

TISHTRIYA - Earth's second Sun

[Pronunciation symbols:-

a as in fun; **ā** as in far; **ā̃** (nasal sound ān) as in 'āvān'; **ə** as in fed, **ē** as in fade; **i** as in fill; **ī** as in feel; **o** as in for; **ō** as in fore; **u** as in full; **ū** as in food. **The nasal sounds are ā̃n** as in āvān; **ə̃n** as in the French 'trés bièn', **ī̃n** as in Ahīnsā (also pronounced 'īm' as in Sanskrit Ahīmsā and as also in Avestan and Gathic languages) and **ū̃n** as in Humayūn. The pronunciation of some consonants (as permitted by my software) are '**ś**' for 'sh', '**ṣ**' for 'ss', '**ṛ**' for 'ri', **ñ** for 'ni', '**ḥ**' for 'zh']

Nomenclatures

The star, **Sirius** is variously named. It is named the "**Dog Star**" since it lies within the constellation, Canis Major, 'the larger Dog.' This constellation is situated within the (buckle of the) belt of the Orion - the Hunter.

In our Scriptures it is a revered **Yazata - Aves: Tishtriya / Tishtrya / Tēshtar; Pah & Guj: Tir**. The Vedic people identify **Tishtriya / Sirius, with the Nakhshētra Pushya ruled by 'Guru/Brihaspati'**. Historical documents reveal it was also named variously as '**Tishya**' in **R̥g Veda X, 64,8; as 'Pushya' by Pānini 6,4,149 and 'Siddhya' & 'Sahshya'** at different times. *Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary* mentions '**Siddhya**' & '**Tishya**'.

The much-observed Star

Tishtriya is our Galaxy's brightest star in the night sky. It is 8.6 light-years away, that is, its pure white light takes about eight and a half years to reach Earth compared to the Sun whose light takes only about eight and a half minutes to reach Earth.

Being a superhot boiling cauldron of liquids and gases (akin to our Sun) it emits **its own pure white sunlight** (like the white light of the Sun Tishtriya's light also breaks up into its seven colours of the rainbow) as opposed to **reflected light** like that of the other stars. Visible on a clear sky to the naked eye, it is seen to emit a mild violet tint.

Tir Yasht, 8.2 it is called 'a radiant, glorious star, of a happy and good dwelling, having a mild violet lustre, beautiful, joy-bestowing.....

Tishtrya bestows helpful rays, which are pure white with an exalted lustre from afar.'

Although, to the naked eye, it looks like one Star it is composed of two Stars. In different research data there seems to be a wide inconsistency in the description of the size and brightness of each of the two stars. The larger and brighter of the two, **Sirius A**, averages 2-3 times the mass of our sun, and over 10-20 times as bright. It shines with a brilliant mild violet tint. **Sirius B** is a 'White Dwarf' star, invisible to the naked eye, intensely dense about 4 times the diameter of our Earth. This suggests that at some previous time, having used up all its hydrogen reserve, it expanded as a '**Red Giant**' during its dying moments and then suddenly collapsed into the size of a dense '**White Dwarf**'.

In 1862 modern astronomy assessed that **Sirius B** takes 50 years to complete an elliptical orbit around **Sirius A**. During the period of their closest encounter in an elliptical orbit the combined radiated energy of these two great stars is especially intense. Vast amounts of

electromagnetic radiation, including visible light, ultraviolet, x-rays, gamma rays....etc are released into space. It appears from historical data that a current of highly charged particles emerging from the mutually interacting *Tishtriya A and its satellite, Sirius B exert an influence' on our Sun's activity and, together, even perhaps on human psyche and quality of life and even on Earth's environment.*

The heliacal rising of Tishtriya in the pre-dawn sky

Once in a year the **heliacal rising** of Tishtriya occurs when it first becomes visible above the eastern horizon for a brief moment just before sunrise, after a period of time when it had not been visible. Each day after the first heliacal rising, the star will rise slightly earlier and remain visible for longer before the light from the rising sun blots it out (makes it, so to say, disappear). Over the following days the star will move further and further westward (about one degree per day) over the dome of the pre-dawn sky, until eventually it is no longer visible in the sky at dawn because it has already set below the western horizon. Tishtriya will, then reappear in the eastern sky at dawn approximately one year after its previous heliacal rising.

Being the brightest visible star it has been studied, commented upon and revered avidly by many ancient cultures. The timely annual return of Sirius in the pre-dawn sky was a most welcome event. Its, *once in a year 'heliacal rising'*, that is, its rising during the haziness of the pre-dawn twilight moments in the east, just before Sunrise, was hailed with great joy.

