



HEROQUEST



HeroQuest Voices *Peoples of Glorantha*

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A Personal View of Teshnan Life, The Mysteries of Fire
Greg Stafford

A Prophecy of the Hero Wars
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*Legion are the peoples of the world, many and varied are their ways.
All are connected by the cosmic webs of Arachne Solara
Who brings and binds all together, in life as in this book,
Who takes and rends apart those who would tear her webs.*

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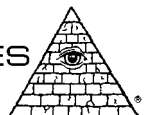
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A Personal View of Teshnan Life

What My Proprietor Told Me

Who are you?

I am Maheshurgan son of MaheSomash, proprietor and keeper of the Fourth Open House of Exchange that has been in business since Chal walked the lands and took away his flywhisk from that shelf, there, that is framed now in gold.

Who are we?

We are the Fourth Open House of Exchange, an institution of great renown and honor, blessed of Somash Mimi—let us praise him! You are one of the trainees, the child of my third wife Ziramant of the Grand Place of Five Front Doors.

What makes us great?

We are great because I am a wise and pious follower of *The Book of Well Being*, learned in its ways (especially the twenty-third through thirty-second verses.) Ever since Chal graced us by taking the flywhisk we have been patronized by nobles and priests and sages. His attention caused Somash Mimi—let us praise him!—to look our way, and our pious attentiveness has kept his gaze upon us.

Where do we live?

This is the district of Bara, the neighborhood of sandalwood aroma, where good and generous people live who are always walking in the pathways of Chal. Around us are the neighborhoods of Heza, Marda, Koor, Manaple, Darathot, Jinjib, and Buna, where people of the other verses live. This city is ruled by the House of Dalar Rapoor Arguni, the wise and generous Son of the Third Teaching, which is why it is called Dajanapol Rabur, Tower of Rubies.

How do we live?

We walk in the glory of Chal, who set us upon the way of fiery truth. We exchange the most valuable commodities: black mares, warm cattle, the Five Spices, incense furniture, rubbing emeralds, women's silk clothing, beard oil, and a complete line of household goods for people of all classes.

What is important in my life?

To know the lessons of *The Book of Well Being* and obey the rules of the First Teaching, to sacrifice properly to Somash Mimi—let us praise him!—to fulfill the obligations of your past lives, to restock the inventory when told, to wait on customers with respect, to count the change properly, to bow to the priests, to lie down for the nobles, to accept a wife from a good house and to have many sons.

What is the difference between men and women?

We are in essence exactly the same, being flame, form and perfection. We are subject to the teachings of Chal, to the rules of the King, to the rites of the priests. We are different in that our bodies are dominated by the flames of Great Somash—He is Life!—while women's souls are dominated by the fuel of Kab Vanarana Sa—She is Love!

Who rules us?

I do, of course, for I'm the proprietor of this establishment. I need obey only Dalar Rapoor Arguni and his kin, and also his Lord, the grand and most majestic Pubnashap, Vessel of Light who has the obligation to be perfect, to perform the Great Rites and to provide the land with love and tyranny.

What makes us great?

We are the flames of Great Somash—He is Life!—and that makes us great. We are humble beings, we who know only the First Teaching. Greater than us are those who know the Second as well, and they are the red-robed priests who intervene for us with the gods. Greater than them are those who have mastered the Third Teaching, the fortunate nobility. But the most great are the zitr, sages who have mastered the Fourth Teaching as well.

What is evil?

Everything not of the Flames of Great Somash—He is Life!—is evil in some degree. That basically means everything that is not of our great land of Teshnos is in some way evil.

What is my lot in life?

You will be fortunate because you are in this house, and you will learn the First Teaching and especially the twenty-third through thirty-second verses of *The Book of Well Being*. If you can you will learn the Second Teaching as well, and in your next life be born among the priests. This is the Way that Chal taught us and the way of all good folk. If you are find this stifling or inadequate then you can learn the way of one of the Moving Gods and still be saved.

How do we deal with others?

Patience is the essence of interaction. If we are so fortunate to deal with a zitr then we wait quietly until they take what they want. If we are lucky enough to deal with a nobleman then we wait quietly until they indicate what they wish, and we choose the best and wrap it and send it to the palace with more gifts. If we are blessed enough to deal with the priests then we wait until they tell us what they want and we prepare it and send it off with them to the temples. If we are fortunate enough to deal with another First Flame then we wait for them to say what they want and we show them the best that we have and exchange it for coin. If we are unlucky enough to deal with a Solfite then we watch until they offend us and we strike them and call the Ovansharu to drive them out. If we are cursed enough to have foreigners come here then we wait until the jungle responds to strike them down with a curse or a disease.

Who are our enemies?

We are blessed and wealthy, and thus there are many who are jealous of us enough to be foes. No one in the land is a foe, not the stupid goonda or the decadent Solfite addicts; those are just unfortunate and inferior.

