



FEZANA Age-Appropriate Lesson Plan

Subject Category (circle one): Iranian Religion/Ceremony Celebration History Prayer
Gathas Comparative Religion Shahnameh

Age Group (circle one): PreK-K Grades 1-3 Grades 4-5 **Grades 6-8** Grades 9-12

Lesson # (if applicable):

Subject of the Lesson: Sedreh Pooshi

Background Knowledge for the Teacher:

Meaning of the word Sedreh Pooshi:

The navjote or sedreh-pooshi ceremony inducts a person into the Zoroastrian faith. For many Zoroastrians it is one of the most important rites of passage in their lives and in the lives of their families.

Navjote is the Indian-Zoroastrian word for the ceremony. Navjote means new (nav) life (jote). Some say that 'jote' comes from the Avestan word zaotar, meaning one who offers prayers. Sedreh-Pooshi is the Iranian-Zoroastrian word for the ceremony. It means putting on the sedreh or white vest which Zoroastrians wear.

Zarathushtra chooses to live according to the Gathas:

Zoroastrian religion is a religion of choice. In the Gathas Zarathushtra too chooses for himself to follow the doctrine presented in the Gathas.

Therefore, Wise God, I, Zarathushtra choose for myself
the very mentality of Yours, which is the most progressive.
May righteousness breath a strong life in body.
May serenity prevail in the sun-bathed dominion.
May the reward for actions be given through good mind.

(Gathas: Song 8.16 or Yasna 43.16)

Meaning behind the sedreh and koshti:

Zoroastrians are recognized in two ways:

1. An inward sign: Living a life of good thoughts, words, and deeds
2. An outward sign: wearing the sedreh and koshti



Sedreh in Avesta is named “Vohumah Vastreh” meaning “garment of good thinking”. Koshti in Avestan is named “Aeioya Vanghan” meaning “belt” is the outward sign of a Zoroastrian similar to a Zoroastrian birth certificate.

Sedreh is the first piece of cloth touching the skin and should be white in color, made of cotton, linen, or jaconet. The color white is a symbol of cleanliness, purity, simplicity, and humility. Sedreh is made of 9 parts which reminds of 9 main concepts and beliefs of Zoroastrian religion. It acts as a reminder to use these 9 concepts in one’s daily life.

They are as follows:

Belief in:

1. one God, Ahura Mazda
2. Zarathushtra as the messenger of the religion
3. the law of Asha (Righteousness and Truth)
4. twin essence, Spenta Mainyu (progressive mentality) and Angra Mainyu (regressive mentality)
5. the Amesha Spentas
6. the eternity of soul
7. donation, and charity
8. honoring the 4 elements, water, fire, air, and earth
9. Freshekerti or renewal and improving the living world

Sedreh is a loose shirt, without neckline and short sleeves. It contains two small pockets, one in front and the other in the back. The pocket in the back is a reminder of the responsibilities of every Zoroastrian that needs to be considered daily. The pocket in front is called “keeseh kefreh” or “Keeseh Kar e neek” meaning good deeds pocket is a reminder of a Zoroastrian’s choice of deeds that leads to one’s happiness.

Koshti is a white band made from sheep wool. It is made of 72 wool strings intertwined together representing the 72 chapters of Yasna. These 72 strings are divided into 6 sections when knitting, with each section having 12 strings. Zoroastrians wear the koshti by wrapping it three times around the waste on the sedreh as a reminder to follow good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. The four knots (two in front and two in the back) reminds a Zoroastrian of the 4 elements, fire, water, air and earth clean and care for the environment. The two knots in front are tied with two Yatha Ahu prayers and the knots in the back are tied with one Ashem Vohu prayer.

Sedreh Pooshi Ceremony:

Choosing one’s religion, in Zoroastrianism is based on a personal choice that is accompanied with free will, wisdom, and knowledge. Sedreh Pooshi is based on an ancient tradition. When a boy or girl reach an age of mental maturity, a time when they can decipher right from wrong and have learned “Avesta



bayaste” then the parents can conduct the Sedreh Pooshi ceremony for them. This ceremony changes their status from a born Zoroastrian to officially joining the Zoroastrian community. Sedreh Pooshi will represent a new birth into the religion. At this time the initiate will make a vow with Ahura Mazda and each time when renewing his/her koshti will renew his/her vows.

In the past this ceremony would be conducted in the morning but now a days it is conducted in the afternoon in one’s home, Darbe Mehr, or another location. This ceremony is sometimes performed as a group Sedreh Pooshi. That is a group of initiates will undergo Sedreh Pooshi together.

The initiate should bathe, wear his/her sedreh and white clothes and present oneself with the Mobed by the Sedreh Pooshi spread. The Mobed will start this ceremony with Atash Niayesh (Fire Prayer) or Urmazdyasht prayer. At the end of the Beresad prayer, while the initiate is holding the Mobed’s sleeves will recite the Koshti Avesta with the Mobed. Together with Mobed’s guide he/she will tie the koshti on top of sedreh around his/her waist. After this he/she will say the Mazdayasnu Ahmi prayer with the Mobed and declares him/herself a Zoroastrian.

