

Weekly Zoroastrian Scripture Extract # 302: Hom Yazata meets Zarathushtra - Hom Yasht Large - Yasna 9, verses 1-2

Hello all Tele Class friends:

Mehergaan Festival:

By Shehenshahi calendar, tomorrow on Thursday, 2/28/19, it will be Meher Maah and Meher Roj, a Parabh Day – the famous Mehergaan festival! We Parsis usually just have a Parabh Jashan and that's it! Our Irani brethren on the other hand really know the significance of the festival and celebrate it with almost the same pomp as Nowruz. (see the attached photos). However, since most of them follow Fasli (seasonal) calendar, the correct seasonal time for Mehergaan is around October 2nd.

Our very good friends Niloufer and Rohinton Hathiram, St. Petersburg, always have a Jashan on this day as a family tradition.

And one of my nieces was born on this day and you guess her name: Meher! Happy birthday Meher!

According to Firdowsi's *Shahnameh*, on this day, King Faredoon vanquished evil Zohak and confined him on Mount Damavand. In our Aafrin-e-Hafta Ameshaaspad, we remember this by praying: Hamaa Zor with Mount Damaavand in which evil Beevaraaspa (Zohak) is chained.

Mehergaan was celebrated in an extravagant style at Persepolis. Not only was it the time for harvest, but it was also the time when the taxes were collected. Visitors from different parts of the Persian Empire brought gifts for the king all contributing to a lively festival.

During pre-Islamic and early Islamic Iran, Mehergaan was celebrated with the same magnificence and pageantry as Nowruz. It was customary for people to send or give their king, and each other, gifts. Rich people usually gave gold and silver coins, heroes and warriors gave horses while others gave gifts according to their financial power and ability, even as simple as an apple. Those fortunate enough would help the poor with gifts. Gifts to the royal court of over ten thousand gold coins were registered. If the gift-giver needed money at a later time, the court would then return twice the gift amount.

Kings gave two audiences a year: one audience at Nowruz and other at Mehergaan. During the Mehergaan celebrations, the king wore a fur robe and gave away all his summer clothes.

For this celebration, the participants wear new clothes and set a decorative, colorful table (see the attached photos). The sides of the tablecloth are decorated with dry marjoram. A copy of the *Khordeh Avesta*, a mirror, and a *sormeh-dan* (a traditional eyeliner or kohl) are placed on the table together with rosewater, sweets, flowers, vegetables, and fruits, especially pomegranates and apples, and nuts such as almonds or pistachios. A few silver coins and lotus seeds are placed in a dish of water scented with marjoram extract. A burner is also part of the table setting for kondor/loban (frankincense) and espad (seeds of Syrian rue) to be

thrown on the flames.

At lunch time when the ceremony begins, everyone in the family stands in front of the mirror to pray. Sharbat is drunk and then—as a good omen—sormeh is applied around the eyes. Handfuls of wild marjoram, lotus and sugar plum seeds are thrown over one another's heads while they embrace one another. In 1960s the Postal Service in Tehran issued a series of stamps to commemorate Mehregaan Festival.

For further reading on Mehregaan: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mehregan>
http://www.iranreview.org/content/Documents/Mehregan_Thanksgiving_Festival.htm

We in NA should celebrate Mehregaan festival with our Irani brethren at its correct seasonal time on October 2nd. It can be a very good Children's Religious Class material!

Jo Ann and I wish you all a very Happy and Healthy Mehregaan Day!

Hom Yazata meets Zarathushtra – Hom Yasht Large – Yasna 9, verses 1-2

As mentioned in many of our previous WZSEs, many of our *Khorddeh Avesta* prayers, including some Yashts, contain many verses from Yasna, Visperad, and Vendidad. Hom Yasht Large is taken entirely from Yasna 9 and 10 except the beginning and ending verses.

At this point, a little digression is necessary to explain the old ritual of extracting Haoma (Zoroastrian) or Soma (Vedic) juice from the twigs of Haoma plant:

In ancient Aryan religion, Haoma plant was regarded as a very therapeutic plant and its juice was extracted from its twigs. Both Zoroastrian and Hindu Religions created an elaborate ritual to do so. Our Yasna liturgy has this ritual and the Haoma juice is created by pounding Haoma twigs with milk and water and after the Yasna ceremony is consumed by the Mobeds as well as the laity. Haoma plant grows in the mountainous regions of Iran and its twigs are obtained in India from there.

