

IN THE NAME OF GOD MITHRAISM AND GOD BELIEVERS SECT

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((When swords sound is heard, when horses nostrils are shaken ... when bows string is wistling and releasing the sharp arrows. do the great gods, mithra and ormuzd help us))

<< Mehr yasht >>

Mithraism have had some followers in IRAN and other countries for centuries. after christ prophetic mission, Mithraism were defeated by Christianity and its.

Followers in new christion lands were prosecuted and their temples were destroyd.

After Islam and its spreading in IRAN through different ways, Mithra who has been worshiped along the Zoroaster was abandoned.

After Arab muslems attacking IRAN and capturing it, inspite of intensive preventing by muslem governors, new Iranian muslems did their Pre-Islam customs which distinkted them from other and at the same time was a negative resistance against new governors.

Gradually after appearance of religious sects, because of social, political and economic factors particularly after mongol attack Mithraism effects were appeared.

Some of these sects have been also affected by manichaeian and Mazdaism. God believer is a religion sects affected by Mithraism in IRAN which has been formed and spreaded specially in west country.

The followers live in different parts of IRAN because of some different factors. They believe in Imam Ali, not as God but he is not a part from God and they believe that God supreme being has been appeared in Ali.

Their best time was from Soltan Ishagh age (8th century AH). He was one of their greatest which is known as creator and recognizer of this sect. He has a special respect and holiness.

Research in this sect shows some similarities to Mithraism. These similarities show the certain unity of mithraism and God believers sect.

1. Jamkhane 2. Devotion Ceremonies 3. Ceremony Performing of Devoted People 4. No Permission the Enter for Women 5. Ceremonies at Special Nights of the Year 6. Gnostic Aspects.

The writer has investigated to show that Mithra exists in new form in Islam age. It has been tried to show the unity of Mithraism and God believers sect and through some documents and observations (The writer is devoted to one of the sects).

It has to be considered that the research is not perfect.

1. Jamkhane

Jamkhane is the place of ceremonies. In some areas, because of financial problems, a rich man make it in his house.

((Some times famous Mithraist or officials make ((mehrabe)) in a part of their home.)) (Vermazern, 59)

Jamkhane is not very big so it may be many of them that each has 100 people capacity.

((They did not build Mehrabe so big because They wanted it to be as a cave and also because the Mithraist who came to worship, became familiar and friend to others and love them. so Mehrabe had only 100 capacity if the number of follower grew they made a new mehrabe.)) (Hami, 63).

Jamkhane has no opening except. A window by the entrance door covered by frosted glass.

Entrance door is at the east to cause to shine in Jamkhane. Today some of them have many windows. The window by the entrance door is for giving vow. They have no window because unbelievers do not look inside.

((Inside was always dark and they never made any opening.)) (Vermazern, 59).

((Usually the temple (Parasteshgah) was made at east to cause shining sun radiates, so they made a window on the roof or dome which cause to shine sun radiates directly on the picture of Mithra.)) (Vermazern, 98).

Inside the Jamkhane, They make some mantels to put lantern, candle stick and the instruments are belonged to jamkhane.

((The way to devide Mehrabe to some chambers is the same, we do not

know if it is carrying a special meaning or not.)) (Vermazern, 60)

Jamkhane is a holy place to God believers, so there is no permission to enter without washing.

They believe on it as same as Kaabe. They have to wash ceremonial to enter with the intention to Jamkhane washing which is the same as Kaabe.

2.Devoting Ceremonies

Devoting ceremony is for whom decides to be a member of one of the 11 sects:

1. Shah Ebrahim family 2. Ali Ghalandar family 3. Baba Yadegar family 4. Sayid Abolvafa (khamooshi) family 5. Mirsoor family 6. Sayid Mosaffa family 7. Hadj Baboo Isa family 8. Atash Bag family 9. Shah Hayas family 10. Baba Heydar family 11. Zonnor family from Sayid Abolvafa off springs.

They are in two groups:

1. People whom their parents are God believers and are devoting soon after naming by their father or a legal representative.

2. People whom their parents are not God believers, have to be devoted through some stages.

For devoting, it is necessary to have a walnut (a kind of fragrant jungle fruit growing in India that is also called nutmeg growing), a white hand kerchief, pomegrante, sugar candy, a knife, money, a silver coin, a cock.

3 kilo gram of rice and a little more rice added and 750 gram of animal oil. ((Silver belongs to moon. According to noroozname. gold is the sun's Elixir and silver is moon's. Jamshid was the first man who has exploited them from the mine, Then ordered to make them circular just like sun, seal up on two faces of sun and say this is the king of people on the earth as the sun in sky, Then make the silver just as moon, seal it up on two faces of it and say this is the head man of people on earth as the moon in the sky.)) (Samadi, 82).

