

A Study of Mitra (mihr) Character in Iranian and Indian Myth

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ABSTRACT

Myths are mirrors that reflect images beyond the Millennium and when history and Archeology remain silent, the myths start talking about the human cultures belonging to a distant past; also they brought us the great Idea and extensive logic of unknown thoughtful scholars of the ancient world. Traditional Mihr worship goes back to the very ancient periods. Mihr has been an important god in the myths of various countries in different periods of history. Mihr worship has been extended in the west up to the northern England besides in the east up to India. Mihr that was worshiped for thousands of years is still respected by Zoroastrians. In the Vedic Indian periods her Name is appeared with the concept of commitment and friendship as Mitra.Varuna . In company with another god called Varuna (true speech) as the combination of (Mitra.Varuna) is called upon for assistant. Mitra .Varuna has been described the same as world's ruler. They establish the order in the world of the gods ,because the agreement and true speech can be basis of the whole systematic Life in the world , Religion and Society. Mihr has been appeared as an important Roman god under the name of Mitras beyond Indian thoughts. Possibly, the worship of Mihr and its relative Ceremony has been extended through Asia Minor and Armenia to the west by the Armies and the followers of the court then it developed in this way. The mythological model has been considered in Iran to reflect the personality of god of agreement and commitment as the same kind of mythological model can be found in India. In this article we are going to consider the explanation of her ceremony in Iranian and Indian tradition parallel with the analysis of her Character.

KEYWORDS: God, Myth, Mihr, Iran ,India, Mihr ceremony.

INTRODUCTION

Prior to be divided, the Indo-Iranian nations worshiped two groups of gods. The first group was called ASURĀ and the other one was DAĒVA. The ASURĀS mostly related to the moral aspects but the DAĒVAS were for the physical ones. The first group consisted of two opposite sexes, males and females whom they could be communicated through conjugal and mating and each sex did his or his own special duties. They consisted of kinds of gods: god of sky, light, sun, wind, fire, thunder and lightning. As the head of harmful forces there was the warrior god called as INDRA and as the leader of another group there was VĀRUNĀ-MITRĀ. Most of Iranian scientists believe that IRANIAN OHRMAZD is the same as VĀRUNĀ . Fire worshiping in IRAN and INDIA showed that both nations believed in natural discipline and a general rule in the world which can be called in IRANIAN culture as ARTA- and in INDIAN one as AŠA- that of course both of them followed the same procedure while worshiping. MITRA was one of the Indo-Iranian or aryan gods before Zoroaster period. He's one of the greatest MASTER's gods(in AVESTA). Everywhere we could find the tracks of MIHR that is as old as our nation history. It's said in Sanskrit as MITRO, in Master(AVESTA) called as Miθra-, and in Pahlavi said MITR also it's remembered as Miça in Achaemenian inscriptions then it's been changed in Persian language as MIHR. MITRA (MIHR) in Sanskrit meant friendship and in VEDĀ said as the god of light and shine. In gāthā it was responsible of religious duties, among Indians the word" Miθ was the root for MIHR meant connecting and landing somewhere. For Iranian in Master(AVESTA) it's used as agreement and bonds, also sun, kindness, a helper and friend. MIHR in master it's remembered as the god of light and shine that shining on top of the mountains before sunrise and everyday it would travel the vast sky by its carriage with horses moving fast in front. It can also shine the earth at night time with its bright beams. It takes care of people moreover their faith and loyalty to agreed bonds. In VEDĀIAN songs, the gods divided into three groups. ĀDITYA,S who were the leader gods. MROTS who were warriors, and DOSARS who were the health and fitness gods. In Iranian customs, AŠA, and in Indian, ARTA is a name for one of ĀDITYAS that would be worshiped as the god of taking care of sky and earth. In VEDĀ, MITRA can be remembered as god of friendship; kindness; light; shine and sun along with VARUNA, the god of wine. In myths sometimes it can be regarded as SURYā or MāD. RIG-VEDĀ is a song to MITRĀ which in it, its name

remembered along with VĀRUNĀ about 3139 times. Through the other songs to VĀRUNĀ and other gods, it's said Mitra's name about 200 times.

