

Tirgaan and also the second Gahambar Maidyo-Shahem

Dear Friends,

Friday, November 28, Roj Tir and Mah Tir is the celebration of **Tirgaan** and also the **second Gahambar**, "**Maidyo-Shahem**", dedicated to the Creation of Water!

This article on Tirgaan and Tir Yazad is by no means a detailed explanation. Also, the attachment regarding "Gahambar" in general, is fairly brief. Both subjects are vast and need a lot of time, understanding and concentration. It is sincerely recommended that one reads these two topics, Tir Yasht and Gahambars from Doctor Saheb Faramroze S. Chiniwala's two books, Tir Yasht and Nikiz -e Vehdin, Vol. 2. Both are in Gujarati.

With best wishes,

Pervin Mistry

Tirgaan:

In the starry Heavens, Ahura Mazda has positioned 4 Guardians, i.e. the 4 Fixed Stars in the 4 Sacred Directions to protect the Good Creations from the armies of Angre-Mainyu. The sky is the sacred garment of Ahura Mazda and also of Ardibehesht Ameshaspand.

The 4 Guardians of the 4 Directions are:

- 1) **Teshtar Tir** (Sirius) in the Eastern Sky, affiliated to Planet Mercury,
- 2) **Satvas** (Vega) in the West, affiliated to Planet Venus,
- 3) **Vanant** (Antares) in the South, affiliated to Planet Jupiter,
- 4) **Haptrang** (Pleiades) in the North, affiliated to Planet Mars.

(These 4 Stars are mentioned in the Pahlavi Minog-i-Kherad, chapter 49, Bundahishn, chapter 2, (SBE), and Dr. F. Chiniwala's Tir Yasht, as well as in Kangaji's Khordeh-Avesta-Ba-Mayeni. There are some minor discrepancies in the English names of stars, especially with Vanant. Some scholars take it to be Fomalhaut but Prof. Haug, Behramgor Anklesaria and Dr. Faramroze Chiniwala maintain it is "Antares". I have taken the above mentioned English names of stars from Tir Yasht by Dr. F. Chiniwala, p. 60).

Tir Yasht reveals that Ahura Mazda created Teshtar Tir (Sirius) as the Chieftain over all the Stars. He created Tir as brilliant, as worthy of worship, adoration and glorification as Himself! Just as the Creator authorized His appointed Yazad Asho Zarathushtra as the chieftain over mankind, in the same way He empowered Tir Yazad as the lord and overseer over all the Stars. Tir is called "rayomand, khorehmand", which is how Ahura Mazda is addressed! The

Brilliance, the Divine Light of Tir Yazad defeats the darkness and ignorance spread by Angre-Mainyu and helps Ahura Mazda to achieve the divine pre-ordained event of Frashogard at the appointed time. In the Tir Yasht, Ahura Mazda reveals that neither witches, sorceresses nor their leader Angre-Mainyu could defeat or dare to kill Asho Zarathushtra; in the same way, He gave a thousand-fold strength to Teshtar Tir among all the heavenly luminaries to gain victory over the armies of Angre-Mainyu who try to destroy the good creations of Ahura Mazda.

On Tir *mah*, Tir *roj*, we observe TIRGAAN which is one of the most important of the 6 Gahambars. Tirgaan is the time of year when we celebrate the second Gahambar called Maidyo-Shahem (mid-summer), when Ahura Mazda created the Waters. Tir Yazad is in charge of the rain and fertility on all the regions of the Earth as well as fertility in the wombs of animals and women. Avan Yazad and Tir Yazad work together as companions. 5 days, from Khorshed *roj* to Daep Meher *roj* are set aside to offer thanks and prayers to Ahura Mazda for the gift of the creation of the “Waters” in charge of Tir Yazad. Tir *roj* is included in these 5 *roj* set aside for the Tirgaan Gahambar.

