



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: Sudreh & Kushti

Background Knowledge for Teacher:

Sudreh

The word **SUD** means good and **REH** means path. So, the **SUDREH** means the **Good Path** and with your Sudreh on you, you are always on the good path of Ahura Mazda. The Sudreh is also called the garment of the good mind (Vohu Manik Vastra) and it is the armor that protects you from the forces of evil. A child born of Zoroastrian parents is not considered a Zoroastrian till he is initiated into the fold by the Navjote ceremony.

The Sudreh is symbolic in its structure. It is made of white muslin (mul mul). White color is symbolic of innocence and purity, and, as such, is the symbol of the Mazdayasnian or Zoroastrian religion. The sudreh is made of one-fold, i.e. no shoulder seams but only side seams - one seam may be on the right hand side, and the other on the left hand side, thus dividing the shirt into two parts, the front part and the back part. These two parts -- the front and the back -- are said to be symbolic of the past and the future, both related to each other through the present.

The front part must remind a Zoroastrian of his duty to persons and institutions of the past ages. We owe a duty towards those who have gone before us -- to our ancestors, our forefathers, our departed dear ones, all who have preceded us. We also owe a duty to our superiors, who have been in the front before us.

The second or the back part of the shirt must remind us of our duty to the future -- to our children, to future generations. It must also remind us of our duty to our juniors who are still to rise to our position. In short, these two parts of the shirt -- the front and the back -- are said to indicate and to say to us, as it were: "Look straight in the front, bearing in mind that it is the past that has come up to the present and will lead to the future."

The first time you are religiously made to wear the sudreh is during the Navjote ceremony. The priest doing your navjote, places the sudreh over you when reciting the word Shyothananam during the Yatha Ahu Vairyo prayer.



The Sudreh is made of 9 parts. The 9 parts represent the 9000 allegorical years that Ahura Mazda said he would fight Ahriman for in the Creation Story. This is the period that every Zoroastrian experiences from birth to growth and finally to death.

The 9 parts of the sudreh are:

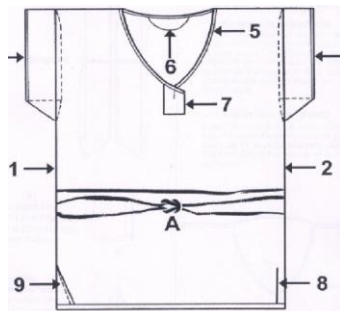
- 1, 2 - side seams
- 3,4 - sleeve seams
- 5 - neck seam
- 6 - girdo - pocket at the back for future good deeds/ potential good deeds
- 7 - gireban - pocket in the front for good deeds you are doing
- 8 - straight tiri - reminder of imperfections/ evil to be aware of
- 9 - triangular tiri - represents good thoughts, words and deeds

It is believed that the Sudreh we wear today is a modified version of a garment worn by Zarathushtra.

Every time you wear the Sudreh you are reminding yourself to use the Good Mind or Vohu Manah and follow the laws of purity.

NOTE:

A sudreh which is torn or stained and cannot be cleaned, needs to be discarded. Before discarding the sudreh you should cut the neck seam with the Girdo and the Gireban attached to it while reciting 5 Yatha Ahu Vairyos and 3 Ashem Vohus and then roll the neck seam and place it in a metal box in your cupboard or bury it in your yard.



(Sudreh and kushti diagram "Zoroastrianism: An Ethnic Perspective" by Khojeste Mistree).

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|------------------|--------------------|--------------|-----------|
| 1. SEAM | 2. SEAM | SLEEVES | SLEEVES |
| 6. GIRDO | 7. GIREBAN | 5. NECK SEAM | A. KUSHTI |
| 8. STRAIGHT TIRI | 9. TRIANGULAR TIRI | | |



Kushti:

The Kushti is the sacred cord tied over the Sudreh. Your Kushti is your **direction finder** – it directs you on to the good path or path of Asha (righteousness). It is made of 72 strands of white lamb's wool. The color white in Zoroastrianism stands for purity of thought, word and deed.

The 72 strands represent the 72 chapters of the Yasna. (The Yasna is a very important Zoroastrian prayer recited during the Yasna ceremony when hom nu pani is made or when an Atash Behram is being consecrated.)

The Kushti is divided into 6 sections of 12 strands each. The 6 sections represent the 6 Amesha Spentas - Sky, water, earth, plant, animal and fire. The wearer of the Kushti represents the 7th creation of human beings - Spenta Mainyu.

The 12 strands represent the 12 words of the Ashem Vohu prayer. The 6 sections (3 at each end) also represent the 6 Gahambars and are linked to the 6 creations.

The Kushti is cylindrical. The inner hollow part represents the inner spiritual world and the outer part represents the physical world, the world we live in.

Once the weaving of the Kushti is completed, it is removed from the loom and taken to a priest for cutting. The ends are braided into a lar, followed by the further partitioning of the strands into 3 sections, lari. It is said that when Zarathushtra left his home in search of truth, he was given a sacred cord, a precursor to the modern day Kushti.



Padyab Kushti (Kushti Bastan) is the act of cleaning oneself and untying and re-tying your Kushti with Kushti prayers.

The basic Kushti prayers consist of reciting the Sarosh Baj first, as Sarosh Yazad is the yazata that provides protection. So, when you remove your kushti, reciting the Kem na Mazda, you are protected. This is followed by the Ahurahe Mazda Khodae and Jasa me Avengeh Mazda. The Kushti should be



done at least twice a day; a traditional Zoroastrian performs the Kushti ritual many more times a day! The Kushti ritual is performed facing the sun or any source of light (like a divo).

Remember!

When you have a problem you talk to your parents or your friends, but now learn to talk to Ahura Mazda on this special chat line, which is your Kushti!

Suggested Material:

1. Sudreh and Kushti
2. Diagram of Sudreh
3. Implements to make a Kushti - if available

Vocabulary:

Sudreh; girido; gireban; tiri; mulmul; Kushti; Navjote; Yasna; Yatha Ahu Vairyo; Shyothananam; Topi; Padyab Kushti; Kushti Bastan;

Lesson for students:

1. Ask students about the different kinds of protective gear or weapons that some fictional characters in books and movies such as Harry Potter, Luke Skywalker, or Avengers wear or use (wand, light saber, cape..). Why do they wear them (protection from evil)? Explain that those armors only protect the body. Zoroastrianism gives us the sudreh and Kushti as an armor to protect our body, mind, and soul. Connect the tying of the Kushti to tightening a superhero robe. Ask students what they think we need protection from (negative emotions like anger, jealousy; being unkind and causing harm to others)?
2. Ask students to learn and name all parts of the sudreh & kushti.
3. Teach the methodology and prayers related to untying and re-tying the Kushti. Provide students with rope to imitate the process. Teach them how to tie the slip knot.
4. Know the meanings of the Ashem Vohu, Yatha Ahu Vairyo, & Kemna Mazda prayers

Activity for Students:

1. Allow students to have a tactile experience with Sudreh and Kushti
2. Draw a Sudreh and name the 9 parts.
Use Sudreh and Kushti Diagram as a guide or activity.
3. Activity Sheet of the “parts of the Sudreh”



Sources

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9. The Joyous Flame - PARZOR

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