A STUDY OF MITRA (MEHR) CHARACTER AMONG ARYANS AND Indo-Iranian

MITRA means agreement and VĀRUNĀ is an adjective means limiting and enclosing. In RIG-VEDĀ, VĀRUNĀ is said for ASURĀ meant limiting god. As his Iranian contemporary, OHRMAZD, called as God precisely it can picture swear which is a magic slack and a promising promise while coming to agreement. According to etymology we can claim that it can be a synonym for HERKOS, the Greek word meant swear and deal (Schmidt, 385-390) It seemed as if MIYE, another equivalent for MITRA, MIΘRA or a common name in Sanskrit meant friend and friendship and MITRA, a master word meant agreement and friendship which are the same in Persian language meant friendship and fellowship. Miye, according to BRUGMAN is an indo-European word, MEI means deal and trade which has already been confirmed in Sanskrit; Latin; German; Baltic and Slavic languages. MANFRED MAYOHOFER wrote: The word "METR" comes from a Greek word METROS means scale and exact measurement which it certainly came from MITRA means a tool for measuring of course the new word "Mitra" comes of it means agreement. In modern master, some former gods could be revived in YAŠT, and one of the most important of them was MEHR god in tenth YAŠT. This god had lots of important responsibilities which could be said as the great and main assistant for AHURĀMAZDĀ (OHRMAZD). MEHR in Mihr-Yašt, that is the oldest Yašts, is the most powerful god having some permanent traits as owning the vast grassland; thousands of sheep; ten thousands of eyes; against telling lie; god of agreement and its guard, the guard of ARYANS countries or the other ones all around the world, bringing the peace, making the uprights winners, the god of light, god of war who brought certain victory, god of gifts, wealth and health for everyone, the god of the family, country god, also the judge in resurrection who mostly in all of the Achaemenian inscriptions (Dārayavauš, xšāyāršā, Artaxšaθra I & II) called as the only mighty God who is the most powerful one, it means there can't be seen another name beside MEHR (Saghebfar2006,8) Bayānagī wrote about Mitra-vedā that we can describe him a god who settles the situations (rtā-) as Gonda said, the galaxy system as it's said in Master (Avesta) aŠa- is the one that retains the world upright also it can set the relationships between man and the god's forces. In (Rig-vedā) it describes as "miram(god of Mehr) god of the sun" that shows the duty of this god which is keeping the world's discipline and the most important one is retaining and taking care of contractions, unity and charity (Saghebfar2006,12) that is also remembered in India as lifesaver and savior. According to the author one of the famous name for Mitra is SUN that it was said in Indian as "maitriy" which according to KUSHANIYAN (The Aryans or KASHMIRYAN who lived in northern India and Pakistan at the present time) it changed to BUDHI- SUTOMETRIYA which meant "the future Buddha" that in terms of send-up day (Roozenfeld) it would be a Messiah savior, this belief was so common across the ancient east (Saghebfar2006,13) "Moghammad moghadam" wrote: we can say about an ARYAN root (mi) along with miç which is a suffix in Sanskrit as mitra meant friend, friendship and agreement that of course originally meant connecting or connector, besides it's said in Master (Avesta) miθra meant friend or alliance which was a special name for the god of agreement. In ancient Persian this word is inserted as miça meant alliance/ agreement. Another root is miθra- meant intercede that we can find out a close similarity among these meanings. Interface, attach, interpose, mediate (Moghadam,2006,69-70) are the synonyms for "mediator" in English also in Greek, mesites meant a helper and mediator that (PLOTARXUS) in early century A.D remembered it to describe MEHR/ the Sun which certainly it was used in Bible or Messiah inscriptions to describe Jesus Christ. As a sogdian name it can be said miši which some how it's said in ancient Persian with "š/ s" sound also in Arabic it's called Mašīh- Mašīh. If we attach this name to the root of Mašīh means rubbing and greasing/ anointing specially while common shaving. In PAHLAVI (middle Persian) it's said "miθra- mihr- mir" moreover on KUSHANIYAN's coins in eastern Iran it's called as "mir & miro", in Persian language it's written as mehr or mir also in MOGHAN literature instead of it we have a synonym which is LOVE. In Sanskrit "mehr" is said as "mitriya" however in Pāli is said MITRA.