The month of Tir marked the commencement of autumn and the setting in of the rains. In summer, especially during June-July, when Tir (Sirius) rises with the Sun, owing to its light being merged in that of the Sun, it cannot be seen except for a short period of time in the very early hours of the morning. But, as every star rises about four minutes earlier on each succeeding day, six months later, i.e. at the time of the autumnal equinox which falls between September 21 and 23, Teshtar Tir rises at the time of sun-set and remains shining throughout in the night sky, attracting towards itself the attention of mankind by its singular brightness. Tir’s rising is looked upon with expectations by the people, especially by the farmers, as being the harbinger of rain and prosperity.

Without water, meaning the celestial waters as well as earthly, no creation, no life could have existed! The element of earth itself, plants, animals, mankind, cannot live without water. Here, the “celestial waters of space” are also included, meaning the spiritual blessings which come down to Earth in the form of “rain”, which, as a purifying agent washes away diseases, infertility and sins! The rains give rise to seasons - dry or rainy, hot or cold, and result in creating the seasonal “Gahambars” which guide creation on its long journey towards attaining Spiritual Perfection and Unity with Ahura Mazda in Life Everlasting, which is “Frashogard”. Currently, we observe only 6 Gahambars because the 7th is still not celebrated – it is the day of rest. The seventh and final Gahambar will be celebrated by Ahura Mazda Himself together with Sarosh Yazad when Frashogard is celebrated and the Universe re-unites with Ahura Mazda.

It is declared that Teshtar Tir originates from Apam Napat, the Navel or the Source of all the Waters (Ap = water and napat = centre) and therefore, possesses the “Seed” of Water. The “seed” of water is formed from the Fire of Lightening or Heaven, as produced in the clouds which consequently bear the rain which fertilizes the earth, giving sustenance to earth, plants, animals and mankind to survive. It is revealed that Apam Napat ascends from Mount Hukairya.

The exaltation and homage to Tir Yazad is revealed in the Tir Yasht. Ahura Mazda declares that He has handed over the chieftainship of water to Tir Yazad and will protect Tir as well as Mahbokhtar (Moon) so that mankind benefit from the essential “Gift of Water” as one of His Creations. The Moon is also affiliated to the “waters” as proven by the high rise in death and birth, mental and physical diseases, especially related to asthma and the circulatory system during the different phases of the Moon as well as during high and low tides. All life grows from water, is proven by the embryo which grows in the womb due to the presence of amniotic fluid. Even plant seeds need water to sprout. Gavyodad, the Kayanian Khoreh, and the Holy Fravashi of Asho Spitaman Zarathushtra are also worshipped here together with Tir Yazad.

Cattle, beasts of burden, plants and mankind, all await the rising of Teshtar Tir (he is the night star in the month of November when he shines most brilliant) so that the heat of summer lessens with the falling of the rain, the diseases caused by extreme heat lessen, the scorched earth becomes green and gets revitalized and the springs, rivers, seas recover the depleted water.

The word “Tir” is added to Teshtar Tir Yazad because the radiant Tishtrya flies towards the Sea of Vourukash as swiftly as an arrow – “tir”, causing the rain to fall on all the regions of the Earth. “Tir” indicates speed. Arash, the famous archer who lived during the Peshdad Dynasty is mentioned here in the Yasht (karda 4, Kangaji, Khordeh-Avesta-Ba-Mayeni, F. Chiniwala, Tir Yasht)! Arash (Av. “Erekhsha”), was the swiftest archer who shot an arrow from Mount Khshutha (Av. Damavand) to the East towards Mount Khvanvant which defined the boundary between Iran and Turan. Meher Yazad, the Lord of wide pastures, is also remembered here. (It is also mentioned by some scholars that the ancient river Tigris gets its name from “tir” because it flows as swiftly as the speed of an arrow preventing silt from being accumulated on its banks.)