In the east are the amazon Marazi, the peaceful Sofali turtles, the dwarf Babadi, and the tree-climbing Fethloni, but none of those are enemies.

But a great foe is the land of Kralorela to the north, which each year sends a monstrous serpent over the mountain passes to destroy us. We are fortunate that Uranaroon Mashadoroon,

the mighty chosen elephant, defends us from them.

Another foe is the horde of beast men of the west who often forget who we are and come into the land to steal and pillage. We are fortunate that Balandak Zim, the Jungle Master, protects us and curses them, or send disease, or rots their faces in our defense.

In the south on the devil island of Melib is Harstar the Vile, a man who has put out his own flame by killing zitrns and hating us. He has an army and navy of Gachi devils and Ashurtan demons who will turn to dust, we are told, if they lay foot upon our good land.

Who are my gods?

You have one of great importance, Somash Mimi—let us praise him!—who is the power of merchants like us. He is a Reverence of the Great God Somash—He is Life! You must never miss a sacrifice or a prayer to him! As for the rest, you should attend their rites at your pleasure and convenience. I can tell you of them. Practical knowledge, not the philosophies of the zitrns, who see beyond this mortal sphere to higher truths.

Great Somash—He is Life!—has many Faces, each with its own form or Reverence. Only the priests may worship him and participate in his sacrifices.

Somash Vindinaran—Praise his name!—is the Creator of the present world. He is worshipped every day at dawn. He bears the powers of Endi Varo, the self-contained Creator of old who made the whole universe and has withdrawn to worlds beyond our ken.

Somash Neran Bas—May he bless us!—is the Healer, worshipped every day in the mid-morning. He helps us to grow, cures us of our sicknesses, heals all our wounds, and repairs our sorrows.

Somash Ji—May he be merciful!—is the current Father and Emperor, the patron of nobility and the protector of wisdom. He guides the noblemen. His sacrifices are every day at noon.

Somash Mimi—Let us praise him!—is our god, the Great Exchanger, the protector of Merchants. His sacrifices are every day at mid-afternoon.

Somash Hero Madoro—Remember his name my son!—is the scholar who records all the deeds of men and women, and gives the document of the soul after death to determine the next lifetime. His sacrifices are every day at sunset.

Somash Veren is the Beauty Sun, the Lord of Music and the Master of Song. Anything of beauty that is seen or heard is from him.

Somash Endi Varo is the Judge of the Gods, who measures the flames of humankind after death and determines what life they will be formed into on their next incarnation. He is one of the Moving Gods.

Alen Somash Sa is the Warrior Sun and the primary object of worship by the *ovansaru*, the soldiers and police for the kingdom. He is also one of the Moving Gods, recognized as the bright yellow planet that traverses the sky each night.

There are hundreds of other deities. Some, like Solf and Calyz, have many faces or forms. Others show only one face to us mortals.

Kab Tolat Solf is the Great Destroying Warrior. He is also one of the Moving Gods, recognized as the great red planet that is called Tolat.

Besdi Solf Du is the Seventh Little Destroyer, the thief of Heaven and Hell. Sometimes give an ibi deer or a black pig to the priests to sacrifice to him, and you can see the shoplifters when they walk through our door.

Calyz Mandar is our ancestor, the father of humankind and the Keeper of the First Flame. His rites are always colorful and joyful. He had many wives, a harem, and from them came all of us humans.

Vai Madar Sa is the Great Star Archer. He is also a Moving God, recognized as the constellation of the Great Hunter.

Balandak Zim the Jungle Master is both male and female, and rules over the vast sweaty forests that ring our cities and fill every hill that is not farmed.

Velit Maniz is the Invisible Leopard, the Lord of the Hunt. He is one of the jungle spirits who are our friends.

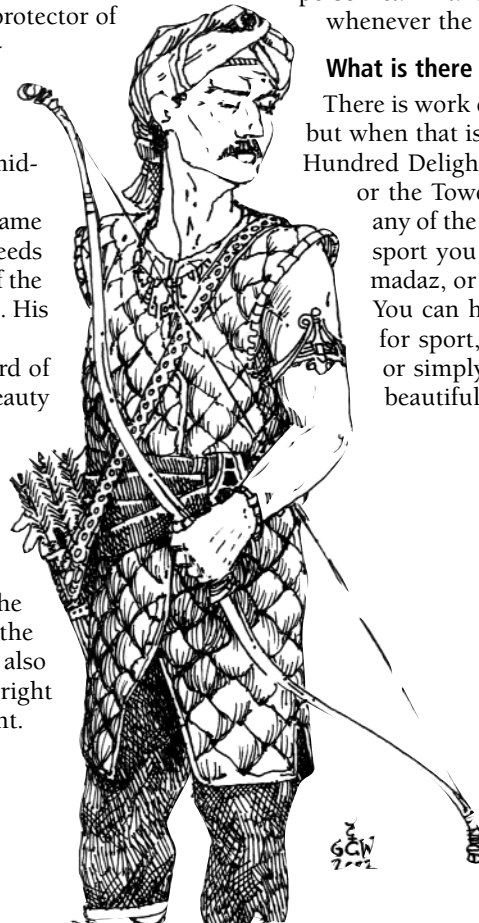
Mairnali Har is the Mother of Compassion. She is called the Mother of Mankind because her kindness and healing saved everyone from evil.

