



## 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 (see references below); visual aids (pictorial representation of 7 Amesha Spentas and their symbols – handmade/ power point slides)

### **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. Zoroastrian Story of Creation - including historic context; time period; compilation
2. How do you compare the Bundahishn to other stories of creation - like Adam and Eve, Aboriginal Dream Time stories
3. What do you get out of the Bundahishn - Amesha Spentas; Gathas; Concept of Ahunavar (YAV); Hegemony; Good and Evil; Shahnameh (Kiyanians, rise of Mazdayasni religion);
4. Concept of Ecology; Tree of Life; Nature of Fire
5. Ahura Mazda's messenger - Why Ahura Mazda chose to send Zarathushtra
6. Material creation of the world - animal kingdom.
7. Duality - Fight between good and evil
8. Constellations/ Cosmology from the Bundahishn
9. Our responsibility to bring about Frashokereti - The Making Wonderful

### **Activity for Students:**

1. Create presentation on a story of creation - Pictorial representation or powerpoint slides
2. Write your own story of creation
3. How do you compare and contrast Creation vs. Evolution?
4. Discuss your role as a Zoroastrian caretaker for the environment



**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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**Date:** 12/2021