When everything is available, They put walnut, coin and knife in a vessel and other needs in an other one. They cook rice and cock and oil. Then the Father Figure and guide comes and they perform devoting or walnut breaking ceremony.

Devoting volunteer has to wash, then he and the guide stand in genu Flexion, Jamneshin persons and Sayid bow down and pray. Sayid let them to cut the walnut and after praying devide them among the jamneshin persons. the volunteer should not set at loose guide's hand or clothes.

They should not make clothes from jam handkerchief. devoted persons should not marry the father Fingure and guide because he is just like their father.

((Theaching ceremony and secrets was performed by Father Figure and herald after ceremony, The volunteer is honored by brother little and is the Father Figure son as his other coreligionists.)) (Vermazern, 179).

From this time he can attend in jam, he must be retentive of jam secrets and do not say them to unbelievers.

((After the ceremony which we can called it Baptism figuratively, new devoter is a community member and undertake not to reveal the secret to friends and women)) (Vermazern, 176).

People whom parents are not God believer, should become familiar to costums and ceremonies near father Figure and then the father figure let them tobe devoted. he must succeed in exam.

((The volunteer who wanted to be a mehri, had to be a student and learn some instructions to become ready for more important ceremonies. so he had to make the the guid satisfied. the nature of the instruction is unknown.

Considering to importance of keeping secrets in mithraism elements and principles have been taught them.

((The secrets that has been trying to keep were related to religious ceremonies.)) (Vermazern, 177).

People whom their parents were God believer were named by jam one weak after birth (girl or boy).

The infant first washed, then named.

According to Hamid Noori in his book a ((Iranian part in word civilization)) page 239, there are some similarities between Mithraism and Christianity, such as Baptism which is performing in God believers ceremonies. (Cumont, 248-249).

3. Ceremony Performing of Devoted People

Devoted person can enter the jam, attend the ceremony. other person can not and they can only stay behind the door.

Children and women have no permission to enter the jam. Sayid sits at the seat of honor.

Is pits of current tradition in Islam, Sayids are not from Mohammad's off spring, they are called Sayid because of their leadership. a Sayid should be a member of 11 family. just shah Ibrahim family is off spring of prophet Mohammad.

Soltan Ishagh is off spring of Imam Mosa Kazem whom I will tell more about him.

One who enters the jam must bow down and say God name (Hoo ya Hagh) at the threshold, then kiss Sayid's hand and other Jamneshin persons hands from the right. there is no difference between the rich or the poor, the old or the young about kissing. Jamneshin can put a knee on the ground to meet jamneshin persons, hand or tie his waist band to others, to fasten the cordiality. If Sayid comes late he also has to meet other's hands.

((Believers in mithraism community are united apart from their social and moral differences or class distinctions, so we can see some manifestation of simple beliefs and glorified works of wealthy people in some mehrabes.)) (Vermazern, 52).

Jamneshin has to wash wear a hat and a waist hand on his coat. wearing shirt without coat or overcoat is forbidden recently. there is no prohibition in some sects, It is sufficient to put the shirt on the trousers and a waist hand on it.

((It is necessary to tie the waist hand. wearing white clothes is recommended. White clothes has interior and exterior virtue on Jamneshin so is the best. it is similar to Muslem's pilgrim group during Kaabe pilgrimage because our Kaabe is jam. So we have to wear pilgrim grab to attend the jam.)) (Elahi, 71-72).

((A rich mithraist also wear simple clothes during the ceremony and see his perfaction in self refining. Because he is ready to other wordly life, which is not similar to wordly life.)) (Vermazern, 239).

The people who do jamkhaneh work. **1.** Sayid **2.** Caliph (successor) **3.** Ghapoochi (door keeper) **4.** Khadem (servant).

For caliph, door keeper and servant, faith is criterion of capability and skill. There is no distinction for selecting regarding to wealth or education.

((In mithraism communities. it is clear that sometimes a person from

the lowest social class in the upper rank and vice versa.)) (Cumont, 87).

In all ceremonies citing Imam Ali, Benjamin and David Kabood savar who are the greatest God believers.

Benjamin is pir-e-piran (chief father figure) because Soltan Ishagh has been devoted to him.

((A cave mehrabe found in marino near the Rome in 1965, and there was a wall in front of it on the last wall, Mithra's portrait was painted. since it was there for 16 centuries, its colour didn't change. When I saw it, I found that the colour of mithra's ox was light and I knew that Ali Allahi people called mithra as Kabood savar David because it had killed an eviu ox.)) (Hami, 61).