Sera Veren is the Beauty Dancer. She is the Lady of Dance and the Mistress of Love. Anything of beauty that is touched or performed is from her.

Kab Vanarana Sa is the Great Goddess. Her nine hundred daughters provide us with sustenance and health. All of the products in this shop and warehouse are the gifts of a daughter, and all the things that are worn, eaten, or known come from more daughters, and all the pleasures and troubles that a person can make are her daughters. Go to her worship whenever the idea strikes you to do so.

What is there to do around here?

There is work enough to keep you busy if you so wish, but when that is done you may visit the House of Eight Hundred Delights, or the Hall of Uncounted Pleasures, or the Tower of Joy, the Warehouse of Wonder, or any of the two hundred restaurants of this city. For sport you can play baman, medifuralor, or solfin madaz, or watch the professionals of those sports. You can hunt on foot or from elephantback; fish for sport, trophy, or food from the rivers or sea; or simply rest, take your ease, and watch as the beautiful men and women walk our streets.



The Mysteries of Fire

What the Zitr Expounds

Where did the world come from?

First was Endi Varo, the self-contained and self-created Creator. It created the Universe from Itself. It created three worlds, one for challenge, one for play, and one for desire. Each of those then self-created as well, so that within each were beings.

After one hundred dynasties they learned each of Endi Varo, and thus of each other. For one hundred dynasties more they mingled, first in harmony and then in conflict. As a result of that harmony and conflict the Fourth World was made, in which we live. This world too self-created, and after another hundred dynasties the Underworld was created, and after one hundred more, the Unworld of Chaos. After another hundred dynasties, Chal the Wise instructed a king and then others and so made the land that we know now as Teshnos.

Where do we come from?

We are people and are made of parts of all the five worlds. Calyz Mandar is the father and creator, and he had many wives who were the bearers of our ancestors, and this is why those who follow Calyz are expected to have many children.

Why do we die?

All things being and end, and that is the way the world was created. Without this renewal no one has the chance to transcend themselves and rediscover Endi Varo.

What happens after we die?

Somash Endi Varo scrutinizes the nature of our inner flame and determines its qualities, then determines the type of its resting and the place of its rebirth. The resting seems long to the soul, but in the world of mortals it is short. We are then reborn, and the zitr's can trace the former lives and histories so that each person retains the obligations and debts and blessings of its former life. Thus is the society tied together.

A Prophecy of the Hero Wars

And the life-flames of the Righteous People will burn bright as Great Somash—He is Life!—rises into the skies that day, such that even the unclean and unknowing can see them, and they will burn yellow and red and blue and white and colors no one has any words for. Yet even as the Righteous rejoice, they will see Great Somash—He is Life!—grow dim and ageing, for it is His flames they are burning. And the Righteous will gather in the squares and in the fields, and the sound of their prayers will roll across the land, then the First Sacrifice will leap into the heavens and his life-flame will soar skywards. Then the life-flames of the Righteous will burst forth and mingle above Teshnos, forming a mighty Flamebridge that will join the polluted ground with the reviving Sun. Great Somash—He is Life!—will then beam his blessings upon the Righteous, beggars will become zitr's, elephants will calve twice a year, and the fields will harvest themselves. Then, after the Flamebridge has burnt for twice two hours, it will begin to fade, but as it does, down it will come Chuhenshanabap, the Somash Maharaj, for such has prophecy foretold.

Why are we here?

We are here to carry on the job of Endi Varo and to experience challenge, play and desire. We are created finite to know these things, and to learn of them and advance our being through them to regain unity with Endi Varo.

How do we do magic?

We are finite beings with infinite opportunity, and our station in life determines the nature of expression. We all draw from the God World, the Spirit World, and the Sorcery World. We must limit ourselves to the ways taught to us by Chal the Wise and as detailed in the *Works of Chal*, or in *The Book of Well Being*. *The Book of Well Being* is, of course, right and true, but it is only a brief synopsis suitable for commoners. For those such as ourselves, the deeper mysteries of the *Works of Chal* beckon. By studying these texts and reflecting upon their lessons, we can perform those works that are most suitable for us and ensure our progress through life, lives and to the infinite.

You spoke of other worlds. Can you tell me the truth about...

