



FEZANA Age-Appropriate Lesson Plan

Subject Category (circle one): Iranian Religion 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:

Work, Effort, and Perseverance

Background Knowledge for Teacher:

Reading the biographies of great scientists, benevolent individuals in fields of human affairs, politics, entrepreneurship, etc. we notice a similar trait possessed by all of them. All these individuals who we now remember in kindness were able to overcome their hardships with perseverance, hard work, effort, and endeavor. This trait is not only true of individuals but also true of communities, peoples of different nations and countries. Those who have made an effort and worked hard were able to build a better and stronger country for their children and the future generation. For example, countries like Japan and Germany after WWII destruction were able to rebuild a strong, and successful country through organization, hard work, effort, and endeavor. Now, the question is what place does hard work, effort, and perseverance have in Zoroastrian culture.

In Yasna 33 verse 3, Zarathushtra says,

“He who is most good to the righteous, Be he a noble, or a peasant, or a dependent, He who zealously makes the good living creation flourish, He shall come to dwell with Truth in the realm of Good Mind.”

Also, in part of Yasna 44.2, we read,

“... What is the source of Best Existence? How shall one who seeks it, receive the blessed recompense? Surely such a holy one through Righteousness, Is a healer of existence, beneficent unto all, a genuine friend, O Mazda?”

In Zarathushtra’s view there is no boundary regarding improving the world. In Yasna 46.12 we read about a person named Fryana Tourani:

“When among the kinsmen and descendants of the renowned Turanian, Fryana, Right rises, when through the spiritual zeal of Armaiti, they further the welfare of the country, then shall Ahura Mazda bring them the illumination of Good Mind and show them the path of Righteousness.”



Note: The Turanian (non-Iranian) tribe Frayana join the Zarathushtrian Fellowship and Yoisht Frayana, a member of the tribe is noted for his profound knowledge of the religion and his victory in debate with an old cult high priest (zoroastrina.org).

Building and improving:

Looking at Iranian historical sites, we realize that Zoroastrians from long ago have strived to improve the country and their lives with respect to the role of humans and consideration of other people. At a time when the rulers of neighboring countries used slaves, the impressive palace of Persepolis was built by men and women across the Persian Empire who received fair wages for their work.

If we look at the more recent history and after the collapse of the Sassanid Empire, we realize that although our ancestors endured many hardships, they did not surrender and continued to build. Many Zoroastrians especially after Safavid period who lived in desert regions of Yazd and Kerman strived in these droughted lands to build, plant and start agriculture. In the droughted land with low amount of rain fall, they used opportunities to invent, utilize, and save water to prosper and have better living conditions. Engineering extensive qanat (underground water canals) and underground water reservoirs are such examples.

Parsis who migrated to India using the same Zoroastrian values worked hard, persevered, and prospered in their new home.

Why today, more than ever, do we need to put in more effort and do constructive work?

Today there are many goals for Zoroastrians inside and outside Iran that need to be accomplished. Therefore, using teachings of Zarathushtra and our ancestors as examples, we need to work hard, be optimistic, and move ahead with consistent, firm, and stable steps.

Learn, understand, protect, and spread Zarathushtra's message is the most important goal for each one of us. As already mentioned, Zarathushtra's teachings is a universal and valuable heritage. We need to understand this culture, preserve it, avoid the loss of its components, and share it with those who appreciate it. We need to build a community in which the ethical and moral values of Zoroastrianism is preserved and practiced. This task is not an easy one and requires work, effort, and perseverance.

Aside from the values of perseverance, hard work, effort, and endeavor being strong Zoroastrian values, these values were praised further by Persian poets throughout history. Read through the following stanzas and stories from three different Persian poets and analyze how Zoroaster's values are being highlighted.



The poet Eghbal Lahouri says:

God gave grandeur to the people,
Who wrote their own fate.

The poet Eghbal Lahouri emphasizes that success and progress is reached when we practice our freedom of choice. We choose our goals followed by action to shape our future. The influence of Zoroastrian values is shown in this poem as the Gathas teaches freedom of choice. There is no set destiny. We are encouraged to use this freedom to shape a future that is beneficial to all including ourselves.

The poet Sa'di says:

*Treasure will not be found without hard work
The person who worked received wages.*

The poet Sa'di emphasizes the importance of hard work and perseverance to gain benefit. This hard work can include physical labor, education, or working at a relationship all of which can result in "wages" that are beneficial.