Tir Yazad is renowned for the 3 battles he fights and wins against Angre-Mainyu to protect Life on all the regions of the Earth! The first battle is with the witches (“pairikas”) who fly between the Earth and the sky in the shape of “worm-shaped” stars who enter the vast, deep Sea of Vourukash polluting its waters. Tishtrya then enters the Sea of Vourukash (which surrounds all the

“regions” of the Earth), in the shape of a pure white horse, signifying strength and authority, stirs the waters violently creating the strong wind to blow all around which destroy these witches. (The destruction of these witches is figuratively compared to the “falling stars”.) In this fight, to help the Iranian countries become fertile and prosperous, Tir is helped by his companion Satvas who distributes rains all over these countries. A second major cosmic battle fought with the pairikas, especially under the leadership of one named Duzyairya, is referred to later, towards the end of Tir Yasht, in karda 16.

In addition to Satvas, Tir’s helpers Vanant and Haptrang (Pleiades) are also mentioned and worshipped for removing afflictions and vices created by the dark forces of Angre-Mainyu. When the Sea of Vourukash is “stirred” and the waters overflow, allegorically, it means that the good blessings of Spenta-Mainyu are showered upon all the regions of the Earth and virtues, fertility, prosperity increase, and sin is washed away.

Tir Yazad complains that if men would worship him with the Yasna/Yasht in which his name is invoked, then the world would be rendered prosperous and fertile by abundant rainfall and seasons (Frashogard) would be celebrated at the proper time. Symbolically, this statement refers not only to prosperity and fertility of the land but also to the abundance of spiritual blessings, fertility of the mind (wisdom), and to the speed and power with which the recited manthra (Yasna/Yasht) as well as the mithra (thought power or energy of light) reach Tir Yazad to help destroy the armies of Angre-Mainyu. Both mithra and manthra, the energies of Light and Sound, are one of the ways in which the devotee increases the strength and power of Tir Yazad.

It is further revealed that Tir Yazad helps to alter the destiny and fulfills the wishes of those who worship him sincerely with the utterance of the sacred manthra, i.e. by reciting the Tir Yasht. Tir accomplishes this in three stages by assuming the form of a youth, a bull and a horse by going to the 12 Houses of the Zodiac and the 27 constellations which are connected to and are affecting the karma, destiny of that particular devotee!

For the **first** 10 nights (of every month) Tir Yazad visits 9 constellations and the first 4 signs of the Zodiac. Allegorically, he assumes the form of a 15 year old handsome youth with bright eyes, lofty size, strong and full of courage. The second 10 nights, he assumes the form of a golden-horned bull and visits the next 9 constellations and the next 4 Houses of the Zodiac. The **third** 10 nights, he assumes the form of a beautiful white horse with yellow ears and golden trappings.

Each 10 nights, Tishtrya convenes a stellar assembly of all the luminaries containing the “seed” of water and asks as to who is worthy to receive his bountiful gifts of happiness? Upon whom he should shower the spiritual wisdom, purity of mind and soul, strength (spiritual and physical), virtues - especially of self-sacrifice, truthfulness and courage? The assembly of the stellar luminaries is convened to find out the particular star affiliated to the soul of the devotee who pays homage to Tir with the worship of mithra and mantra which help Tir to defeat Angre-Mainyu and help fulfill the event of Frashogard. Hence, in helping Tir through the staot of the mantra recitation which increase the power of Tir to defeat Angre-Mainyu, the devotee also helps himself because in turn, Tir helps advance him on the path to Frashogard. Irrefutably, Divine Justice and the ensuing suffering is immutable and yet, whatever suffering the devotee has earned through his past deeds, consequently whatever destiny he inherits, Tir alters this by altering the effects impressed on his “star” which rules his destiny. How? By giving **strength** to go through the ordeals in life with patience, by acquiring the **wisdom** to know how to correct the mistakes and walk on the Path of Truth and Righteousness, by acquiring the **courage** to face any adversity with faith and obedience! (Karda 6, Dr. F. Chiniwala, Tir Yasht.)