Then the initiate will say the Payman e Din prayer and by saying this prayer he/she will commit to following the teachings of Zarathushtra which is based on Truth, wisdom, and Righteousness.

At the end, the Mobed will recite the Tandorosti prayer, wishing a benevolent, prosperous, healthy, and joyous life for the initiate.

Daily renewal of the koshti is a way for the initiate to remember his/her commitment to the Zoroastrian religion, and his/her declaration to serve the living world based on Zarathushtra’s teachings.

Sedreh Pooshi is a beautiful ceremony that teaches the initiate to pay attention to the teachings of Zarathushtra, one is not alone in implementing a righteous way of living and other righteous Zoroastrians are aiding in Hamazoori for the improvement and betterment of the living world.

Sedreh Pooshi Spread:

The Sedreh Pooshi spread is usually placed on the ground or floor. A small amount of Avishan (thyme) is placed on each of the four corners. Two lit candles can also be placed on either side of the spread.

Following items are placed on the spread:

1. Photo of Ashu Zarathushtra- Reminder that we are Zoroastrian
2. Avesta Book or the Gatha book- We follow the teachings of Zarathushtra and the religion.
3. Candle or a lit light- representing divine light
4. Kaleh Ghand wrapped in Green (sugar cone wrapped in green)- representing a good and benevolent life. We also offer it as a gift to one another.
5. Place for fire and nice smelling incense.



6. A small dish containing a bit of rice mixed with Avishan (thyme) and a brand new unwrapped koshti- Rice is a symbol of a prosperous life, thyme is a symbol of vibration and nice smell. The Mobed will use the rice and thyme during Tandorosti prayer to place on the initiate's shoulders.
7. Sweet to offer guests- presenting a sweet life, celebration, and joy.
8. Mirror and rose water- mirror represents a radiant heart, and face (radiant inside and out). Rose water is a sign of vibration and nice smell.
9. A dish of season's fruits
10. A dish containing lork (toasted and salted dried fruit and nuts-ajeel) with some white noghl (candied almond)- A small bag of lork will be given to each guest to enjoy.

Reference for teacher:

1. Soroush Vaj and Avesta Koshti
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7mz1aanBjCE&list=PLnOSH5j1sQh_sKPkoUzPj_ER_wzQkG0qI
2. Sedreh Pooshi by Zarathushtrian Assembly (In Persian)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rg1o2hig9Dc>
3. Kurdish Sedreh Pooshi
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-QMDWsnd_Y&t=62s
4. The translation of the Koshti prayer is provided in the Iranian Prayer section of lesson plans.

Lesson for students:

1. What do you know about Sedreh Pooshi ceremony?
 - a. Who goes through Sedreh Pooshi and why?
 - b. How is the ceremony conducted?
 - c. How do we celebrate Sedreh Pooshi?
 - d. Have you gone through Sedreh Pooshi? If yes, do you wear your sedreh and koshti daily, on occasion, or never? What constitutes your decision.
2. Is it important for someone who wants to follow the teachings of Zarathushtra to go through Sedreh Pooshi? Why or why not?
3. Use the provided Power Point or make one of your own to share with students. You can share the inspirational video of youngest woman Mobedyar.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E8aP-9lo1cs>
4. Use the Koshti Prayer translation provided in the Iranian Prayer section to discuss the meaning of the Koshti Prayer.
 - EX.
 - a. Mazdayasni Ahmi- choice of religion-“I choose”
 - b. Hamazoor Bim- Uniting with all the good people of the world in doing good deeds.



Activity for Students:

1. Make a game of who can name the most items on the Sedreh Pooshi spread.
2. Have a long yarn for each student and practice tying the koshti with students.
3. Break the class into teams and have a poster board for each team. Have the students draw and write on the poster showcasing what they learned.
 - a. Items on the Sedreh Pooshi spread
 - b. Reasons why we go through Sedreh Pooshi and what we remind ourselves when we tie the koshti everyday? 9 concepts and beliefs of Zoroastrian religion related to renewing the koshti daily.
 - c. Make a section of the poster illustrating what would you add to the Sedreh Pooshi ceremony?

Sources:

1. <https://www.heritageinstitute.com/zoroastrianism/navjote/index.htm>
2. YouTube link in Persian: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TFvG-WwAp4>
3. Amoozesh e Din e Zartoshti (Sal e Aval e Dabirestan): Education in Zoroastrian religion (6th grade) Prepared by Tehran Zoroastrian Anjoman
4. Gathas Our Guide by AA Jafarey
5. Fravarane by AA Jafarey

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Date: 5/2022