...Chaos?

This is the Sixth or Last World, a subcreation made by beings of ignorance and trouble. It is farthest removed from Endi Varo.

...Gods?

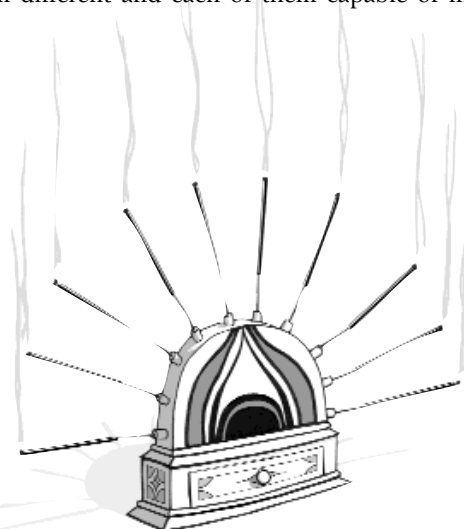
The gods are the beings of play, created by Endi Varo for his enjoyment. Their God World has a million beings within it, each of them different and each of them capable of manifesting a magic.

...Sorcerers?

These are the beings of challenge, created by Endi Varo for his enjoyment. Their Essence World has a million beings within it, each of them different and each of them capable of manifesting a magic.

...Spirits?

These are the beings of desire, created by Endi Varo for his enjoyment. Their Spirit World has a million beings within it, each of them different and each of them capable of manifesting a magic.



I have heard of other gods and powers. Can you tell me the truth about...

...Air?

This great storm lord is the pre-eminent deity of the God World, the Master of Play who became confused with challenge and desire.

...Darkness?

This is the power of the Underworld, or Fifth World, that spilled over into the Fourth World. It is a subcreation brought into existence by beings of limitation and mixed desire, play and challenge.

...Earth?

Mostal is the name for the creator of the Babadi, a clever race of craftsmen who live in the mountains and in the jungle. They are among the unflamed, but they are also the source of our prayer wheels, the sacred mirrors that link the temples of Somash, and many other clever artifices.

...Jungle?

Aldrya is the Fethloni name for the great jungle that provides us with the wood and spices that fuel our mundane fires. She is the mother of Balandak Zim, the Jungle Master, who protects us.

...Sedenya?

The Red Moon is a great being of the Fourth World, an example of the state of higher being that can be attained by the residents of the world of men.

...Water?

This is a power of the Underworld, but which lies halfway between the world of men and the Underworld. It takes the form of ceaseless motion and of water.

Zitric Lore

The Teachings of Chal

Chal the Wise, blessed of Great Somash—He is Life!—brought order to Teshnos after the evil of Sheng Seleris. He taught us the Truth of the world.

His First Teaching shows us that we are all Flames, and that each flame is one of the Five Fiery Forms.

His Second Teaching proves that we are not really Flames, but actually the Form itself, for the Flame is an illusion made by our many imperfections.

His Third Teaching reveals to us that the Forms are also false, caused by minor imperfections. When we realize that all Forms are One Form, flames of a single Celestial Fire, then we are released from the bondage of rebirth and reside forever in the perfection of Creator. There are less than a dozen people alive today who have mastered all three of Chal's Teachings. Some fear the coming of the calamitous Time of No Zitrs, as was prophesied by Chal himself.

The Five Fiery Forms

Zitro Argon

Zitro Argon is first of the fiery forms, with one Reverence, the zittr meditative ascetics. King Pubnashap, the Vessel of Light—may he reign in radiance!—is an avatar of Zitro Argon, and contemplates his transcendent flames in the Soul Furnace at the heart of the Great Temple in Zanozar.

Somash

Somash is the second form, with many Reverences to his many Masks. He is the form of superior human beings, such as priests, nobles, warriors, poets, healers and administrators. His path requires fidelity, purity, and truth. His temples spread the will of the Vessel of Light across the land, and the order of priests known as the *ovansaru* defend his divine person and his realm.

Calyz

Calyz is the third form, and is the fire of normal humankind. Most people benefit from the sacrifices we make to Calyz, whose fires are kept burning within domed kilns, ready for the next offering. The city of Dombain is his birthplace and most hallowed city. The queues of young men seeking the fireseed blessing outside the Broadest Dome can often stretch three times round the temple's outer wall.

Furalor

Furalor is the fourth form, the female fire that receives all things. She is primarily the funeral pyre fire, but is also the recipient of lost items, forgotten thoughts, decay, and lost causes. When a Quenching Mourning is declared, everyone must pay the woe-tax of a copper coin every time they see one of Furalor's white-veiled priestesses.

Solf

Solf is the fifth form, the burnt out fire. His polluted forms include the cold volcano, sexual deviance, gluttony, abuse of intoxicants, waste, suicide, and death of Self.

