



THE MAZDAYASNI CONNECTION

January 28, 2022



The Zarathushti festival of **Jashn-e Sadeh** was originally called **Jashn-e Se Dae** - celebration of the three (Farsi: *se* = three) Dae (Dae-pa-Adar, Dae-pa-Meher and Dae-pa-Din).

In the Pazand *Afrin e Haft Ameshaspand*, the 3 Dae are extolled as the co-workers of Dadar Ahura Mazda.

History

The Shahnameh credits the **Peshdadian King Hushang** with the initiation of this festival.

One day, while out hunting with his party, Hushang viewed a huge *azda* –a snake. A stone hurled at the creature, missed its mark and struck another stone, causing sparks and igniting the dry brush in the surrounding area.

Hushang was the first to recognize Fire as the Divine energy and the Divine Glory of Mazda. In the words of Firdausi, Hushang proclaimed, “This luster is Divine and thou if wise must worship it.” Thus, Hushang was the first to establish Atash as an *ālāt*. That night, the king and his subjects celebrated a Jashan around this fire with great zest and festivity.

Jashn-e Sadeh
Zarathushti
Mid-winter Festival



King Hushang and the feast of *Jashn-e Sadeh*.
Folio from the Tahmaspi Shahnameh circa 1540 C.E.

Peshdadian Kings were *Saoshyants* - not Cave-dwellers

Gayomard, Hushang and the other Peshdadian Kings were not primitive cave-dwellers as is commonly believed. They were *Dahyupats* (spiritually advanced Kings) possessing lustrous *khoreh*, who played a stellar role in combating the *Daevayasnis* (evil worshippers) and guiding the *Mazdayasnis* (Mazda worshippers) towards *Frashogard*, and are, hence, regarded as *Saoshyants* or benefactors of mankind.

One of the first law-givers, King Hushang is called *Paradata* in the Avesta. He was a *Dahyupat* (spiritual lord) of this world, trained in various spiritual disciplines by his ancestor Gayomard himself. In the fight against the evil Daevas, Hushang was aided by Avan, Ram, Gosh, Ashishwangh and Jamyad Yazatas whom Hushang supplicated for divine help.

Deeper Significance of the Story

There is a deeper significance behind the simple outward meaning of the above story. The 'snake' symbolizes the base tendencies or evil characteristics in man. The 'stone' represents the *tarikats* or spiritual disciplines of the *Mazdayasnis*. The inner meaning is, when the spiritually advanced *khoreh*-possessing king Hushang taught his people the *Mazdayasni tarikats* of controlling and eliminating the evil tendencies in them, their inner spiritual fire (*Atash-e Vohufriyān*) blazed forth.

Celebrations Today

The name of the ancient Zarathushti Iranian festival of *Jashn-e Se Dae* is today known as *Jashn-e Sadeh* and is observed on (Fasli) Mah Bahman, Roz Meher, a hundred (Farsi *sad* = hundred) days after the beginning of winter, or fifty days and fifty nights before the New Year, Nowruz, to commemorate the discovery of Fire.

Zarathushtis in Iran observe this festival by lighting huge bonfires, performing religious ceremonies, feasting, merrymaking and giving *khairat* (distributing food among the less fortunate).

Zoroastrians Associations worldwide must observe such ancient Iranian festivals to educate their members about our customs, traditions and culture. ■