MITRA WITH VĀRUNĀ

Mitra was one of gods in Rig-vedā who was an allied for vārunā and except one time every where it's inserted its name along side varunā, in Rig-vedā we can read that "oh....Mitra- vārunā, the skies gods who run on the holey heaven and watch the day light, appear while lighting with your colorful clouds and make the heaven starts to rain through your divine miricles. Thou, the eternity couple, can take care of the grace dominion which is settled on thousands of pillars." Mitra is the essence of contraction, the atmosphere in which people can connect each other, and vārunā as the governor can promise to perform these agreements, in the other word we can claim that Mitra is the ruler and take care of performing the supplies in the world. If there wouldn't have been this kind of unity, for sure, never it could have been performed the eternity rules in the world, or the god honor (rtā-), because of

this these two gods could be called as *rāvan*- the followers of *ritān* and *yārtās*- *yāgupā* as a guard for *rtā* (Dadfar& Mansouri,2004,275-276)

MITRA(SUN) in Sanskrit, a borrowed word from mehr in middle Persian

It wasn't the first step in sun worshipping across India (related to MAGA HĀ'S immigration), but it was the second time that came back to SAKA'S and KUSHĀNIYAN'S invade that happened in the mid of the second century B.C, the second step can be recognized through the borrowed word, MEHR, (in Persian is said MEHR and in Sanskrit "SUN", as it was already claimed by **Weber**, Possibly sun in Sanskrit came of "Helios" an Iranian word which was a BĀXTRIYĀN shape of it meant "miro", which certainly could be written as *miuro*, *moro* and they were seen firstly on coins of *kanishka*, the governor of KUSHAN during the first half of the second century (Humbach,2000,19) also there were some coins that on them some pictures can be seen belonged to *mehrākulā* (the Heptalian governor during the first half of sixth century A.D) beside it a small picture of sun, moreover there are some other coins which on them can be seen: *jayatu tarani*, meant the taranian sun would ever win. So we can go to this conclusion that(*Mehrākulā*) worshipped the SUN, however in his time another fluent (*shivāic*) religion was overcome, we can see this event as the *shivāic* signs and symbols on coins and through inscriptions of that time. (Humbach, 2000, 21) in long years ago the Iranian and Indian ancestors both of them worshiped MITRA commonly before being separated. In *vedāiyan* songs which can be said in *master (avesta)* as *Yašt* there was a long song, *Yašt*, that belonged to the mighty GOD, however there can be lots of differences among the Indian-Iranian customs, but there are lots of common things about this special god. For this reason we can claim that *Mitra* can be an old heritage (Humbach, 2000, 21) *Mitra- vārunā* beside five other *ādityas* which could be worshiped in *vedās* can be MITRA- *AH URĀ* and *Amšāspandān* who surrounded GOD which in fact they were the sun and the moon and the other planets that the Iranian and Indian nations got it through their neighbors' religious believes which were worshipping planets and astronomy. According to *avestā*, MITRA was the god of light that shown on top of the mountains before sunrise and every day it can run across the broad sky sitting on his fast horse and he's always clear and alert (Comon, 2004,24)

MITRA IN IRAN AND INDIA

In 1907 A.D, in an area named BOGHĀZKOY, the capital of HĀITI, in west-north of minor Asia, it discovered some clay monuments/Tablets which on them for the first time it could be realized the name of MITR which include an agreement between Hāitians and MITĀNIANS, so they asked MITRA, the god of sky to retain firmly this contract(1400-hegira ghamari). It shown that then the ancestors of Indo-European knew exactly MITRA and in *vedā*, a holy book for ancient Indian it's said *mehr* as *mitra* so many times which meant contract and agreement. In *avestā*(*master*) there came a song named *mehr-Yašt* to pray it, moreover in *avestā&vedā*, *mehr* is the accompany name coming with *Mitra- vārunā* and *Ohrmazd*, the great god maseren1993,15 () *Mitr* is the same as light god which in Indian it describes as sun that has an equivalent for *Helios* god in HUMOR epic that travel around the world to take the revenge of underdogs on cruel to make the world upright again (Maseren1993, 15) For Iranian people, *mihr* can be recognized through this title, bay, it was a word which could be used to describe nobles in Persian language. In *Mehr* religion could be used for nobles meant god, then the word "bay" transferred to Slavic languages as the sun, also in Russian we have a word meant "leaf" as the same, in Latin and European languages it means the follower of *mehr* or it's said as *pagan* and *paganism*. Through some inscription in SOGHDI(sogdian), *mehr* is remembered as " *miši- bayi*" like *baghestan*(*bistoon-behestān*) where have some temples as *Tāghebestān* or some other temples like the great ones in KANGAVAR where called as NAHID, the mother of MEHR. MEHR in *zan* and *khorda*.aweta is a (mediator between man and GOD) *miθ ra-* in *master(avesta)* is a synonym for *mazmai* which meant mediator also in Greek it can be said: *misites* along side with *plotārkhos* for MEHR.

