

Weekly Zoroastrian Scripture Extract # 190 – Best adoration and love for Ahura Mazda and practice and preach the truth to others - Yasna Haptanghaaiti - Moti Haptan Yasht - Yasna 35 Verse 6 - 7

Hello all Tele Class friends:

Next week, Dec. 21st, the longest night will take place. A very ancient Iranian festival is associated with it, called Yalda. Here is some good history and information for this wonderful festival:

The Birth of God Mithra & Significance of Winter Solstice in Iranian Culture & Heritage

By Massoume Price

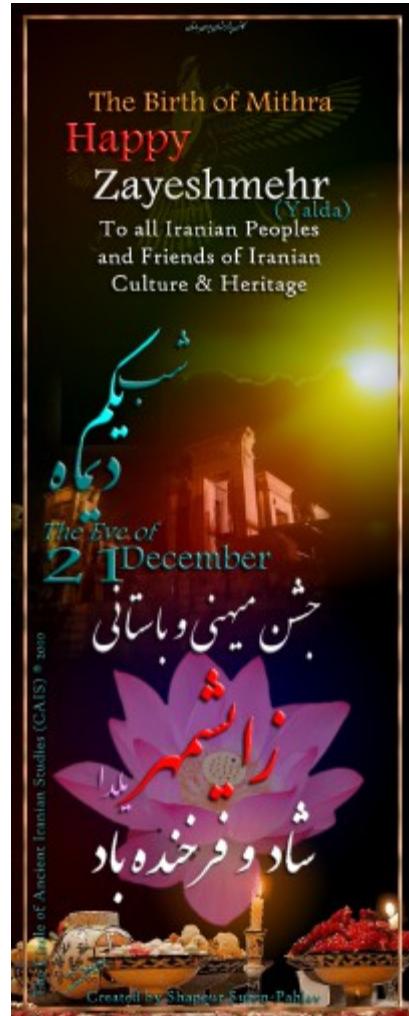
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<http://www.cais-soas.com/CAIS/Celebrations/yalda.htm>

Zayeshmehr* which is known as **Yalda** and **Shab-e Cheleh** in Persian is celebrated on the eve of the first day of the winter (December 21-22) in the Iranian calendar, which falls on the Winter Solstice and forty days before the next major Iranian festival "Jashn-e Sadeh (fire festival)".

As the longest night of the year, the Eve of Zayeshmehr or the Birth of Mithra (Shab-e Yalda) is also a turning point, after which the days grow longer. It symbolised the triumph of Light and Goodness over the powers of Darkness.

Yalda celebration has great significance in the Iranian calendar. It is the eve of the birth of Mithra, the Sun God, who symbolised light, goodness and strength on earth. Shab-e Zayehmehr is a time of joy. The festival was considered one of the most important celebrations in ancient Iran and continues to be celebrated to this day, for a period of more than



5000 years.

Yalda is a Syriac word meaning birth (NPer. *milād* is from the same origin) in the 3rd century CE, Mithra-worshippers adopted and used the term 'yalda' specifically with reference to the birth of Mithra.

The original Avestan and Old-Persian term for the celebration is unknown, but it is believed that in Parthian-Pahlavi and Sasanian-Pahlavi (Middle-Persian) it was known as *Zāyishn* (*zāyīšn-i mithr/mihr* – birth of Mithra). The New Persian "Shab-e Cheleh Festival" is a relatively recent term. The celebration was brought to Iranian plateau by the Aryan (Iranian) migrants around middle of the 2nd millennium BCE, but the original date of celebration could be reach as far as pre-Zoroastrian era, around 3rd to 4th millennium BCE.

In Ancient Iran, the start of the solar year has been marked to celebrate the victory of light over darkness and the renewal of the Sun. The last day of the Iranian month of "Āzar" (21st December) is the longest night of the year, when the forces of Ahriman (darkness) are assumed to be at their peak. While the next day, the first day of the month of "Dey" known as "Khorram rūz" or "Khur rūz" (the day of the sun, 22 December) symbolises the creator, Ahura Mazda (the Lord of Wisdom). Since the days are getting longer and the nights shorter, this day marks the victory of the sun over darkness, and goodness over evil. The occasion was celebrated in the festival of "Deygān" dedicated to Ahura Mazda, on the first day of the month of "Dey" (December-January).

Fires would be burnt all night to ensure the defeat of the forces of Ahriman. There would be feasts, acts of charity and a number of Zoroastrian deities honoured and prayers performed to ensure the total victory of the sun that was essential for the protection of winter crops. There would be prayers to God Mithra (Mithr/Mihr/Mehr) and feasts in his honour, since Mithra is an *īzad* (av. Yazata) and responsible for protecting "the light of the early morning", known as "Hāvāngāh". It was also believed that Ahura Mazda would grant people's wishes in that day.

