



## FEZANA Age-Appropriate Lesson Plan

**Subject Category (circle one):** Iranian Religion/Ceremony **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 #5

**Subject of the Lesson: Aryans**

**Material for the teacher:**

**Lesson Objective:** To learn about ancient Iranian people – the “Aryans”, and their migration.

**Lesson Length: 1- 1.5 hour**

**Introduction: Teacher** asks students the following question and spends time exploring the responses:

- What does race mean?
- Who were the Aryans?

**Teacher** shares the definitions of race and racism from Glossary on page 4 and continues:

Race is usually associated with biology and linked with physical characteristics, such as hair texture or skin color, etc.

Genetic studies in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century denied the existence of biogenetically distinct races. Also, anthropology and history scholars began to examine race as social and cultural, rather than a biological phenomenon and have determined that race is a social invention of relatively recent origin.

The idea of “race” began to evolve in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century in Europe. In twentieth century, the word “Aryan” has been used in association with racism, crime, hate crimes, and Nazism which has given the word a new negative sense.

**Teacher** shares the following and explains:

“Aryans” were group of people who migrated from Central Asia into ancient Iran and India (2000 B.C.E.), and farther westward into Europe. They were speakers of Indo-European languages (which will be discussed in detail on next lesson!).

Aryana means “The land of the Aryans” from which the name “Iran/ Aryan” comes from.

‘Arya’ means ‘noble’ or ‘honorable’ in Sanskrit and Avestan.



**Teacher** asks students to read from handout (page 2) and using the map (page 3) to further explain the path of the migration.

## **ARYANS**

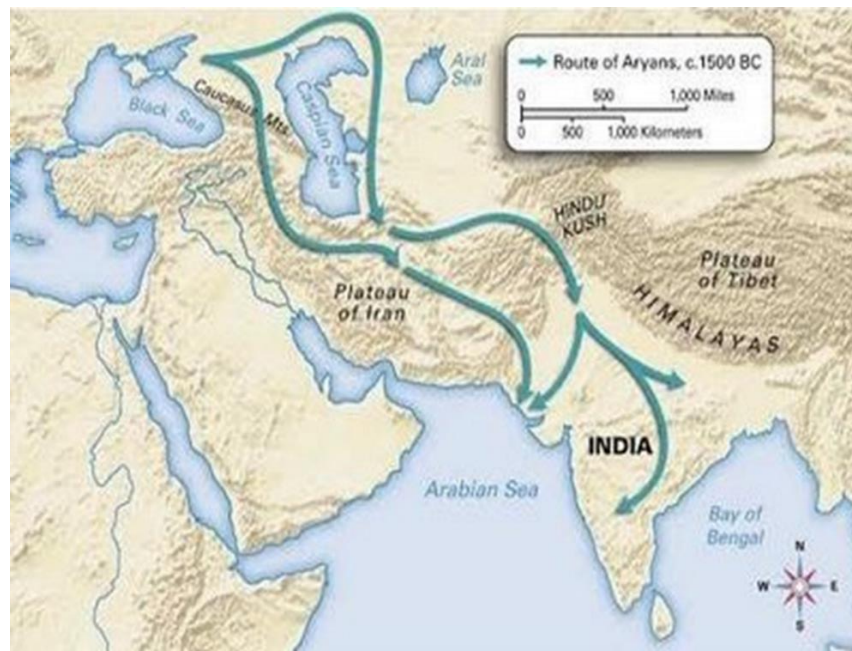
The Aryans were a group of people who came from somewhere in Central Asia and moved into ancient Iran and India (2000 B.C.E.), and farther westward into Europe.

The historical evidence and archeological remains suggest that the migration of Iranian tribes into the Iranian plateau and the surrounding area took place through a succession of numerous tribes, each tribe speaking its own variety of the Iranian language.

The earliest groups contained the “Western” Iranians (Medes and Persians), whose migration is generally placed at the end of the 2nd millennium B.C. However, their exact routes are extremely hard to establish. There are two possibilities:

(1) They went north of the Caspian Sea, crossed the Caucasus and the Armenian Highlands, and then went southeast.

(2) They came directly from the steppes in the north or northeast, crossed the Dasht-e Kavir, to be brought to a halt only by the Zagros mountains. The last group was the “Eastern” Iranians, who in historical times settled in the region extending from Margiana and Bactria to Arachosia and Baluchistan.



The Aryan tribes took over most of the Iranian plateau and started organizing small cities, headed by local mayors. Slowly the Iranian tribes re-organized themselves into united kingdoms to gain more power in the region.

The books of the Avesta as well as the Middle Persian Pahlavi texts tell us that Aryana Vaeja, the Aryan homeland, was where Zarathushtra's father lived and where Zarathushtra first developed his beliefs.



Aryan Migration (2000 B.C.E.)

## Glossary

- Race** Any people united by common history, language, cultural traits, etc.
- Racism** The systemic oppression of a racial group to the social, economic, and political advantage of another.
- Arya** 'noble' or 'honorable' in Sanskrit and Avestan.
- Aryana** "The land of the Aryans" from which the name "Iran/ Aryan" comes from.
- Aryana Vaeja** is the homeland of the early Iranians and is mentioned in the Avesta.

**Sources:** Google, Encyclopedia Iranica, Encyclopedia Britannica

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