Different meaning for MITRA

- Agreement and contraction
 - In Persian literature (sun), kindness, friend, helper, pal, also the zoroastrians called their temple as the door of MEHR today. The sixteenth of Mehr(the seventh month of the Iranian year), besides mehr is the name of a root of a kind of plant which called MEHR GIYAH. For Indian, mith is the root of mehr that meant attaching and landing somewhere. In Sanskrit meant friendship, in *vedā* it's the god of light and shine and in *gātās* meant the religious duties. In *awestā* it meant *maēθanga*- that is a place and home which changed to hometown as the same it's said in some dictionaries. (Malekzade, 2007,39)in *awestā* and *vedā*, mehr is the god of light in the sky that before the sunrise can shine on tip of the mountains and travel across the vast sky in her fast carriage run by the fastest horses. Again at night it can light the earth, she takes care of people's minds and behaviors to ward their contracts

and promises. If a promise assigned through a mazd.yasnā or a div.yasnā it surely should be fulfilled. And when anybody infringed a contract or promise, mehr would revenge on him or her((Malekzade ,2007,14) THE Mehr ceremony came of Iran which proved through lots of documents, one of the old documents announced by a Latin poet, stātitus which was said about mitra around 80 A.D .THE one who webs the wild branches penetrating into the rocks in Persian cave.

- Also it's said many times about worshipping Mehr in SHĀHNAME OF FERDOSI, firstly it's said in FEREIDOUN story about ARYANS praying mehr, when he went to struggle against ZAHĀK, told his brothers that if he would be the winner:

I'll bring the fair and judge for the whole universe,
When I only remember GOD, his holey name,
FEREIDOUN inflated his head to the sun,
To revenge on his father in blood feud.

MITRA IN RIG-VEDĀ

In vedā there are some songs that we can divide the gods into three groups: 1- Āditya, the governor gods. 2- mrut, the warrior gods 3- vasu who gave health and gifts. The āditya who are the offspring of the great God, the mother of gods conclude Mirta, vā runā, āryāman, Bhaga, dakṣa, Amṣa, also mitra along side with one of āditya would be worshipped as the keeper and guard of the sky and earth, moreover in vedā, mitra appeared in the form of a god of kindness, light and shine also friendship and sunshine. Her spouse is the god of wine whom in myths called as suryā or surā, Rīg-vedā is usually a song dedicated to Mitrā also her name always came along side with vārunā, in songs about vārunā and the other gods it's said more than 200 times the name of Mitrā. In fact there is no difference between Mitrā and mitrā-varunā, in other word none of them is the superior. Both of them have the same thought and mind so giving their hands they can upright the rules of the world (Malekzadeh2007,53) So they can control the universe by the help of each other, then they could be called as ardavān or the owners of ARTA. Totally we can claim that the gods in vedā had the power of magic or governing legally that all of them belonged to mitrā-vārunā, in other word Mitra has a magic power, it means that she has the legal and judicial power also vārunā can guarantee their performance. The clergymen and Brahmins are the representatives of these gods that is(Malekzadeh2007,53)

Worshipping MIHR and its background in Iran

Mehr has already been worshipped long ago by ARYANS as a supply of honesty and victory, besides on a tablet belonged to indo-European nations that was found in 1400 in kāpādosiya where is a part of minor Asia, mitrā is said along side vārunā and indra and nāstiyā which showed the god of mehr was so respected by those nations also in another word we can find out that mehr is a god who belonged to ARYAN'S period. It has already been seen the worship of mehr among Iranians long ago. Its name also is said in Achaemenian inscriptions that are the oldest documents belong to Iran. Moreover it's said in awestā during writing a letter of ohrmazd in one of ancient Persian languages. This god had been prayed in vedā,s , an old Indian document, as Mitrā. In awestā and vedā, this god had always had such similar responsibilities that with no doubt we can announce that this god had always been worshipped by Indo-European nations in old days. Generally praying Mihr, an old god, came back to many many years ago in Iran. As some Achaemenians kings respected it in their inscriptions. Also it's written about it in modern awestā (master), during the tenth Yašt that is the longest and most beautiful yašt in praying Mehr(Malekzadeh2007,54-60,71).

