



FEZANA Age-Appropriate Lesson Plan

Subject Category (circle one): Parsi Religion/Ceremony History Prayer
Gathas Comparative Religion Shahnameh
Age Group (circle one): Pre-k Grades 1-3 Grades 4-5 **Grades 6-8** Grades 9-12
Subject of the Lesson: Fire

Background Knowledge for Teacher:

Fire is the 7th Creation of Ahura Mazda, known as Asha Vahishta - the Best Truth/ Order. Fire is one of the most important creations of Ahura Mazda, as it is said in the Bundahishn, that Ahura Mazda created fire from his own breath.

In the Gathas, especially in Kem-na-Mazda prayer, fire is spoken of as good thoughts. In some places it is called the fire of Ahura Mazda.

In Ha 47-6 the worshipper prays to Ahura Mazda to send him through holy mentality the light of righteousness and divine wisdom. In Meher Yasht fire is called symbol of wisdom and compared to the Kayaivan glory. It reminds us to stay on the path of Truth (Asha)

In Atash Niyesh the fire is compared to the fire in our body giving light and growth for long time, bestower of intellect, giving nourishment and protection to life. It is for this reason that we face light as if facing God while praying. Fires are kept burning in our Atash Behrams and Atash Adarans. The light from these fires reminds us of the presence of God.

Fire is the giver of energy, light, warmth and is responsible for giving life to all the other creations. Fire is considered a purifier in Zoroastrianism, as it cleanses, purifies and drives away darkness. The Yazatas Adar, Dae-Padar, Ardibehsht represent the Fire

Fire is central to all Zoroastrian ceremonies and rituals. When we do our Kusti ritual at home, we should light a divo or face in the direction of the sun or some form of light and pray. For instance, in the morning hours, we face the East as the sun rises in the East and in the evening, we face West, because that's where the Sun sets.

All Zoroastrian places of worship, ceremonies and rituals involve the use of the Fire. Zoroastrians worship in a Fire Temple, Atash Behram, Agiary/ Adaran, Atash Kadeh or Dadgah.

A Fire in an Atash Behram or an Agiary is tended by Zoroastrian priests – keeps the fire burning and never lets it be extinguished. Five times a day – during each change of *Geh* (specific time of morning, afternoon, evening, sunset and midnight) a boi ceremony is performed where sandalwood offering is made during as Atash Niyayesh prayer is recited.



The 3 levels of Fire (Atash) are:

- Atash Behram - Fire of Victory, is the most sacred type of Fire, made by combining 16 different fires – Burning Corpse, Dyer, King, Potter, Brickmaker, House of a Zoroastrian (priest and lay person), an Ascetic, Goldsmith, Ironsmith, Armourer, Baker, Brewer, Soldier, Mint, Shepherd and Lightning.
- Atash Adaran/Agiary/Atash Kadeh - 2nd level of Fire - made by combining 4 different fires (Priests, Warriors, Herdsmen and Traders)
- Dadgah - House Fire

In the Shahnameh, it is said that King Hushang discovered fire by striking a rock. This revolutionized the way people in King Hushang's kingdom lived.

Suggested Material:

1. <https://zoroastrians.net/category/agiaries-and-atash-behrams/>
2. <https://zoroastrians.net/category/agiaries-and-atash-behrams/page/7/>
3. <https://zoroastrians.net/2021/07/14/rare-divine-ancient-fire-temple-found-in-iran/>

Vocabulary:

Fire, Atash, Adar, Atash Niayesh, Atash Behram, Atash Adaran, Agiary, Atash Kadeh, Dadgah, Divo, Asha Vahishta, Yazata, Afarganyu, Chipyo, Chamach, Kathi, Sukhar (Sandalwood), Loban, Boi, Maachi, Mobed, Geh

Lesson for students:

1. Importance of Fire in Zoroastrianism; Connection to Sun and Light;
2. Fire the 7th Creation of Ahura Mazda.
3. King Hushang's discovery of Fire – Story from Shahnameh
4. Divo - How to light a Divo
5. Types of Fire Temples (Atash Dadgah/ Atash Kadeh/ Agiary/ Atash Behram)
6. An explanation of the Boi ceremony in a fire temple – How many Atash Niyaesh to be prayed at Boi ceremony for Atash Behram and Atash Adaran.
7. How to consecrate a fire and the consecration of the fire temple
8. Practices and dress code observed at the Fire Temple

Activity for Students:

1. Research on Fire Temples around the world
2. Creating a Fire Temple (Agiary/ Atash Behram) diorama



Source:

1. Joyous Flame - Parzor
2. Atash by Silloo Mehta (Mazdiyasni Connection)
3. <http://www.heritageinstitute.com/zoroastrianism/>
4. <https://www.iranicaonline.org/>
5. <https://www.britannica.com/>
6. The Good Life Book, ZAGNY: <https://zagny.org/shop/books/the-good-life-book-4th-ed/>
7. Zoroastrianism: The Story of Our Religion by Ava Mehta
8. J. J. Modi – Chapter on Consecration of Fire and the Temple

Prepared by: Vehishta Kaikobad, Arnavaz Sethna, Tashan Mistree Byramji

Edited by: Vehishta Kaikobad

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