

Tirgan:

In the starry Heavens, Ahura Mazda has positioned 4 Guardians, i.e. the 4 Fixed Stars in the 4 Sacred Directions to protect His Good Creations from the armies of Angre-Mainyu.

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 Doctor Saheb F. S. Chiniwala's translation of **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).

The exaltation and homage to Teshtar Tir Yazad is revealed in the Tir Yasht. It 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! He authorized and empowered Tir Yazad as the lord and overseer over all the Stars. Tir is called "rayomand, khorehmand", which is how Ahura Mazda Himself 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 predetermined event of Frashogard at the appointed time.

In the Tir Yasht, Ahura Mazda reveals that 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; likewise, neither witches, sorceresses nor their leader Angre-Mainyu could defeat or kill Asho Zarathushtra, the Yazad of Renowned Fame, sent to Earth by Ahura Mazda Himself to rescue the good creations from destruction caused by Angre-Mainyu and his army of devs. The leader of these devs is "Akoman", or evil thoughts.

On Tir *mah*, Tir *roj*, we observe TIRGAN, a *parabh* day when the day and month are identical. Tirgan is the time of the 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 rains which result in an abundance of vegetation 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* (days) set aside for the Maidyo-Shahem/Tirgan Gahambar.

The month of Tir marked the commencement of autumn and the setting in of the rainy season. 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 before sunrise. 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 on September 22, 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 especially by the farmers, as Tir is 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 Reunion 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’. This seventh and final Gahambar will be celebrated by Ahura Mazda Himself together with Sarosh Yazad when Frashogard is celebrated and the Universe will re-unite with Ahura Mazda.

Tir Yasht reveals 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 which produces the rain-bearing clouds. These clouds fertilize the earth with rain thereby giving sustenance to plants, animals and mankind to multiply and survive. It is revealed that Apam Napat ascends from the spiritual Mount ‘Hukairya’.

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 which sustains life. The Moon is also affiliated to the “waters” as proven by the high increase 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 which are also affected by the Moon. 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. The holy Gavyodad, the Kayanian Khoreh, and the Holy Fravashi of Asho Spitaman Zarathushtra are also worshiped together with Tir Yazad.

Tir Yasht depicts how Cattle, beasts of burden, plants and mankind, all anxiously await the rising of Teshtar Tir (the ‘Night Star’ in the month of November when it shines most brilliantly) 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, safeguarding the earth from drought and famine, i.e. depletion of life and life-sustaining abundance. “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; also by Dr. 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. The ancient river “Tigrish” or Tigris is also mentioned (karda 4 and 9). Some scholars maintain that the ancient river Tigris gets its name from “tir” because it flows as swiftly as the speed of an arrow, *tir*, preventing silt from being accumulated on its banks.

To protect Life on all the regions of the Earth, Tir Yazad is renowned for the 3 battles he fights and wins against the witches, Apaosh Dev - the dev of drought, and Angre-Mainyu! 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 with tremendous strength and stirs the waters intensely creating the strong wind to blow all around which destroy these witches. (The destruction of these witches is figuratively compared to the comets as well as the “falling stars”.) In this fight, to help the Iranian countries become fertile and prosperous, Tir is helped by his companion Satvas who also 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 worshiped for removing afflictions and vices created by the dark forces of Angre-Mainyu. When the Sea of Vourukash is intensely “stirred” and the waters overflow, allegorically, it means that the good blessings of Spenta-Mainyu are showered upon all the regions of the Earth so that virtues, fertility and prosperity abound, and the sins created by Angre-Mainyu and his army are washed away by the “overflowing” purifying waters of the Vourukash Sea.

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 more prosperous and fertile by abundant rainfall and the seasons (as well as 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 (energy of Sound) as well as the mithra (thought power or energy of Light) reach Tir Yazad to help destroy the armies of Angre-Mainyu. In this Yasht, as in all Yashts,

throughout the Holy Avesta, 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, as well as of all the other Yazads to whom the devotee prays.

It is further revealed that Tir Yazad helps to alter the destiny, "*bagobakht*", 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, the ensuing 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 and visits the last 9 constellations and the last 4 Houses of the Zodiac.

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 manthra which help Tir to defeat Angre-Mainyu from attacking the devotee from within and from outside sources.