The early **Egyptians** noticed that Sirius always rose before the sun just before the annual flood of the River Nile, which they impatiently waited for just as the Avestan people eagerly awaited the coming of the rains.. Its appearance in the pre-dawn sky before the rising of the Sun was a most delightful sign. This yearly inundation was important to Egyptian agriculture. The *Sidereal Year* (the time taken for Earth to rotate round the Sun on its ecliptic path and return to the same position) is 365 days, 6 hours, 9 minutes, and 9.5 seconds. It matches the length of our *Solar Year*, 365.25 days. The **Avestan people** and the ancient Egyptians had already made this observation. Even today, our New Year's Eve celebration is a continuation of a most ancient ritual honouring the return of Sirius to the mid-heaven position at 12 0' Clock, midnight of December 31. The alignment marks the moment of the advent of the first day of a New Year.

The early **Greeks** and **Romans** had a different impression of the Dog Star. At this time of year, Sirius travels across the sky with the sun during the daylight hours. They believed that the combination of the sun and Sirius actually caused the hot summers resulting in fever in men and abnormal rabid nature among dogs.

Tishtriya in our Avesta

Whatever form Tishtriya assumed in the eager minds of its devoted invokers, it, most often, happened to grant its special boons and gifts they yearned for.

Our scriptures are full of rapturous praise for this brightest star as it rises in the early morning dim twilight in the east just before sunrise. *A Yazata in our holy scriptures, Tishtriya presides over the life-giving rains, which the Avestans most eagerly awaited after a season of intense laborious work of tilling the soil and laying of the seeds in the fields.* The expected rains meant prosperity to the settlements. The tillers naturally held its opponent, the evil of drought - *'Apaōśa'* in utter disdain.

Tishtriya - bestows annual rains in the prepared fields offering solace to the devotees who had been eagerly awaiting the down pour of the rain: -

Tir Yasht 8.15:

Tishtriya accosts an assembly of tillers of the soil advising the members.

‘To whosoever doth worship with libation of milk & Haōma shall I grant the immense wealth of sons, multiple progeny.....’

Tir Yasht 8.17: *‘.....with increase in cattle....’*

Tir Yasht 8.19: *‘.....with a troop of horses and a magnificent capacity for the adoration of this, our corporeal world.....’*

Tishtrya-ascha: **Tir Yasht 8.22:**

‘.....the radiant & glorious Tishtrya grapples with his opponent, Apaōṣa in fierce battle for 3 days and 3 nights &, being powerful, triumphs over the ill-famed opponent.’

In a land based economy, dependent entirely on the slow cycle of the soil under the uncertain vagaries of Nature, the heliacal rising of the Yazata was held in great awe as it also coincided with the timely crowing of the domestic rooster in the farm homesteads in the Primeval Homeland of Airyānā vaēja. The subsequent ‘*rains of Tishtriya*’ that followed heralded immense joy.

Tishtryō: **Tir Yasht 8.5:**

Reverence be to the Star, Tishtriya, radiant and glorious whom the cattle and the beasts of burden and men eagerly remember when they happen to be deceived in their yearnings.’

Tir Yasht 8.20:

Tishtriya ‘travels to the holy sea - Vouru-kaṣa to soak the vapours for the rain clouds (allegorically) in the guise of a horse - magnificent, with yellow ears and golden decorative harness.’

Tishtryō: **Khorshed Nyāēsh 1.9 & Mehr Nyāēsh 2.8:**

‘Reverence be to the radiant glorious star from good and happy dwellings as it rises - mild violet lustre, beautiful, helpful, health giving, joy bestowing, exalted’

Tishtryō-stārahē: **Mēhr Yasht 10.143:**

‘Reverence be to the glittering light of Tishtrya, whose face shines like the one who the spreads happiness(the ‘light’ spreader), & whose chariot is in readiness to combat deceit.’

Tishtrim: **Tir Yasht 8.1:**

‘Reverence be to the ones who call for assistance to the glittering light of Tishtrya to appear in the east.’

Tir Yasht 8.12:

‘Reverence be to Tishtriya for its piercing vision of its brilliant illuminations, extending afar.’

Rashnē Yasht 12.27; Vend 19.33; Yasna 16.4:

‘Reverence be to the glittering spreader of light.....’

Astad Yasht 18.7; Khorshēd Nyaesh 1.8; Mehr Nyāēsh 2.8:

‘Salutation to Tishtriya, sharp-eyed in its piercing vision through its glittering light.....radiant & full of lustre.’

