitra. Therefore, Mitra stands on the second position after Ormazd (Bois, 2005).

According to Zoroastrian's beliefs, the world is divided into three parts: Top, Middle, and Low. The top part is considered as the light, purity and salvation, the bottom is the darkness and weakness and the middle is the meeting point of those parts or dummy part which we can see this in legendary tales of "Verjamkurd" in Avesta. Zoroaster assigned all bad and good appearances in the universe to two energies of "Sepanta Minoo" and "Angreming. There are three houses in heaven according to Zoroastrians. The third house is the place of Ahura-mazda. In Zoroastrian religion, Ahura mazda and devil are complementary and are the signs of the light and darkness and these two elements can be seen everywhere in Zoroastrian religion (Al-e Hashemi, Barati & Sajadi Miniyator, 2017).

### **Manicheans religion**

Mani is Sufi reformer who was Zoroastrian and

opposed the government at that time due to the changes in some parts of Avesta and changing angel to demon religion and he claimed that he wanted to reform the ancient religion and continue the Zoroastrian religion.

Mitra in this religion has been considered equivalence of two Manavi angels:

First, the alive spirit that is a big fighter in Manavi, captured all oppressors; it is connected with "Misreh" – the victorious angel, the alive spirit at first made the sun. Therefore, these two angels have enough in common to equalize their images.

It was always like other fighter angels being in fight with devils. It was linked to the sun and it is believed that it is the sun inhabitant so has given credit of to whom worship. In addition, the east where the sun rises is assigned to the third sender / prophet and Mani called it "the nice east" and in the literature, it is called Sepideh "dawn" (Refer to shariatmadari, 2013 for more information).

The similarities between the third prophet and Mitra are so strong that Manavi mission to part felt they could not put them apart. Therefore, like previous beliefs, they released the alive Meysare and united the third prophet with Meysare and Niryouasanghe (The messenger of Zoroastrian angel/ god).

In comparison between Qebt and part texts, we can infer that Iranian, who worship the sun accepted Manavi religion, because the sun worshipping doctrines were not enough to them.

In part, poems according to a belief, the third prophet as Qebti texts is the manifest of the angel in the sun together with the mother of the life and the powerful fathers and in other words it is the God itself (Bois, 1997:45).

### **Sufism point of view**

In Sufiyan point of view, the real light is the nature of truth and all creatures are the ray of truth. The creatures did not exist and came in to being by its power. It means God created all creatures in

which belonged to a clay tablet on which Hiti and Mitani people have sworn to the treaty God / angel. This displays the importance of Mitra as a glorious Goddess the kings have sworn to and assumed it as their treaty protector. Mitra's followers have considered the sun as a sign of Mira and prayed God standing toward east before the sunrise (Hammi, 1977).

Therefore, Mithraism have regarded Mithra rose from the brightness and believed that Mitra was born in a cave on Alborz mountain or rose from lightning due to hitting two cliffs, so they have hoarded stones and worshipped Mitra in caves and they've built one where there was no cave. These monuments can also be a metonymy of the cave where Mitra had scarified a cow and that is why mountains and all monuments in the mountains, specifically Alborz Mountain, are considered holy for Iranians (Javadi, 2007). Komen believes that Mitra was the God of light and brightness and since the spread of light is through the air and space, it is assumed that the Mitra's place is somewhere between heaven and hell (Komen, 2000). Also, the importance of Mitra is displayed when some special names combined with Mitra have been created like one month and day (Mithraism celebration) of a year in Iranian calendar and showing that Mitra like the God of light has been considered similar to the sun for a long time (Benvenist, 2007). Therefore, the behavior of the nation of this land has been affected by the thoughts of Mithraism and has produced some elements, which certify the importance and the role of light and the sun in their culture.

Mehrabeh structure, fireplace, Saqakhane, Zurkhaneh, Moqarnas designs, and dome-like monuments, lion and the sun motif, sarv, sacrifice tradition, Nowruz, Yalda night, and other events and signs in Persian literature all show their combination with Mitra culture. The metonymy of the culture of that time can be found in Hafiz poems a lot where Sufism was

common and the signs of Mithraism seeped into that culture.

Therefore, we can say that Iran is the "Mitrland," which is known by Iranian human being's reallion with Mitra mediator. In other words, "Mitra land" is an aspect of the human beings on earth that is dominated by Mithraism characteristics (Mansouri, 2013). In addition, the Iranian lives were entangled with the sun due to the geographical position of the land toward the sun. Therefore, Iran concept can only be found out through understanding the concept of Mitra. Mitra land is stated through united concepts of Iran and Mitra, understanding of which is dependent on perception of the two dimensions (Mansouri, 2018).

### **Zoroastrianism**

Zoroastrians protect their prophet's instructions within a framework of rituals where there are some ancient religious beliefs. In addition, you can see the fire and Hoam (the main thing in Zoroastrian worship tradition) rituals in the center of these rituals. Mitra is also put on the top in this religion and people worship it together with Ahura – Mazda (the name of God in ancient Persian theology).

Through reading Gahan (the holy book), we find out that Ahura-Mazda has considered all gods as the creature of human being's Mind and readers have been constantly called upon to worship only God. Garchovich believed that it was after Zoroaster that the leader of the priest had to promote all gods' rank and Mitra became popular again among Zoroaster deputies. He stated that in "Mehrist," Mitra was the creator of Ahura-Mazda and just in Mithraism poem, Mitra was switched to the creator (Saqebfar, 2006). After that, Zoroaster would reinforce and Zoroastrian priest had to get along well with Mithraism.

Zoroaster himself emphasized on the unique God that is Ahura mazda and not any other gods and even called all those "demon". However, in new

Persian translation of this paper entitled:

مهر تا الله : بررسی جایگاه نور و چگونگی تداوم آن در آیین‌ها و ادیان ایران زمین، از باستان تا اسلام امروز

is also published in this issue of journal.

## The Mehr to Allah: Investigating the Light Position & its Continuation in Iranian Religions from the Ancient to Today's Islam

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### Abstract

Spiritual and exalted viewpoint towards the light is an issue which can be observed among various Iranian religions and rituals. According to this point of view, the light has metaphysics origin and spiritual nature and is holy. The sun was the God of light and brightness in ancient religions and was really important in the Zoroastrian religion and Islam. In Islam, it has been said that Quran is the light of the earth and sky. Therefore, the light has been considered as the spring of the all being, which renew the entire world during various time and religions. This element has been always in Iranian culture and in fact it shows the eminent and spiritual world and its exalted and holiness values have been spread throughout this culture associating the past to the present.

This article tried to highlight the importance and the concept of the holiness element in Iranian culture and the way it has been handed down to new generations through the time.

### Keywords

*Light, Mitra, Divine, God.*

### Introduction

Paying attention to the light element has been observed in all basic human cultures and the societies with different customs and religious beliefs & it is considered and valued as a God element. The light has been always present and important in the ancient to Islamic period in Iran in all places, traditions, and religious customs and it has been manifested nicely in each period

compatible with the dominant culture and religion. In other words, Iranian life, culture, and art have been resulted based on their ideology and the movement from darkness to brightness was among the most important basics of this ideology extended from the ancient to Islamic Iran.

### The sun religion

The oldest sign remained from the sun God / angel,

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