Hence, in helping Tir through the staot (resonance) of the manthra recitation and mithraic thought waves 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 quickly and firmly. Irrefutably, Divine Justice and the ensuing suffering is immutable and yet, whatever suffering the devotee has earned through his deeds, consequently whatever fortunate or unfortunate destiny he inherits, Tir Yazad alters the suffering by altering the effects impressed on the "star" which rules the

devotee's destiny. How does Tir Yazad alter one's destiny when it is immutably earned according to the one's own deeds? By giving the devotee **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 and suffering are at their peak. Tir's brilliance transforms the darkness (vices) existing inside the devotee, into Light (virtues, wisdom), thereby helping the devotee avoid the difficulties/"stones" Angre-Mainyu throws on the Path to prolong Frashogard.

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, "seeds" of 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 that due to extreme heat, the earth becomes scorched, vegetation and fields are dry, water from the streams, rivers, wells and seas evaporate, varied diseases are caused by heat, and also moral failings through sensory temptations/"thirst" increase. **This is allegorically stated as the battle between Tir Yazad and Apaosh Dev who is an agent of Angre-Mainyu.** Apaosh brings depletion, drought, scorches the earth, waters dry out and vegetation withers so that life would end on Earth. Vices also increase and there is decrease in good health and the good mentality. Apaosh Dev is depicted as a black, ferocious, hideous looking horse.

At First, Apaosh Dev seems to win! Tir cries out in woe, "Men do not worship me as they worship the 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 and speed of **ten** horses; wisdom and vision of **ten** camels; the courage and might of **ten** bulls; plus unyielding conviction, fierce courage, formidable power, unyielding strength 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; therefore, Tir asks for the highest strength of power, the peak of wisdom, and the greatest courage from Ahura Mazda to defeat his adversary, Apaosh Dev.

Hearing Tir's pleas (karda 6), Ahura Mazda Himself performs a Yasna dedicated to Tir, and to add to Tir's strength, grants him the strength of ten horses, ten camels, ten bulls, ten mountains and the swift waters of ten deep 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 such as Ashishvagh, Parendi and Meher also help Tir in the fight against Apaosh. No matter how much evil increases, ultimately, Ahura Mazda steps in and eradicates sins - "druj", and in the end, Angre-Mainyu is defeated so that Frashogard is achieved at the divinely appointed time.

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

spiritual blessing on the Earth and its people so that virtues grow giving spiritual strength to people to fulfill the pre-appointed Divine Event of Frashogard. Through Tir Yazad, Nature got its relief and an abundance of virtues and life 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 sacred element of earth as well as humanity (entrapping mankind into unrighteous temptations, attractions and vices).

Tir engages in the battle with the “Pairikas” ruled by Duzyairya (“Duz-yairya” also means a bad year full of drought, diseases and all different kinds of “famine”/depravations). Again, Tir fights with the strength of ten horses, ten camels and ten bulls to rescue the good Earth and mankind from the evil clutches of Duzyairya, created by Angre-Mainyu! 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 are depicted as dark small stones, symbolically signifying the dead army of pairikas, falling 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 escaping and doing harm in future. (This battle and binding of Duzyairya 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, imply 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. Through prayers, manthra and mithra, mankind 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 teach of the sacred and mystic ritual of “pasu-pach” wherein a holy person “kills” his own “animal” (*pasu*) which is subjugated (domesticated), meaning one kills all the animalistic desires within oneself, completely conquers the ‘druj’ within, and becomes a Master of his “lower self” or unrighteous thoughts and emotions.

In the Persian Empire, Jashans were performed in honor of Tir Yazad. **Tirgan** was celebrated 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 stands for spiritual perfection and 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 - deceit.” (Kangaji, Khordeh-Avesta-Ba-Mayeni, footnote, p. 246; also, P. N. Tavarua, assisted by B. R. Panthaki, A Manual of Kshnoom, p.158.)

This then is a short explanation of the Tir Yasht and Tirgan. It is a cosmic drama in which Tir Yazad wins over Apaosh Dev and over the evil witches “pairikas” as well as the entire army of Angre-Mainyu. As humans, we are also entangled in the battle of good versus evil waging within ourselves due to the dual mentalities. In the end, **Good always wins over evil!**

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

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