They call David to help them, he knows secrets and can guide people. to know about the greatness of David.

Ahmad Hami has some verses from yarsan religious songs from masha Allah soori in his book:

One who comes to rescue is David.

One who comes to rescue from morning to night is David.

Early riser bird in sky is David.

Aware of hidden secrets is David.

The shout of sun morning is David.

Judge of Appearance Day is David.

Imam of all companios is David.

Guide of loneliness road is David.

Riding on the north wind is David.

Loading the burden of yarsan is David.

((In mehryasht its prettiress is described. It appears before sun and since sun and mithra are accompanied with each other, mehr meant sun later mithra goes with sun from east to west. It controls all promises so it is always a wake. it control all over the world to avoid any breach of promise. It also appears in the last judgement of souls in the ((chinvad bridge)) with Izad soroush and Izad Rashn and controls the judgements.)) (Amoozgar, 19).

((Pardivar)) is a bridge in North east of ((Gooran)) on the ((sirvan)) river. It is said that bridge builder is Soltan Ishagh. according Saranjam name this bridge was made at the early 8th century (AH).

Since the builder is Soltan Ishagh, the bridge is holy and respectful. It is said that the bridge is ((serat)).

((Pardivar)) in Goorani accent means ((the other side of bridge)) according to Khorde saranjam name soul of dead people must pass through the bridge and then settle on other bodies. Caliph is the Pir Benjamin (father figure) jam, Khadem (servant) plays David's role. when every body comes, Sayid orders to close the jam door then nobody can enter or exit.

Every body must bow down and sit on knee. citing is performing along with devoting vow and sacrifice animals.

Finally they give some sip of syrup to jamneshin people Jamneshin has to fast earlier 3 day fasting is necessary and another 3 day is recommended. We will tell about the 6 days.

4. No Permission to Enter for Women

Women have no right to attend the ceremony, although they are also devoted from childhood (whom their parents are God believer). They can only stay out of the jam and behind the door to listen to citing. Women cook the vow (wearing waist band) but do not enter the jam.

In some sects some vow devote among the women and in some sect nothing is expelled from the jam.

((A woman cannot be a jamneshin, unless she reach the ((Jani)) Rank. ((Malek Jan)) with the sheik little is Noor Ali Elahi's sister and he confirms her spiritual rank.)) (Elahi, 502).

((These traditions are all remembrance of Mithraism such as being brother. no permission to enter for women, lighting the candles, drinking, truth, honesty and so on.)) (Saedi, 93).

5. Ceremonies at Special Nights of the Year

Ceremonies start at 10th Day (31st december) in every year and continue for 6 days. Every night has a special name.

1. Excellency David 2. Mostafa Davoodan 3. Pir father figure Benjamin

(Kami Jan) **4.** Excellency Soltan (King Night) **5.** Pir Mossa (Father Figure) night **6.** Excellency RazBar (special bread).

The time must be the first day of lunar month in winter and they must vow the beginning of month.

From the 15 the night of the month, consecutively 6 day ceremonies continue. may be the weather of 10 Day (31th december) is not cold so ceremonies carry on later or earlier. Some sects believe that it must snow to start the ceremonies snowing causes blessing .

The pir (father figure) from Kermanshah let the ceremonies to start. Everynight ceremonies continue with sacrifice, cooking rice and cock and Jamneshin has to bring his vow which is at least 3 kilo gram of rice and a little more, cock which was cooked with animal oil and other Jamneshin people bring also sugar candy.

Sugar, fruit, chocolate and yoghurt for luck to divide them and give a partion to whom has brought them. nothing is givent to unbelievers unless. They sure nothing is thrown away.

((The picture in saint persic church mehrabe was discovered on Aventine by van Essen, archaeologist of the Netherland history instiute in 1956. There is a man in this picture who carries a white cock. The cock is so considerable because we can see it in low pictures of Temple walls and also on pictures of right wall of Temple. cock is ((IRAN's bird)) and its shout explses the wicked Devil. (Ahriman)

In zoroastrian religion, the cock is a holy animal, and the white cock is dedicated to ormuzd and Mithra.

These beliefas have been spreaded a bout west and archaeological research proves it.)) (Vermazern, 70-74).

What the Jamneshin brings to the jam has two names:1. Doshahi
2. Shokrane. The former is for David and the latter is charties.

If some one cannot attend the jam for several nights he tries to attend at king night. This night has the most attendance. it is a holy night to believers. The people who are devoted, can stay behind the door and listen to the citing if a Jamneshin confirms them.

Jamneshin people bring a bread called ((Gerdeh Razbari)) to at last night.