ANALYZING MEHR CHARACTER

In awestā, Mehr is the god of light, honesty, courage and agreement, the one who owns vast plains and green landscapes. He's always awake and alert completely armed to help warriors and truthful people. Also vanishing liars and those ones who never fulfill their promises. It goes across the world, it's the god of light and shine, so nothing would be hidden in front of her eyes, moreover to take care of people he has thousands of ears and ten thousands of eyes, it can watch the ARYAN lands above the ALBORZ mountain range. It,s territory is as vast as the whole earth, because of this he's in everywhere. He's always awake and powerful in such a way that his arms would huge the whole world then find the liar everywhere that he could possibly be. Having a good power of sight, being courage also never cheated or deceived is its great and tangible characters which certainly belong just to mehr. He owns all the tools and utensils to protect creatures in the whole world, he's totally armed with shield and a rod in his hands, sitting on a golden heavenly carriage running by four white horses briskly and speedy around the world. In his carriage there are thousands of steel battle-axes, thousands of swords, steel bludgeons also slings.

BAHRĀM was the victory god; Soroš, the god of obeying; rašn, the god of justify; aštād, god of justice; pārandi, god of happiness and wealth; aši, the god of affluence also mehr is completely wealthy and run in every direction (teacher), her accompanies in mehr yašt in awestā include: aši in verses 66,68,76 and 143; pārandi in verse 66; sraoša in verses 41 and 41100; RAŠNU in 139, 126, 100,81,76, and 41; nairyosangha in verses 66,52; ham varati in verse 66; kavaēm xvarənō & ātarš in verses 127; vərəθraϑna in 127,66,68,9,7; vāta in verse 100,9; fravašayō in 100,66,2; arštāt in verse number 139; daēna mazdyasni in verses 64,68,100(Malekzadeh-92) mehr in gahān, see oštavadgāt; yasne 64, verse 5; mehr in vandidād fargard 19 the verses:28&27; mehr in (yasnā-hāt) includes 72 verses; 6mehrs in khorde-awestā includes 31 verses also 125 mehrs in visparəd in verses 9&7,11(Malekzade,2007,69)

Development of Mihr worshipping to Europe

Apparently Mehr worshipping had been promoted in western parts of Iran especially in minor Asia, besides there was chosen a male name "Mehrdād" among kápādokiya's commandors (pontos) now is a part of ARMINIA and komazhen. So Mehrdād was a serious name on those areas. The Greek soldiers coming to these area were familiar with this ceremony, mehr worshipping, so they transferred it along side DANUB and each frontier that were taken care of. Or sometimes by making mihr temples in Europe or the other Roman territories, Mehr ceremony could be transferred. Plotārk who lived one century after Jesus Christ was familiar with Mehr ceremony in minor Asia then after defeating by Pampei, the Greek got it. Possibly the Syrian soldiers were the next agents to promote Mehr ceremony in the west((Comon,2004, 40-42; see Maseren1993, 31&41& Malekzadeh2007 ,298&304)

Mihr Temples

Probably Mehr worshipping in early ages was done in natural caves having a stream or river in front passing by. Some of these early temples have been recognized in some parts in Italy; France; Germany and Yugoslavia that the main symbol of this ceremony, killing a cow by Mehr, carved on the frontier rock of the cave. Usually these temples were called as Mehrābe (altars). Finding the natural caves with rivers flowing in front was so difficult that caused the ancient people tried to build the artificial temples underground. Apparently cave was the secret sign of the earth and its dome roof was a symbol of the roof of the sky because of this the roofs of Mehrābs had the shapes of stars in them also there had been built some Mehrābs having windows but dark inside. Usually Mehrābs were built in the form of narrow corridors with some platforms built for followers sitting on them; also on opposite walls some pictures related to Mehr ceremony were carved which showed killing of cows. Through documents we could get that never these ceremonies were luxury and deluxe ones, so never did the Mitrāiyan temples change to great mansions, the follower of Mihr totally remained far away of luxury lives and just did their simple worshipping ceremonies(Maseren,1993, 93-95& Malekzadeh, 2007,177-182)

Picture of sacrificing cows for Mehr

This picture is one of the main subjects in Mehr views which show Mehr as a powerful and strong youngster wearing a pergola, knocking out the cow and sitting on it, using one of his hands to pull its head backward and with one of the other hand hitting the cow in the heart by a dagger. At this picture there can be seen some other figures including two torchbearers standing on opposite sides of the cave mouth watching sacrificing cow. Their torches are one in up and the other in down direction which show the down and rise of the sun that is in another word the symbol of death and life. Of course at this picture Mehr stood at the middle which showed that one of the torchbearers could be the sunrise, the other sunset and Mehr showed noon that are the triple Mitrāiyan gods whom the first one is the symbol of sunrise, mitrā, the symbol of noon and the other torchbearer is the symbol of sunset. Sun passes three steps: morning, noon, dusk which through this we can see the actions and power of Mitrā. Near the cow we can see a snake and a dog that try to drink the blood of the cow since under the cow's leg there can be seen a scorpion which wanted to poison the liquid of life. Mostly above the head of Mihr we can recognize the picture of a sun and a moon. This painting was drawn in such a way that sacrificing cows would be done inside the caves where in the mouth we can see lots of plants growing thickly. At this painting mostly it can be seen a crow which sat on the crescent part of the cave and it was trying to fly toward Mehr and sometimes it's been sitting on his shoulder((Malekzadeh,2007,273-274) and see Olancy ,2008,68-71) Hashem Razi,2002, 68&488& Moghadam, 2006,74)