If the devotee’s star is in the first 4 Houses of the zodiac, Tir assumes the form of a 15 year old youth; if the devotee’s star is in the next 4 houses of the zodiac, Tir goes searching for his star in the shape of a bull; if the devotee’s star is in the last 4 houses of the zodiac, Tir goes to help in the shape of a horse! Here, only nights are referred to and not “days” because nights are dark when evil is at its peak. Tir’s brilliance transforms this darkness (vices) existing inside the devotee, affecting him through sufferings, into Light (virtues, wisdom).

Through his extreme brilliance, Tir finds out wherever evil exists and keeps it in check. Because of Tir Yazad, the Earth maintains its vitality, greenery and sustains Life! “Rain” results in the “seeds” to grow, subsequently, abundance and prosperity increase, and virtues also grow faster and in abundance. The “growing of seeds” also refers to the growing of embryos in the womb so that life increases and simultaneously, Frashogard is also hastened.

As soon as Tir (Sirius) rises in the night sky, heat subsides. It is emphasized in that due to extreme heat, the earth is scorched, vegetation and fields are dry, water from the streams, rivers, wells and seas evaporate, varied diseases are caused by heat and moral failings through sensory temptations increase. **This is allegorically stated as the battle between Tir Yazad and Apaosh Dev who is an agent of Angre-Mainyu.** Apaosh brings drought, scorches the earth, waters dry out and vegetation withers so that life would end on Earth. Vices also

increase and there is destruction of health and the good mentality. Apaosh Dev is depicted as a black, ferocious, ugly horse.

At First, Apaosh Dev seems to win! Tir cries out in woe, “Men do not worship me as they do other Yazads”! Subsequently, Iranian countries suffer drought which is lack of prosperity and virtues. Tir vows, “If Iranian countries worship me with the Yasna/Yasht, I’ll render prosperity and fertility by showering the Earth with rain and cooling the land.” (During the season of drought in India, the Brahmins pray to their Rain God. Also, the natives of North America still address their Rain God if there is severe drought and corn depletes. In ancient Iran too, the Kings used to perform Yasnas, Jashans dedicated to Tir to bring rain and render the land fertile again.)

Tir asks Ahura Mazda for the strength of ten horses, wisdom and vision of ten camels, the courage of ten bulls, unyielding conviction, power, as a mountain which cannot be moved, as well as an abundant self-sacrificing disposition (“as deep and vast as equal to the deep waters in which ships ply”) to defeat Apaosh so that the Earth will be saved. Number ten denotes perfection or peak, therefore, Tir asks for the highest strength of power, the peak of wisdom, and the greatest courage from Ahura Mazda to defeat Apaosh Dev.

Hearing Tir’s pleas (karda 6, Kangaji, Khordeh-Avesta-Ba-Mayeni, F. Chiniwala, Tir Yasht), Ahura Mazda Himself performs a Yasna dedicated to Tir, to add to Tir’s strength and grants him the strength of ten horses, ten camels, ten bulls, ten mountains and the waters of ten deep canals (or rivers) so that Tir defeats Apaosh and the earth is saved from drought, destruction of virtues and crops, as well as from extreme heat (sins). With help from Vayu (Govad) and Hom Yazads, Tir creates gusty winds to blow and causes the rain to fall on all the regions of the Earth. Apam Napat and the Holy Fravshis of the righteous distribute the waters to all the lands, spreading joy and prosperity throughout the regions.

Other Yazads also help Tir such as Ashshvagh, Parendi and Meher in the fight against Apaosh. No matter how much evil increases, ultimately, Ahura Mazda steps in and eradicates sins, “druj”, and in the end, defeats Angre-Mainyu so that Frashogard is achieved

This major battle between Tir and Apaosh lasted for 3 days. Rapithvin is the time of extreme heat and suffering. Consequently, it led to Apaosh Dev to admit his own limitations and he ran away from Tir Yazad. As a result, people started believing in manthra, righteous Mithra (thoughts), virtues, having faith in the teachings of the religion, and gave up sensual desires and other vices. Tir Yazad won and sent Angre-Mainyu to a corner of the Vourukash Sea. Tir subsequently

showered spiritual blessing on the Earth and its people so that virtues grew and gave strength to Frashogard to materialize at the pre-appointed time. Tir, with help from Satvas, overflowed the Sea of Vourukash to wash out heat, sins, diseases and destruction to the crops as well as the earth. Nature got its relief and an abundance of virtues and life appeared on Earth!

