

Weekly Zoroastrian Scripture Extract # 191 – Union with Truth gains best existence and with good thought and good rule, we praise Ahura Mazda - Yasna Haptanghaaiti - Moti Haptan Yasht - Yasna 35 Verse 8 - 10

Hello all Tele Class friends:

Coming Wednesday, Dec. 21st, the longest night will take place. A very ancient Iranian festival is associated with it, called Yalda.

Our FEZANA Publication Chair, Behram Pastakia, after reading our WZSE #190 pointed out to me that Fall 2015 FEZANA Journal:

https://fezana.org/fjissue/FEZANA_2015_03_Fall.pdf

covered Yalda and other festivals. The cover of this beautiful issue is attached. Those interested further in Yalda should read this FEZANA Journal issue.

Here is some good history and information for this wonderful festival:

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

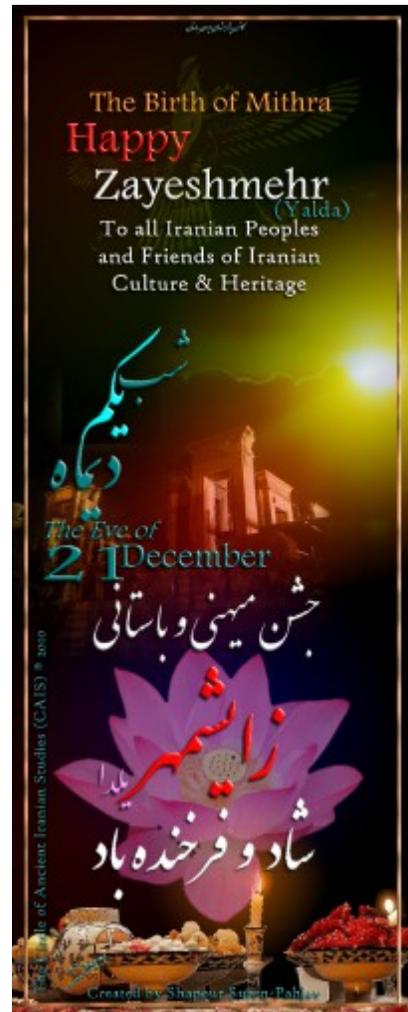
By Massoume Price

Edited by CAIS (2010)

<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 millenniums 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 "Hāvangāh". 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 Sassanian 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.

Winter solstice 2016 in Northern Hemisphere will be at 5:44 AM Eastern Time on Wednesday, December 21

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

Yasna Haptanghaaiti Yasna 35 continued:

Last 3 weeks, we covered the first seven verses of the first Haa (chapter) of YH. We now continue with the rest of the three verses of the same Haa.

Please note that the whole first Haa of YH, Yasna 35, is in adoration and worship of Ahura Mazda.

Verse 8 of this Haa states that a human being in union with truth will gain best of both existences.

It is to be recited twice which shows its importance.

In Verse 9, the congregation states that they proclaim these solemn utterances and designate Ahura Mazda as their listener and teacher.

Verse 10 states that on account of Truth, Good Thought, and Good Rule, we praise Ahura Mazda.

With this YH background, let us present the last three verses of Yasna 35
Verses 8 - 10:

Union with Truth gains best existence and with good thought
and good rule, we praise Ahura Mazda - Yasna Haptanghaaiti
- Moti Haptan Yasht - Yasna 35 Verse 8 – 10

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

(8) Ashahyaa aa-at sairi, ashahyaa verezeneh,
Kahmaaichit haataanm jijishaanm vahishtaanm
Aadaa uboibyaa ahubyaa. (to be recited twice)

(9) Imaa aat ukhdhaa vachao, Ahuraa Mazdaa,
Ashem manayaa vahehyaa fravaochaamaa;
Thwaam at aashaam paityaastaaremchaa
Fradakhshtaaremchaa dademaideh.

(10) Ashaa-at chaa hachaa vangheushchaa manangho,
Vangheushchaa khshathraat,
Staotaaish thwaat Ahuraa staotoibyoo,
Aibi ukhdhaa thwaat ukhdhoibyoo,
Yasnaa thwaat yasnoibyoo.

Yengheh haataanm aa-at yesne paiti vangho,
Mazdaao Ahuro vaethaa ashaat hachaa,
Yaaonghaamchaa taanschaa taaoschaa yazamaideh.

Union with Truth gains best existence and with good thought
and good rule, we praise Ahura Mazda - Yasna Haptanghaaiti
- Moti Haptan Yasht - Yasna 35 Verse 8 – 10

(8) I now tell every human being
that in union with Truth,
and in the community of Truth
the desire to gain one's living is best
for both existences. (to be recited twice)

(9) Those words now, O Wise Lord (Ahura Mazda),
we proclaim as solemn utterances,
with very good concentration on Truth.
We designate You only
as their listener and teacher.

(10) On account of truth,

of good thought and of good rule,
through these verses, O Lord (Ahuraa),
praise now follows on from praise,
solemn utterances now from solemn utterances,
worship now from worship.

(Translation by Prof. Almut Hintze – *A Zoroastrian Liturgy – The Worship in Seven Chapters – Yasna 35 – 41 – Pages 31 – 32*)

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 250th day, he states in Summary Substance:

“If one, any person whosoever, remains steadfast in righteousness, he/she will find it the best way to live a full life in both the existences – mental and material, spiritual and physical lives.”

3. For the 251st day, he states:

“The praying people confirm what they have thoughtfully said about remaining steadfast in righteousness with good thoughts, words and deeds, and that they consider Ahura Mazda to be the maintainer and director of what they say.”

4. For the 252nd day, he states:

“The congregation concludes the prayer by praising and venerating Ahura Mazda and by vowing to act according to righteousness, with good mind and within a good dominion.”

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 Janyaat, 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

Yalda Cover from FEZANA-Fall20151.jpg

FEZANA

PAIZ 1384 AY 3753 Z

VOL. 29, No 3 FALL/SEPTEMBER 2015

JOURNAL

Mehr–Avan–Adar 1384 AY (Fasli) • Ardebehesht–Khordad–Tir 1385 AY (Shenshai) • Khordad–Tir–Amرداد 1385 AY (Kadimi)



PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA

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