Āfringās of the Siruzas 3.13:

‘Reverence be to Tishtrya the star, radiant, possessing bright glitter, created by Mazda, who makes the waters flow. Reverence be to all the stars that have in them the seed of the waters, the seed of the earth, and the seed of the plants.’

Tishtrim-cha: Tir Yasht 8.12:

‘Reverence be to the star, Tishtrya.’

Tishtim: Āshtad Yasht 18.5:

‘.....Tishtriya - the spreader of 100 fold affection in harmony with its brilliant, glorious and glittering light.’

Tishtryēhē:

Tir Yasht 8.56:

‘.....if appropriate adoration of the radiant & glorious Tishtrya with holy righteousness is done neither the chariot of a hostile foe, nor a calamity, nor sickness, or vengeance, nor the lifted banner of a hostile army would be able to inflict harm..’

Yasna 27.2:

‘.....this is an offering to Ahura Mazda to smite evil and bring about the prosperity of Tishtrya’s glittering, brilliant & glorious light.....’

Tishtryaēnyascha:

Tir Yasht 8.12:

Kanga’s Khordeh Avesta talks of ‘satellites pertaining to Tishtrya’ and, in this same verse, talks of the star, ‘Haptoiring’ (meaning a group of seven).’

In modern times, this group of 7 stars called the ‘Pleiades’ has been identified only with the help of telescopes.

Yet our Avestan ancients could see the 7 stars with the naked eye.

Could the ‘satellite’ of Kanga, in fact, be Sirius B?.

Tishtriya’s strong cosmic electromagnetic influence

It is described, both in our Avesta and by modern science, as having a **strong cosmic electromagnetic influence on other stars (and Constellations) as identified in Tir Yasht:- the Sun, the Moon, the stars, Satavaēsa / Lambda Aquarii (Nakhshetra Satha Bhishang of the Vedic people, ruled by ‘Varuna’), Haptoiring / Pleiades - group of 7 stars (Nakhshetra Krittika of the Vedic people, ruled by ‘Agni’), Vanant (also called Thvorshtar) / Spica (Nakhshetra Chitra of the Vedic people, ruled by ‘Tvasta’).....**

Tir Yasht, 8.44:

‘.....Just as Ahura Mazda has ordained that Zarathushtra, as Lord,

*oversees the affairs of men so also he has established Yazata
Tishtriya to accomplish the workings of other stars.'*

Tir Yasht, 8.12:

*'Reverence be to Tishtriya and to the satellites of Tishtriya - the star, Haptōiring to
oppose the incantations of evil-doers, the star Vanant, which by opposing
Apaōša helps gives strength and overcome afflictions and malice....'*

Tir Yasht 8.1 & in the preamble, in addition, adds reverence to the **Moon** (whose light has been observed attracting moisture to promote the sprouting of saplings on a Moonlit night) and the star, **Satavaēsa**, which was observed as:-

*'the fair distributor of rain water, possibly through its ability to move appropriately
the masses of rain clouds through the timely adjustment
of strong wind currents in the atmosphere.'*

Tir Yasht 8.1:

Ahura Mazda spoke unto Spitama Zarathushtra:

*"I will protect the superiority and the chieftainship of Tishtriya, the Moon
and her abode and ritual offerings so that my other stars may
move precisely and may bestow glory upon men....."*

Mah Yasht 7.4:

*'When the Moon's light shines, due its attraction on moisture early
green coloured off-shoots grow on plants on the day of
Full Moon and the days after the Full Moon.'*

References:

Boyce, Mary, *Zoroastrianism - Its Antiquity and Constant Vigour*, Mazda Publishers, Costa Mesa, 1992.

Griffith, R. T. H., *The Hymns of the Ṛig Vēda*, Motilal Banarassidas, Delhi, 1976.

Kanga, Kavasji Edulji, *Khordēh Avesta* (Original in Gujerati 1880), Reprint Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay 1926. First Edition in English, published by the Trustees of the Bombay aersi Punchayat, Bombay 1993.

Kanga, Kavasji Edulji, *'Avasthā bhāshā ni sampurna farhang'* (A Dictionary of Avesta, Gujerati and English languages), Education Society's Steam Press, Bombay, 1900.

Monier-Williams, Sir Monier, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, New Edition, 1988

Sethna, Tehmurasp Rustamji, *Yashts/Yasna/Vəndidād* (3 separate Vols), Ma'aref Printers, Karachi, 1976 and 1977

Spencer, Hormusji Shapoorji, *The Aryan Eplictic Cycle*, H.P. Vaswani, Poona-2, 1966.

- Sam Kerr
Sydney, Australia
23 July 2012