

Weekly Zoroastrian Scripture Extract # 196 – The Mythological Bird Simurgh - Shahnameh and Behram Yasht - Verses 34 - 36, 41, 43, 44

Hello all Tele Class friends:

Happy Sadeh to All!

This week on January 24th and on January 30th, thousands of our Zoroastrian Humdins in Iran, North America and other countries will celebrate the religious feast of Jashn-e Sadeh by burning firewood in an open space to signify the coming of spring and as a symbolic token of the eternal fight of light against darkness.

Sadeh in Persian means “hundred” and refers to one hundred days and nights before Navroze on 21st March. Sadeh is a mid winter festival that was celebrated with grandeur and magnificence in ancient Persia. It was a festivity to honor fire and to defeat the forces of darkness, frost, and cold.

Our very good friends and teachers, [Pearl and Poras Balsara of Dallas ZANT have created a very good PowerPoint Presentation on Sadeh and I have attached it to this weekly.](#)

Legends have it that King Hushang, the 2nd king of the mythological Pishdadian dynasty (Pishdad means to give the Law), established the Sadeh tradition. It is said that once Hushang was climbing a mountain when all of a sudden he saw a snake and wanted to hit it with a stone. When he threw the stone, it fell on another stone and since they were both flint stones, fire broke out and the snake escaped. This way he discovered how to light a fire. Hushang cheered up and praised God who revealed to him the secret of lighting a fire. Then he announced: “This is a light from God. So we must admire it.”

For more information, please look the following articles:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sadeh>

http://www.iranchamber.com/culture/articles/festival_of_sadeh.php

Jo Ann and I wish you all a very Happy and Healthy Jashn-e-Sadeh!

The Mythological Bird Simurgh in Shahnameh:

([Please see the PowerPoint Presentation attached](#) and the [Wikipedia article: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simurgh](#))

Firdowsi in his *Shah Nameh* narrates the story of Simurgh and Zal, the son of the famous Iranian hero Pahelwan (Paladin) Sam of Zabolistan.

Zal was born as an albino and his father Sam was so ashamed to have a son like an old man and was very embarrassed.

He ordered his men to take the new born and leave him on top of the Mount Alborz.

Simurgh heard the cries of the new born and took pity on him and took him to her nest and raised him as his own.

The all knowing Simurgh taught Zal well about the world and Zal grew up to be a very strong man full of wisdom.

But he always longed to be with his own family.

After few years, Sam became very apologetic for his actions and so went with his men to Mount Alborz to find Zal.

Simurgh saw the men coming and informed Zal about it.

Zal was very sad to leave Simurgh, his only parent he knew.

However, Simurgh consoled him and took him to his father Sam.

Both father and son were ecstatic meeting one another.

On departing, Simurgh gave Zal three of her feathers and told him to burn one feather when he needed her help.

Zal became a very well-known Pahlawan of Zabolistan.

He married beautiful Rudabeh and she was pregnant with a child but the child was very big.

Everyone thought that lives of Rudabeh and child were in danger.

Zal then thought of Simurgh and burnt one of her feathers.

Simurgh came and instructed Zal to perform a cesarean section thus saving Rudabeh and the child.

The child became one of the greatest Iranian heroes Rostom who is covered profusely by Firdousi in Shah Nameh.

The next time Simurgh came to Zal and Rostom's help is during the battle of Rostom with Prince Asfandiyar.

Prince Asfandiyar, one of the sons of King Gushtaspa, was given a boon by Prophet Zarathushtra with an impregnable body.

That's why he was also called Rohinton (Rohin = iron, ton = body).

He waged many battles to propagate Zarathushtra's religion and was unscathed in all of them.

He was promised the throne by his father if he accomplished a number of difficult tasks and even after that he kept asking him to do more.

Finally, he asked him to bring Rostom to him in chains since he has not accepted him as a king.

Asfandiyar was amazed at this request to bring the most celebrated Iranian hero in chains.

Many people requested him not to do it but he wanted so bad to be the king so he went out to Zabolistan to fight with Rostom and bring him in chains to King Gushtaspa.

Rustom tried to reason with him but of no avail.

Finally both mighty warriors were fighting with one another and Rustom as well as his famous horse Rakhsh were injured by Asfandiyar very badly.

Due to sunset, the fight was postponed till next day.