Sa'di also writes:

*Sa'di, a righteous person who does good deeds will not die
Dead is one whose name is not associated with good deeds.*

Zoroastrian values, manifests good thoughts and words by practicing good deeds. It is through good deeds that goodness most visibly reaches the community at large. Some scholars regard Amertat (one of the Amesha Spentan meaning deathlessness) as exactly what Sa'di is describing in the poem above. One who does good deeds is remembered and hence never dies in our hearts and minds. A good example is Ashu Zarathushtra who lived about 3700 years ago but is still remembered today.

The poet Malek al shoara Bahar has a poem called "Hard Work and Treasure",

A farmer on his deathbed advises his sons to work hard plowing the planting field because there is a hidden treasure in the land. The father told his sons that he doesn't know where the treasure is, but it is up to the sons to find it. When the father died, the sons worked very hard plowing the field, and turning the soil in hope of finding the treasure.

Due to their hard work each seed grew as if 70 seeds were planted. The sons did not find the treasure, but their hard work gave them an excellent crop that year which was as if they had found treasure.



The poet Malek al Shoara Bahar describes hard work in a clever way. The sons looking for gold or silver gained riches of a prosperous harvest leading to financial gain including a bountiful harvest that benefited the whole community (grain for the winter ahead). As Zoroastrians we believe in gaining riches through hard work, and perseverance.

Lesson for students:

Lesson Title: Do your best!

Lesson Objectives / Learning Targets:

- Students will learn that one of the important Zoroastrian values is to do our best at whatever we do.

Essential Questions:

1. Why is it important to do our best at what we do?
2. What kind of help do give your family at home?

Materials Needed:

1. Story on ethics.
2. Paper and coloring material.

Introduction / Anticipatory Set:

Start the class by introducing a tangible example, emphasizing the importance of doing a job well done and the effect it will have on others.

EX: Ask the class who makes dinner at home and if it tastes good. When the family member takes his/her time to make a dinner that the family enjoys, everyone will benefit and the person making the dinner will feel good.

Lesson Procedure:

Direct Instruction (10 minutes):

Read them a story. The following story was generated by AI. Feel free to use your own.

Once upon a time, in a magical land, there lived a group of friendly animals. They loved to play and have fun, but they also knew that work was important. They had a wise old owl named Oliver who often shared his wisdom with them.

One sunny morning, Oliver gathered all the animals around and told them a story. "My dear friends," he began, "let me tell you about two little ants named Andy and Annie. They were small ants with big dreams."

Andy and Annie loved to explore the meadow and collect food for the winter. They knew they needed to work hard to gather enough food. Every day, they woke up early and set out on their adventure. They worked together, carrying tiny crumbs and grains to their anthill.



One day, some other ants saw Andy and Annie working so diligently. They laughed and said, "Why work so hard? Let's play instead!" The two little ants didn't listen. They knew that working hard was important, even if it wasn't always the most fun.

When winter arrived, Andy and Annie had a cozy stash of food in their anthill. But the ants who had played all summer had nothing left. They were cold and hungry.

Seeing this, all the animals in the meadow realized the importance of Andy and Annie's work ethic. They learned that working hard, even if it's not always easy, helps us be prepared for challenges that might come our way.

From that day on, all the animals, big and small, remembered the story of Andy and Annie. They understood that a strong work ethic, like the ants had, was important to make their lives better and happier.

And so, the animals in the magical land learned that a little hard work today brings a lot of happiness tomorrow. And they all lived happily ever after, working together and playing together with big smiles on their faces.

Note: Point out that as a Zoroastrian it is important to do our best at whatever we do

Guided Practice (20 minutes):

Ask students why Annie and Andy's work was important and how it benefited them and the other ants.

1. Ask each of the students to make a drawing of something beneficial they did that day.
2. They must take their time and do their best.

Note: In a virtual class, students can hold up their drawings to share with the class.

Summary/closing activity (10 minutes):

1. Each student will share their drawing with the class and talk about what they did and if they did their best job.
2. Summarize the importance of doing our best at whatever we do.

Note: In a virtual class, students can hold up their drawings to share with the class.

Learning Extensions:

At home, students can practice doing their best in brushing their teeth, doing their homework, etc.

Assessment:

Assess the students' understanding of the day's lesson. Do they agree that doing our best at whatever we do is important?



Sources:

1. “Amoozesh din o Farhang e Zartoshti” Grade 7
2. *The Gathas The Hymns of Zarathushtra* by Dinshaw Irani

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