One of the themes of the festival was the temporary subversion of order, as the masters and servants reversed roles. The king dressed in white would change place with ordinary people. A mock king was crowned and masquerades spilled into the streets. As the old year died, rules of ordinary living were relaxed. This

tradition in its original form persisted until the fall of Sasanian dynasty (224-651 CE), and is mentioned by the Persian polymath Bīruni and others in their recordings of pre-Islamic rituals and festivals.

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Another related Roman festival celebrated at the same time was dedicated to “Sol Invictus” (the Invincible Sun) dedicated to the God Mithra. This ancient Iranian cult was spread into the Roman world by Emperor Elagabalus (r. 218 to 222 CE) and declared as the god of state.

Jo Ann and I wish all of you Humdins a very Happy and Healthy Yalda!

Yasna Haptanghaaiti Yasna 35 continued:

Last 2 weeks, we covered the first five verses of the first Haa (chapter) of YH. We now continue with the next two verses of the same Haa.

Please note that the whole first Haa of YH, Yasna 35, is in adoration and worship of Ahura Mazda. We will cover the remaining verses of Yasna 35 in the next WZSE.

Verse 6 of this Haa states the importance of knowing truth, practicing it and preaching it to others.

Verse 7 states that the whole inhabited world has the best adoration and love for Ahura Mazda and we should preach it to all as much as we can.

With this YH background, let us present Yasna 35 Verses 6 - 7:

Best adoration and love for Ahura Mazda and practice and preach the truth to others - Yasna Haptanghaaiti - Moti Haptan Yasht - Yasna 35 Verse 6 - 7

(Please hear the attached .mp3 file for its recitation)

**(6) Yathaa aat utaa naa waa naairi waa
Waedaa haithim athaa hat vohu tat
eh-eh-aadu, werezyotuchaa,
it ahmaai frachaa waatoyotu it aeibyo,
yoi it athaa werezyaan,**

yathaa it asti.

(7) Ahuraya zee at weh Mazdaao
yasnemchaa vahmemchaa vahishtem
amehmaidi geushchaa waastrem.
Tat at weh werezyaamahi,
frachaa waateyaamahi
yaa teh isaamaideh.

Best adoration and love for Ahura Mazda and practice and preach the truth to others - Yasna Haptanghaaiti - Moti Haptan Yasht - Yasna 35 Verse 6 – 7

(6) The more a man or a woman
Knows the truth, the more it is good.
He/she should zealously practice it
And preach it to others,
So that they practice it accordingly.

(7) For the Lord Wise (Ahura Mazda), indeed,
The best adoration and love,
We as well as the inhabited world have borne in mind.
This we do for You
And preach as much as we can.

(Translation by Ali A. Jafarey, Supplements I – Gatha Supplements –
Yasna Haptanghaaiti – Day 248, 249
- <http://www.zoroastrian.org/GathaSongs/supplements1.htm>)

SPD Explanation:

1. Ali A. Jafarey, an Avestan scholar, has translated many Zoroastrian scriptures such as Gathas, YH, etc. He presents one verse of the 241 Gatha verses each day in a Zoroastrian Conference under the heading: "A thought a day, to practice, say and pray", with a summary substance and a pondering point. After 241 days, he covers other Avesta scriptures including YH in Supplements to complete a year of 365 days. You can find them at:

<http://www.zoroastrian.org/GathaSongs/aglance.htm>

2. From the above reference, for the 248th day, he states in Summary

Substance:

“It is good for every person, man or woman, to know the truth. The more the better. Once he/she knows it, he/she should fully get into practicing it. It is after personal experience the he/she should teach it to others so that they too do the same. This is how the practice of truth spreads.”

3. For the 249th day, he states:

“The congregation asserts that its members and the people of the whole inhabited world bear the best adoration and love for the Lord Wise (Ahura Mazda). They add that they, as much as they can, adore and love Ahura Mazda and also teach others to do as much as they can.”

May the Flame of Fellowship, Love, Charity and Respect for all burn ever eternal in our hearts so we can do HIS work with humility, diligence and eternal enthusiasm!

Atha Jamyaat, Yatha Aafrinaamahi! (May it be so as we wish!)

(Aafrin Pegaamber Zartosht, from Ervad Kangaji Gujarati Khordeh Avesta Baa Maaeni
– Page 424, adapted Aafrinaamahi - we wish instead of Aafrinaami – I wish, in the original)

Love and Tandoorasti, Soli