



FEZANA Age-Appropriate Lesson Plan

Subject Category (circle one): **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 # (if applicable): 1

Subject of the Lesson: **Bundahishn**

Introduction:

- The story of Creation in Zoroastrianism is called the Bundahishn
- It was written in the 9th century in the Pahlavi language.
- As per the story, in the *Menog* (spiritual) period, Ohrmazd (Ahura Mazda) lived in Endless Light and Ahriman lived in the Station of Darkness. When Ahriman first saw Ohrmazd he tried to attack Ohrmazd but was unsuccessful and being scared, returned to his station of darkness.

Ohrmazd knew that Ahriman would eventually be defeated because he did not have the power of the good mind. So Ohrmazd to be fair, offered Ahriman a pact of peace. But Ahriman is ignorant and rejects Ohrmazd's pact of peace, which he believed Ohrmazd offered through weakness and helplessness.

Ohrmazd recites the Ahunavar prayer (also known as the Yatha Ahu Vairyo) and Ahriman is knocked unconscious. Ahriman remains out of action for an allegorical period of 3000 years.

In this time, Ohrmazd created the physical world (*Getig* period) as we know it, so that humans with the help of Ohrmazd and the seven creations can defeat Ahriman.

First, he created the sky as a fortification from which evil could not escape. Then beneath the sky, he placed the waters. On the 'waters he floated the earth' on which humans would live and trap evil. On the earth he planted 'the tree of all seeds' from which all other plants and trees could grow. Ohrmazd then created the good cow, to represent all animals and created the first human, *Gayomaretan*. From his own breath, Ohrmazd created the seventh creation, fire, whose warmth, and radiance gave life to all the other creations.

After the end of the first 3000 year period, Ahriman awoke and attacked Ohrmazd's seven beautiful creations, causing destruction and chaos. Ohrmazd seeing the destruction brought by Ahriman, decided to send a special messenger, Spitaman Zarathushtra to help save the creations, restore happiness, and bring peace and harmony to the world. With the help of Vohu Manah, the Good Mind, Zarathushtra spread Ohrmazd's message.



The Getig period is the current state that we live in.

In the last time period, Ohrmazd promises us that with the use of Vohu Manah (the Good Mind), the power of Asha (truth) and spreading Ushta (happiness), Ahriman will be rendered powerless. The world would once again experience Frashokereti or the making wonderful, where time ceases to exist, and the world remains in a perfect state.

Material for the teacher:

1. Teacher made materials like worksheets, Bundahishn story (Use 'Hello World' by Shazneen Gandhi); visual aids (pictorial representation of 7 Amesha Spentas and their symbols – handmade/ power point slides)
2. Masks for Ahura Mazda, Ahriman and the Amesha Spenta masks
3. Puppets representing the seven creations

Vocabulary:

Bundahishn; Creation; Ahura Mazda; Ohrmazd; Ahriman; Yatha Ahu Vairyo; Ahunavar; Menog; Getig; Frashokereti; Amesha Spenta (Holy Immortals); sky, water, earth, plant, animal, human beings, fire; Names of 7 Amesha Spentas (Khashatra Vairya, Haurvatat, Spenta Armaiti, Ameretat, Vohu Manah, Spenta Mainyu, Asha Vahishta);

Lesson for students:

1. Read and introduce the Zoroastrian Creation Story
2. Discuss the importance of the Ahunavar (Yatha Ahu Vairyo) prayer
3. Concept of dualism - Good versus evil

Activity for Students:

1. Making Puppets or masks or using props related to the Bundahishn to tell the story of creation.
2. Arts and Crafts - making a toran with the seven creations
3. Dramatization/ Role Playing
4. Team Games related to good vs. evil, Jeopardy

Sources:

The Good Life Book, ZAGNY: <https://zagny.org/shop/books/the-good-life-book-4th-ed/>
Hello World by Shazneen Gandhi

The Bundahishn - The Zoroastrian Book of Creation by Domenico Agnostini and Samuel Thorpe
<https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/bundahisn-primal-creation>

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