((Jusinius)), a christian spiritual scientist says explicitly that Mithraists eat water and bread in their religious ceremonies)) (Vermazern, 139).

At the end of ceremonies, sacrifice bones are divided among the jamneshin people to bury at their yard. Remaining bones are buried at the yard of Jamkhane.

((They make a hollow near the mehrabe and bury the bones of sacrifice animal in it)). (Vermazern, 62).

There is no more ceremony except in 13th Tir on old persian dialect of IRAN. Ancient months equals to 13 Aban and is somewhere 14 Aban (4th or 5th november) when the sacrifice ceremony is performed. There is no rice cooking.

Sacrifice animal is brought by Vower or by members of Jamkhane. Then they cook it. In this ceremony like others, They do not use spoon or fork. Jamneshin must eat the vow without them. They use ewer and basin to wash their hands.

Ceremonies start after darkness about 8 at night and continue to 12.

((Midnight religious ceremonies have been seen in both religions. (Mithraism and Christianity)). (Pazargad, 44).

((25th December every year just after winter beginning lengthy religious celebrations and ceremonies were held, the bells were rang, they sung religious songs, lightened the candles, gave presents and as a holy and religious action, They gave bread and water to believers.)) (Pazargad, 44).

((In Iranian calendar, sixth month of year was specified to mithra so in mehr day of mehr they held a celebration called Mehregan but there was no such a celebration in west. Undoubtedly this celebration composes to 25th December ceremony. So in such spreading religion, it was necessary to hold glorified celebration with happiness because of the sun birth at the end of winter revolution when the length of day started to increase and the sun gradually stayed more in the sky every day. ((In Iran yalda night (25th December), and the first day of month had God's name.)) (Cumont, 171).

((Several young people have a loaf of bread and a pot in their hands and some have a cock or candles (related to saint presic Mehrabe.)) (Vermazern, 137).

6. Gnostic Aspects

God has created men equally, man must try to reach God so he must control his self. He must connive at worldly tasks to reach Fana fe Allah (Annihilation in God). He must love others and avoid uncleanness.

((To be a disciple of God road the man must see every thing in God and go to an expect person. A real believer must always be benevolent a say good words and think well.)) (Elahi, 19).

Equality is so emphasized. so all the people who enter the jam are equal. There is no distinction between them.

Every new believer has to kiss other's hand. there is no difference between rich and poor, literate and illiterate.

As mentioned before, believers must fast 6 days, 3 days are necessary and 3 days are recommended. First 3 days are called Merno which is for the remembrance of Soltan Ishagh and his followers. He and his brother afther diversity of opinions, exited the village. Chichak army prosecuted them.

Suddenly by God power a cave appearad. (((a Mer)) means cave and Merno means new cave.) Soltan and his followers stayed there for 3 days, the weather was stormy, The opening of cave was closed by spider's web. prosecutors thought nobody was in cave and stopped prosecuting Soltan and his followers fasted there for 3 days so 3 day fasting is necessary.

Soltan told that these 3 days carried to account 3 usual fasting day.

((Merno fasting referst Mola Ali time and Adam's time and its time was always the same.)) (Elahi, 532).

((Fasting is between Azar and Day (december). the moon radiate on earth is in this 3 days which is called Ayyam –ok– Ibayz. (Elahi, 350).

As mentioned befor there are 3 days recommended fasting which is called Ghaveltasi, that is for remembrance of 7 followers who went to meet Soltan, They were captured by snow and died.

Then became a live again by God's order. This event happened in Merno fasting days. Soltan Ishagh ordered to fast 3 commeded day. So believers fast for 6 days.

((In Soltan Ishagh time there was an interval day between first 3 days and merno days. 7th night was king night. After Soltan, they took second month as time of Ghaveltasi intend which was chelleh (Day) (december-january) because there was the tropical difference and people of Turkistan (apart of south Russia, Caucasia and Azerbaijan.) Who were not familiar to old persian dialect.)) (Elahi, 531-533).

In some sects there is some intervals between 6 days and in some sects people fast 6 days consecutively. In God believer religion ((7)) has a fundamental importance. God penetrates to 7 pure body.

According to ((saranjam)) God existed in a pearl in eternity. Then appeared in 7 body.

1. Khodavandgar 2. Mortaza Ali 3. Mobarak shah entiled by shah khooshin
4. Soltan Ishagh 5. Shah veis Gholi 6. Mohammad Gholi 7. Khan Atash

This is the God eternal being that appears in some people such as Ali or Soltan Ishagh. Do not mistake it to meilem. God eternal being is a ble appare in people in every period which is called (Doon).