The linguistic and ritual evidence appeared to conclusively establish that *haoma* was some variant of Ephedra. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haoma>)

Dasturji Maneckji Dhalla in his wonderful book: *History of Zoroastrianism* – in its Chapter 22 on Yazatas (<http://www.avesta.org/dhalla/history3.htm#chap22>), states for Haoma Yazata and Haoma plant, as:

One of the most distinctive features common to the Indo-Iranian peoples before their separation is the Haoma-Soma cult. The Avestan Haoma is identical with Vedic Soma, and both refer to the sacred drink prepared from a special plant and partaken of as a part of the ritual service. Haoma has secured a prominent place in the later Avestan theology and forms an essential part of the Zoroastrian liturgy. Haoma primarily is a plant of this world, from which the drink was quaffed as a religious act, but the idea soon evolves into an angel of the same name presiding over this plant. Three chapters of the Yasna and a Yasht mostly composed of

excerpts from the Yasna are dedicated to Haoma. More than 120 hymns are devoted to Soma in Rig Veda.

In Yasna 9, verses 1-2, a meeting takes place between Hom Yazata and Zarathushtra.

Let us present these verses of Yasna 9 – Verses 1-2:

Hom Yazata meets Zarathushtra – Hom Yasht – Yasna 9, verses 1-2

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

**(1) Haavanim aa ratum aa, Haomo upaait Zarathushtrem
Aatarem pairi-yaozdathentem, gaathaaoscha sraavayantem;
Aadim peresat Zarathushtro, ko nareh ahi,
Yim azem vispahesh angheush astvato sraeshtem
Daadaresa khaheh gayehesh khanvato ameshaheh.**

**(2) Aa-at meh aem paiti-aokhta Haomo ashava duraosho,
Azem ahmi Zarathushtra Haomo ashava duraosho,
Aamaam yaasanguha Spitama, fraamaam hunvanguha kharete-eh;
Avi maam staomaineh stuidhi,
Yatha maa aparachit Saoshyanto stavaan.**

Hom Yazata meets Zarathushtra – Hom Yasht – Yasna 9, verse 1-2

**(1) During the Haavan Gaah Hom Yazata came to the Prophet Zarathushtra
Who was purifying the throne of the fire and attending it and was chanting the Gathas.
The Prophet Zarathushtra asked him: O man! Who art thou?**

**Whom do I see, the most excellent and beautiful and of immortal life
In the entire corporal world.**

**(2) Thereupon that Hom, the righteous, warding off sickness replied unto me:
O Zarathushtra! I am Hom, the righteous, warding off sickness.
Desire earnestly for me and, O Spitama Zarathushtra!
Pound me out for drinking and do thou praise me in a hymn of praise**

As other benefactors of the world have praised me.

SPD Comments

1. The most important aspect of the above verse is what Zarathushtra was doing when Hom Yazata came to see him.

He was cleaning the pedestal of the fire, tending the fire like an Aathravan should do and **chanting the Gathas!**

2. This is one more place in our prayers that we are told that Gathas have to be chanted, not just read.

3. The other place the same is mentioned about Gathas is in Sarosh Yasht Vadi (Large) in its Karda 3, where Sarosh Yazata was mentioned as the first one to chant the Gathas. We have covered this in our previous WZSE #39 at: <http://www.avesta.org/wzse/wzse39.pdf>

4. For 'benefactors' in the Verse 2 above, Kangaji explains in a footnote:

The meaning of 'Saoshyanto' is giving light to the world, indicators of the path of morality, piety and divine worship to the people, persons well-versed in the precepts of the religion, the restorer of the religion in its original pure state by wiping off impurities. In the singular case its meaning is 'the prophet Soshyos who will be born of the mother Eredat-fedhri at the time of Resurrection – Ristaakhiz.'

5. The 'benefactors' who praised Hom Yazata were Vivanghaan, father of illustrious Jamshid, Aathavyaan, father of Faredoon, Thrita, father of Urvaakhshaya and Keresaspa, and Pourushaspa, father of Zarathushtra himself.

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!

In HIS service 24/7!

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

Love and Tandoorasti, Soli

480px-Mehregan_Table_Persian_Festival_of_Autumn_in_Holland_Photo_by_Persian_Dutch_Network_2011



Mehregan_Table_in_UCTI_University_of_Malaysia_2011