Describing the picture of sacrificing cow

Usually the scientists and researchers believe that sacrificing cows would be related to plant growing and also they claim that creation is related to the other organisms, they think that sacrificing cows is a kind of creating

which related to creations, sacrificing is an example which mostly happens in nature repeating most of the time. It conveys the whole secrets in ancient beliefs. In Greek inscriptions and history documents, Mehr is said as mediator and rescuer, so sacrificing cow by Mehr is the sign of saying a secret thing as a mediator and rescuer, in the universe he controls the world along side its rules, in fact he mediates to bring happiness and health for good creatures, for this reason we can claim that Mehr is a mediator and the main character for followers of Mehr ceremony (Razi 2002, & Moghadam 2006, 81, to get more information see Ulansey, 2008, 37-38; Malekzadeh, 2007, 177-179-188; Comon, 2004, 230-231)

The common figures in Mihr illustrations

In addition to the picture belonged to sacrificed creature which is a clear symbol in Mehr ceremony and its secret procedures, in Mitraiyan pictures we can mostly find out the drawing showed Mitrā's birth coming out of a rock, at this ceremony the 25th of December is his birthday to be celebrated. It's the day that the secret power of Mehr can be emerged through a rock, while coming out of the rock, Mehr is naked wearing only a pergola, in one of his hands he's carrying a torch to light the world and in the other carrying a dagger to sacrifice the cow (of course later), he's also carrying some arrows and arch on his waist which immediately after birth shooting toward the rock to flowing water out of it. So he was born as a warrior, it's obvious that in Mehr ceremony, cave is the sign of the world, rock the sign of sky shining on the earth with sun at the middle of the sky lighting the earth, also Mehr coming out of rock carrying a torch (Malekzadeh, 2007, 177-179, to find more information see David Ulansey 137-139, Comon, 102-105). At these pictures except Mehr birth something which so prominent would be sacrificing cow which is a sign of astronomy. Sunrise in SOUR month is the sign of spring coming because of this sacrificing cow would be done during spring. Mostly in margin of the main picture we could find some stars and the symbol of the months where the cows were sacrificed. Also they can be realized on the body of a strange creature having a lion head with four wings and a snake coiled around it while this creature standing on the earth, one of the repeated drawings would be a banquet in which the persons invited were sun and Mehr whom they were served by the beef of the sacrificed cow and the wine of grapes, the other picture which mostly can be seen in Mehrabs (altars) is the gold wheel of Mihr pulled by four white horses while the other gods like the god of sun accompanying him (ulansey, 2008, 45-52)

The general rules in Mihr ceremony

As it can be realized through documents, taking part in Mihr ceremony was like going to military service so the followers of this religion believed in struggling for the god of victory. They also believed that always he would protect them; it meant that Mitrā would protect them in war and hunting. Most of the followers who were the warriors and soldiers while worshipping the god of agreement and light and truth, they tried to fulfill their promises and have their pieties and virtues. Hence following Mehr ceremony caused anybody fulfill the things that today we call them as respect, honor and dignity. The most important factors in promoting this ceremony was the harsh military discipline also finding a way to Christianity in Rome, on those days wherever the roman military settled in a place, it was seen Mehr ceremony setting there.