((The principle of rescue from bratal instinct and self and getting salvation has stems in Iheism and the allegory of mythical mithraism creation. Mithrasits beleived in life after death and continuing the life essence in other world and final reward. They believed that numerous souls exit in space and sky and they penetrate to people's body to continue their overland life (in zoroastrian, Fravashi and Fravahar beliefs) to help devils or fight them. (Cumont, 144).

To reach God, They must travel throught 7 valley.

1. Search 2. Love 3. In sight 4. Magnanimity 5. Monotheism
6. Perplexity 7. Poverty and Fana (Annihilation in God).

((Number 7 was holy. Seven stage or valleys through which every disciple must travel to reach purification and absolute deliverance.)) (Cumont, 175).

((They thought the sky had 7 valley or layers and realms, with 7 stairs or seven doors which they were exaited up. They were made of a metal which was a allusion of reaching paths to sky layes or stars. A disciple who entered the group had to pass these stair or layers.

They were gradually destitue of sins and sensual instinets through the 7 stages. His fundamental nature were remaind and he were deserved to enter 8th valley or sky (8th realm) to settle on the immense dream which was a permanent eternity. (Cumont, 145). Seven morsel: In Jamkhane all the people demand seven morsel after Sayid permission. They were recieved 7 morsels of seven dishes from devided food among others. They realy believed on curens of 7 morsels. Infant giving name ceremonies are held on 7th day and cooking bread (Gerdeh) on 7th night.

One of the mysterious aspects of the sect is to have mustache. Their mustache covers the lips and protects them from revealing the secrets. Jamneshin has not to reveal secrets of sect.

God believers do not speak about their ceremonies or sects, name to unbelievers yet. They believe that to have mustache refers to Imam Ali time to distinguish between Moavia's army and Ali's.

((After annihilation of ancient religions, Mithraism started to be important. Mithraism which was more pure among sufism and mysterious religion and had more moral aspects, became more desirable to Roman soldiers and intellectual class of the age.)) (Pazargad, 43).

((God believers and Ali Allahi people do not cut their mustache, They let them grow to cover their lips to show that their lips are closed and they are silent. These are remained all from Mithraism.)) (Saedi, 93).

((There is another narrative. According this narrative Imam Ali says that my friend's sign is mustache.)) (Elahi, 444).

As we mentioned, mustache was lip closing sign to keep the secrets. Mithraists can conceal their ceremonies at past and they do not let any body to enter their group so nobody could reach The secrets. Ali's followers were prosecuted and hurt so they hid themselves behind their mustache. We said that the ceremonies start after Sayid permission Sayid sits and caliph next to him, door keeper and servants are standing. One of them lights a lamp and starts the ceremonies after Sayid permission. In some picture of Mithra he is killing an ox, two adolescents are standing his two sides one with a light torch and the other with an extinguished down ward torch.

Main Pir (father figure) is in Kermanshah, he allows to start ceremonies every year. He is the master and has a high rank from religious and gnostic aspects according God believers he can perform miracles and can cure sick people by Imam Ali and David permission and grant poor's requests.

He is holy and honorable. A believer can reach his rank through lucubration and travelling seven stages.

He has complete religious and gnostic knowledge. And can predict everything so he knows astrology and most of the times choose his successor before death.

((In any case the pir (father figure) has highest rank in hierarchical order of Mithraism, and he has sufficient knowledge in astrology so it is

not surprising when we see that mithraism has many astrological beliefs such as 7 stage of travelling based on 7 star.)) (Vermazern, 209).

((In hierarchical order, There was a high rank person who was father's master. In an mithraism community or in any mehrabeh, father's order was valid. Pater-Patrum ordered father's group high controlling was his responsibility. And Pater-Sacroum was a holy father who conduct of a high rank the high and common ceremonies and all disciples were brothers and Pater-Patrum's son.)) (Cumont, 158-159).

In some sects, alcoholic drinks are not for bidden but intrestingly tobacco products and hookah is for bidden.

((Ali Allahi people drink Ilakhchi which refers to Mithraism age.)) (Saedi, 93).

((The supervisor of devoting ceremony durig The special monners performing, eats holy bread (It could be Mazdaism drun-draona) and drinks Hoom which intoxicant drunk. This is a very ancient costum which were performed in Mithraism religious ceromonies.)) (Cumont, 168).

These are some similarities between Mithraism and God believer religion. According these similarities, These is no doubt about unity of Mithras and God believer religion.

In God believer religion Mithra is replaced by Imam Ali.

Although the research is not perfect, The writer believes that the God believer religion is Mithraism which has continued it's life with newname in Islamic age.

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