Zal was horrified to see Rustom and Rakhsh so badly wounded and realized that Asfandiyar will kill them next day.

He then thought about Simurgh and burnt her feather,

Simurgh came and with her touch cured all the wounds of Rustom and Rakhsh.

Then she takes Rustom to a distant place where a Chinaar tree (Tamarisk) grows in a jungle whose branches have poison in them!

She instructs Rustom to pick a straight branch with 2 prongs on it, create an arrow with six feathers on it for speed, add poisonous caps on the two prongs of the arrow and shoot it straight into the eyes of Asfandiyar, if he refuses to stop fight.

Alas, next day Rustom again begged Asfandiyar to stop this fighting but he would not budge and started to fight.

Rustom then took the poisoned 2 prong arrow and shot it into Asfandiyar's eyes.

Asfandiyar was blinded and poison took his life.

A very sad ending of a Prince who waged so many battles to propagate Zarathushtra's Religion!

Simurgh and Behram Yasht:

I was studying Behram Yasht from Kangaji's English *Khordeh Avesta* to find material for our next WZSE.

To my amazement, in Verses 34 – 37, I see a reference to Simurgh and the magical powers of her feathers!

So, let us present these verses from Behram Yasht, Verses 34 – 37:

The Mythological Bird Simurgh - Behram Yasht - Verses 34 – 37:

(34) Verethraghnem Ahuradhaatem yazamaidéh.

Peresat Zarathushtro Ahurem Mazdaanm,

Ahura Mazda mainyo spenishta,

Daataréh gaethanaam astavaitinaanm ashaaum.

Yat bavaani aiwi-sastoh aiwi-shmaretoh pouru-naraanm tbishayataanm,

Chish angh-héh asti baeshazo.

**(35) Aa-at mraot Ahuro Mazdao,
Mereghahéh pesho-parenaheh varenjanahéh
Perenem ayasaesha, Spitama Zarathushtra.
Ana parena tanoom aiwi-sifoish,
Ana parena hamerethem paiti-sang-haesha.**

**(36) Yaanaao baraiti astavo vaa takhmahéh mereghahéh,
Parenavo vaa takhmahéh mereghahéh.
Naedha chish raeva mashya jainti, naedha fraeshyeiti.
Paurva-héh nemo baraiti, paurva kharenaao vidhaarayeiti,
Upastaaanm mereghahéh pareno mereghanaanm.**

**(37) Taa Ahuro saastranaanm dangghu-paitish,
Noit satem jainti viraja,
Noit hakeret jainti vaesaepa, oim jainti frasha aeiti.**

[\(Please hear the attached .mp3 file for its recitation\)](#)

The Mythological Bird Simurgh - Behram Yasht - Verses 34 – 37 Translation:

**(34) We praise Beheram Yazata created by Ahura Mazda.
Prophet Zarathushtra asked the Creator:
O Ahura Mazda most beneficent Spirit,
Creator of the Corporeal World and righteous!
When I am injured, harmed and cast by incantation
amongst many tormenting persons,
and am under the use of spells, what is the remedy then?**

**(35) Then spoke Ahura Mazda: O Spitaman Zarathushtra!
thou shouldst seek the feathers of the bird called Pesho-parena (Simurgh)
fluttering the wings.
With that feather thou shouldst rub thy body
and shouldst drive away thy enemy by curses.**

**(36) No one can smite that fortunate man or can harass him
who holds bones of that strong bird or feathers of that bird.
The person who keeps it bears first respect for him**

because on account of it he maintains glory.

The feather of that bird amongst the birds brings help unto the keeper.

(37) The Lord of the Rulers or the master of the land

or the killer of hundred heroes as well cannot smite that bird with one stroke.

Rather that bird alone can smite all of them and exercise superiority over them.

(Translation from Ervad Kangaji's English Khordeh Avesta Pages 316 - 318)

SPD Explanation:

1. For the above verses, Kangaji says in his English Khordeh Avesta (footnote on page 317):

This story resembles to some extent with the Simurgh's feather in the Shah Nameh in the narration of Zal-e-Sam.

2. More references for Simurgh and her feathers are in Behram Yasht, Verses 41, 43, and 44.

3. In Rashne Yasht also, this bird is referred to as Saena in Verse 17.

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 Jamyat, 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