The conditions to register in Mihr ceremony and its rules

As taking part in military service belong mostly to male so having mehr ceremony would be related a masculine one, so we can't find any track of women taking part there. Registering in Mehr followers group for men was so difficult in such a way they had to pass hard exams. In general any young people who wanted to join Mehr ceremony, first he had to desert his family and all his favorite things to join the other followers to learn the necessary lessons. As soon two of them (sage and herald) started to teach him directly and test him as hard as possible then if they recognized that he got enough and appropriate faithfulness then they announced him that he should take the oath in front of the other followers to be one of them. The intern should raise his right hand to swear that he's always cleaved to mihr followers and never disclose the secrets of the ceremony which introduced to him in stages. In fact it was every mihr follower's duty to take the secrets, after taking the oath, the intern should shake hand with the sage which was a sign of being accepted and welcomed to Mehr ceremony, then the sage and dean tattooed his hands to be identified. Among the mehr followers there were seven steps that the intern should pass them one after another to reach the highest one (Ulaney, 2008, 35-38) Those seven steps were: **1- crow**, was the first step to conduct, in fact it was the messenger of Mitrā, also today among Iranian crow can be remembered as a sign of good messenger, besides in sacrificing cow myth we could realize that crow was a messenger carrying good news and it's the one who carried GOD's message to Mitrā. His protector god is Mercury and his element is air. So the interns desired to pass this step should do the ceremonies related to this element. The Greek names for these ceremonies were kerdinā or kerdināsakrā, after being accepted the wayfarer would be called as the holey crow. The

symbols have been seen beside it would be the mercury stick and glass (Malekzaded, 2007, 165). Maseren wrote: in fact the crow had the rule of mercur which was the gods' messenger; because of this its special symbol is a stick with a snake coiling around it that is the magic stick of Hermos Mercur. Moreover on some discovered mosaics we could find the picture of a cup (Maseren, 1993, 171).

2- Spouse, bride and a covered fiancée

The second step that any intern entered to swear never discloses its secrets was the covered fiancée which was an illusion of marriage that happened between Mirtā and wayfarer, who should cover his face in yellow mask, the special sign of a spouse was the light or torch (a sign for the wedding night) also its element is water. This marriage had a mystical nature and its god protector was Venus. Maseren wrote that in Parisk temple was found a picture in it there was Nymphus or a spouse who covered her face and head with a piece of cloth and on a script hanging above her head was written that Nymphus was under Venus protection. In admission ceremony shaking right hand was the sign of loyalty, it was a ceremony done among Iranian besides the Romans which sometimes we can see this picture on Roman tombstones (Maseren 1993, 172 & Malekzadeh 2007, 165).

3- Soldier, the third step was becoming a soldier and those ones passing this step called themselves as the soldiers of Izad Mehr (god of sun) and took their oath to struggle against enemies until settling the aims of god's religion. The symbols related to soldier were a helmet and sack. Soldier was the sign of ground and its god protector was Mars. In awestā we read that Mitrā was a god who never defeated and in battle field he always made his soldiers, who ever fight against evil, win. Also he like the god of nobility would be the final winner. Tertolin wrote: the interns went to soldier steps should have received a seal on their foreheads (Maseren, 1993, 181 & Malekzadeh, 2007, 166).

4- Lion, this step was the last one in teaching followers physically and those ones coming up to this stage would be called as Shirmard. And if unfortunately they would be dead on their tombstones there could be the pictures of lions or rams, the wayfarer at this step should be baptized which was a sign of purity of soul and body and being away of sins, the symbols of it were fire, trowel and sitrom. The trowel was used to transfer fire (Malekzaded, 2007, 166-167; Maseren, 1993, 181).

5- pārsi (pārsā) the fifth step was pārsi which belonged to freedom and braveness. During this step the wayfarer could deserve to find out about some important secrets. Its protector god and the signs accompanying it was the new moon and steel sickle, the one passing this stage needed to wear gray clothes (Malekzadeh, 2007, 167 & Maseren 1993, 181).

6- The sun messenger, was the sixth step which its symbols were slash; bright crown and torch, the protector god was sun, the one passing this step successfully had to wear red clothes with yellow belt around his waist.

7- oldness which was the best and highest divine rank in this ceremony and it was the representative of Mehr on the earth, so his clothes had to be white as Mitrā's. An elderly guy had to know a lot about divinity; astronomy; astrology and horoscope. The protector god was Saturn and its symbols were ring; stick and pergola. These seven steps for SOLOUK (comport) in Greek language which was the formal language in west for Mihr ceremony and religion were as follows:

- Corax
- Nymphus
- Miles
- Leo
- Perses
- Helidromous
- Patter (malekzadeh, 2007, 168)

By the way the pious in Mehr ceremony in any steps had to use the suitable masks and clothing appropriate to their spiritual ranks. As mostly in Mehri pictures the persons could be seen in some animal masks like crow; lion and so on. Each of them of course was the symbol of a special element, for example crow was the symbol of wind. (malekzadeh, 2007, 167)