After the battle with Apaosh Dev, Tir combats with the “pairikas” (enchantresses) created by Angre-Mainyu to stop Frashogard from being realized. These powerful “pairikas”, especially under the leadership of one named Duzyairya, bring destruction to crops by stopping the rains (i.e. they create spiritual drought by increasing vices) and destroy the earth and humanity (entrapping mankind into unrighteous temptations, attractions and vices).

Tir fights this battle with the “Pairikas” ruled by Duzyairya (“Duz-yairya” also means a bad year full of drought, diseases and all different kinds of “famine”). Again, Tir fights with the strength of ten horses, ten camels and ten bulls to rescue the good Earth and mankind! This fight, mystically, results in the “meteorite showers” which fall on Earth around the middle of August each year and are known as the “Perseides” showers. These meteorites fall like dark small stones signifying the dead army of pairikas who fall to Earth when killed by Tir Yazad! Tir binds Duzyairya with the strongest, double and triple fetters with the strength of a thousand men so that Duzyairya is prevented from doing harm in future. (This story also reminds of the fetters with which Peshdadi Faredoon Padshah (Av. Threatona) bound and imprisoned Zohak (Av. Azidahak) inside Mount Damavand.)

Finally, after August, the heat turns to coolness. The defeat of these pairikas and Duzyairya, also Apaosh, signify retributive suffering and later the sense of fulfillment when mankind gains holiness by practicing spiritual disciplines such as *druj-parhez* (purity of body, mind and soul) to gain control over vices and undesirable emotions. Through rain and cooling, Tir showers spiritual blessings. Mankind gains wisdom and through prayers and manthra will attain to Frashogard at the pre-appointed time! Manthra are extremely important to rid of evil because these are not just ordinary words, but are the result of “Manthra Spenta”, the Energy Radiating from the Divine Soul of Ahura Mazda Himself!

There is similarity between Tir Yasht and Behram Yasht. Both also teach of the sacred and mystic ritual of “pasu-pach”.

In the past, Jashans were performed in the Persian Empire dedicated to Tir Yazad. **Tirgaan** was celebrated grandly from the time of the Peshdad King Hushang who discovered Fire, established the religious rite of Sadeh, discovered metallurgy, agriculture and domestication of animals! On

Tir *mah* and **Khordad roj**, a jashan called “Nilfer” was also performed in ancient Iran to celebrate the creation of **Water**. Khordad Ameshaspand presides over the creation of Water and Health.

Emperor Darius’ cuneiform inscription at Persepolis reads: “May Ahura Mazda protect this Kingdom (of mine) from the hostile army, from famine (*hacha dushiyar*) and from falsehood - decept.” (Kangaji, Khordeh-Avesta-Ba-Mayeni, footnote, p. 246; also, P. N. Tavaria, assisted by B. R. Panthaki, A Manual of Kshnoom, p.158.)

This then is a short explanation of the Tir Yasht and Tirgaan. It is a cosmic drama in which Tir Yazad wins over Apaosh Dev and over the evil witches, the army of Angre-Mainyu. **Good always wins over evil!**

May Teshtar Tir Yazad come to our help! Atha jamyat yatha afrinami!

Pervin J. Mistry (Tirgaan, November 28, 2014, Tir mah, Tir roj, Y.Z. 1384)

References:

P.N. Tavadia, A Manual of Kshnoom, Bombay, 1990

Kangaji, Khordeh-Avesta-Ba-Mayeni, Bombay, 1993

Dr. Faramroze S. Chiniwala, Tir Yasht, (Gujarati), Bombay, 1975