Conclusion

For the special geographical conditions and nature verity, sorts of ancient civilization appeared in Iran and India. The founders of Aryan culture in India and Iran were the Aryans who had been immigrating to an area between Ural Lake and black lake during 2 till 3 B.C. also considering the sun and the moon's symbols in Iran and India showed lots of similarities. In Iran, the sun was the symbol of eternity life and authority and glory of monarchy that during the daylight it caused all the demons and evils vanish. In India besides the sun is the symbol of life and

the source for all the creatures to be born. Moreover sun had been realized as a taker and preserver of life on the earth and a thing that caused the plants grow. In India, the Suryā was the symbol of the sun and in Iran Mitrā had the same role. Suryā was the source of light and the spiritual power also the strength of mind and the nearest creature to eternity nature. In Iranian myths, the sun had been realized as the border of eternity and immortality. Among the geometrical shapes of both civilizations there have been some things in common like the wheel of vasvāsticā (svasticā) which was a symbol in the hands of viśno that of course showed the unlimited continuity of life. In Iranian art, vasvāsticā can be instead of the Aryan sun with Mihr wheel which was one of the oldest pictures. Talking about the common gods and heroes for Iran and India we can claim Mitrā and varunā and viśno. Mehr ceremony was a connector that joins the ancient heritage of Iranian and Indian civilizations even the European one together.



figure1) Picture of sacrificing cows for Mehr(Moghadam2001,198)

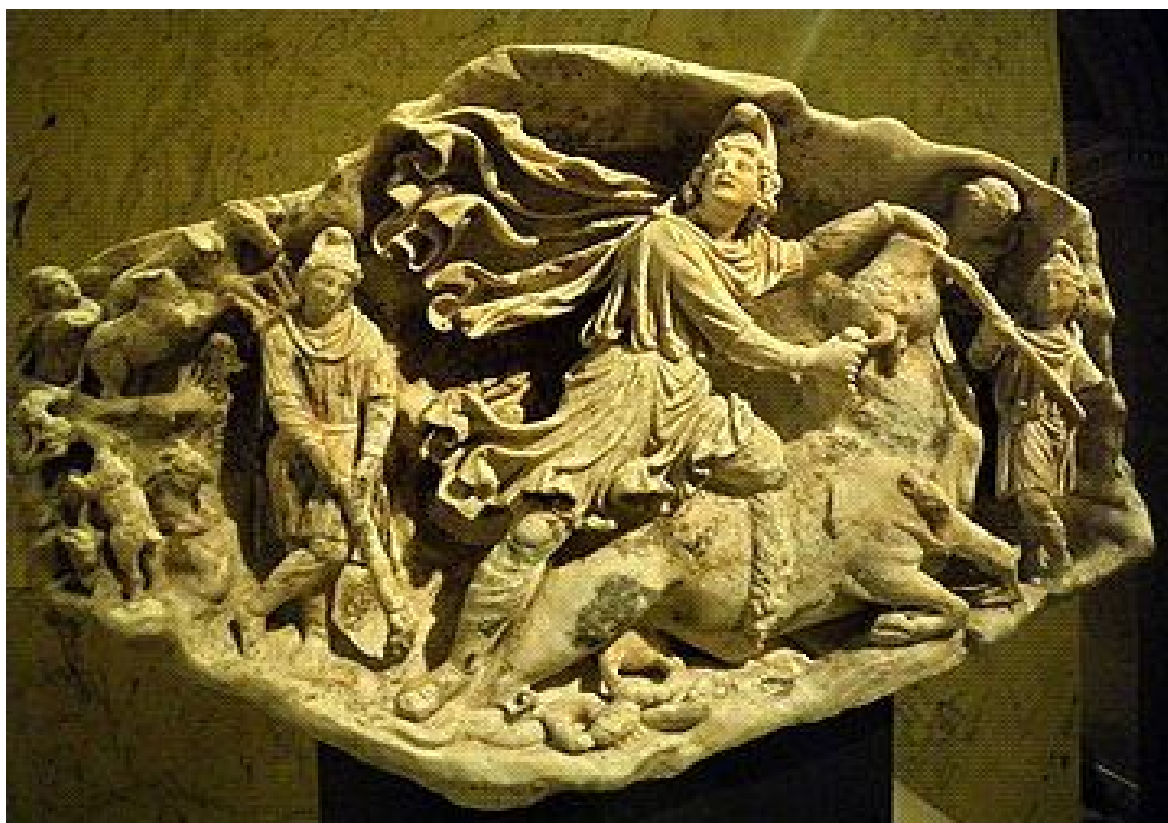


figure2) the picture of sacrificing cow in the Altar(Mehrābe)Moghadam,2001,202)

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