

THE MEYADI CHILDREN OF THE SANDS



“SWEAR BY YOUR EYES— YOU NEED THEM NOT”



Mhe desert's magnificent views and sweeping dunes give way to a pure oasis, whose waters had been poisoned but whose people thrived. Even before the stars caught the oasis, a pact was made between Man and spirit—a covenant sealed in death that would continue till the end of the stars. Serving under the omnipotent scorpion Azirat—He of Many Names. The mighty clan first known as the fet-Maydi came to prominence from the ashes of a brutal betrayal, whose dynasty spanned further than any mountain and whose descendants take pleasure in their principles of humility and art of devotion. The fet-Maydi showed themselves worthy in a period when the strongest ruled supreme, enduring the harsh tests of time, and whose people knew that the rest would not live to be etched into the eternal pages of history. Some think they were blessed and chosen, while others hint at more sinister aspects.



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VALUES & ATTITUDES



They call these plains of death home, as chosen folk of the deserts, mesas, and savannahs, and where fields of life instead take shape. A family emerges from their houses in the mountains or adobe pastures out on the wide dunes, who view their neighbor as their own and those in need as honored guests — as long as they are welcomed by the community as a whole. Otherwise, one risks dying alone in the sands. Rude behavior includes things like bad manners, overtness, and averted gazes.

Faith is essential to the Meyadi, and their God, the Benevolent Azirat, is revered and feared. Only his titles, not his name, may be uttered. While it is allowed to write his name, one of his endless titles should be invoked first. Death and its secrets are a frequent theme in folktales, despite being a taboo in Meyadi society. Magic is commonly accepted and openly practiced.

A FOLK OF DECORUM

In conversation, it is proper for a Meyadi to be concise but quickly speaking, and with a locked gaze to the subject. For the Meyadi, it is not considered rude to stare, but it is a way of saying '*I understand & hear you.*' Some say they are a kind peoples, but by all means not friendly to just about anybody. Their hospitality is to be praised, and their strong sense of community and identity is what keeps a mostly solitary people together as one mighty force to be reckoned with. People of quality, and not quantity. As foreign as the Meyadi stamp is, it often means exotic and of exceptional grade.



THE LAUD OF DEFORMITY

The Meyadi recognize that not all are born alike, and so embrace imperfections. Abnormalities and misgrowths are often considered a great blessing from birth. Being born without sight, speech, or other major disfigurements is praised for its sanctity — deformed individuals therefore often end up being idealized, and valued more than 'perfect' men.

Many of the great Meyadi kings are disfigured and mangled, those without are remembered for little.

UNBLEMISHEDNESS AMIDST VENOM

Originating with the worship of the Great Scorpion Azirat, who possesses innate purity and wisdom, and who breeds life through deadly toxins and emerald poisons. The Meyadi came to revere poison as a sacred essence, and a manifestation of power. Poisons are utilized both ceremonially and therapeutically in everyday life; taking in tiny doses with regular prayers is supposed to induce potent healing, both physically and therapeutically.

Though traditionally recognized as the holiest manner of ritual suicide — the use of poison is very impure and unethical — the Meyadi do not murder with poisons; doing so would be a kindness.

THE CREED SYSTEM

THE KIISH AND THE IISHRA



Social hierarchy has been prevalent in Meyadi society since the Days of the Sticks. There are two systems, the oldest of which sorts the common folk into *Kiish* – or ‘creeds’, the newer system is made to determine the strength of royal blood, the Iishra. The former is the common system of hierarchy that an individual subscribes to once they mature, and adheres to until death. Renouncing one's *Kiish* is like abandoning your identity; marking yourself as creedless is grounds for desipement & exile. There are four creeds that the Meyadi must fall under, these will determine one's status, and focus, inside of a community. Not all Meyadi are made equal, warriors are of greater importance and status than a scholar, and so on – with the artisans being the lowest of importance and status.

Φ	❖	ω	♂	○
KIADD	HIAANL	SENVIR	TIRIH	SZAUGIT
<i>PILLAR OF THE SOLDIER</i>	<i>PILLAR OF THE SCHOLAR</i>	<i>PILLAR OF THE MERCHANT</i>	<i>PILLAR OF THE ARTISAN</i>	<i>PILLAR OF THE UNBOUND</i>
I. RESILIENCE II. HONOR III. BOLDNESS	I. INTEGRITY II. ORDER III. EXPORATION	I. TRADE II. CONTENTION III. HARMONY	I. QUALITY II. DEDICATION III. LABOR	I. FREEDOM II. VERACITY III. ISOLATION

For each *Kiish*, there is no set line of principles or code to adhere to, only an idea. The three tenets are what usually is associated with each *Kiish*; what a member of the group would value and ideate in their daily life. One cannot be forcibly removed from a creed, only be shunned by its vowlers when its central idea is violated. Neither can one change *Kiish* on a whim, but must instead undergo the same ceremony as they first did.

THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS MAGNIFICENCE

Choosing one's *Kiish* is a watershed occasion, beginning with a now-mature Meyadi's nameday at the age of 19. A small celebration is frequently conducted inside the family, when a feast is prepared but not consumed until the vower has made their intent apparent. Intent to commit to a *Kiish* can begin after the vower is fully dressed, with no flesh showing and the majority of the face and head covered. The intent is stated plainly, the personal pledge is vowed before they unveil.

THE FIRST MARK

Before the feast can begin, the *Kiish*'s insignia is etched into the flesh, deep enough to leave a lifelong scar. It doesn't matter where the symbol is, but for some, it represents their personality. Bold and aggressive *Kiadd* followers may wear their insignia openly on the forehead, but a more modest *Hiaanl* scholar may use their pen hand. The feast may commence following the marking ritual, thereby finishing.

THE COURAGEOUS INDIVIDUALS

There is a fifth, mainly shunned uncreed for the creedless, or the *Szaugites*, as they're frequently mockingly referred to—the *Kiish* rejectors. Choosing to commit to the creedless is regarded as a brazen disrespect to one's family. Some, however, believe they have no alternative, and those who have been exposed to the *Kiish*'s unpleasant whims will undoubtedly realize its faults. Joining the uncreed is a serious decision, since the Meyadi face ancestral pressure, familial stress, and conformity.

A REPENTANCE MOST FOUL

Because the *Szaugites* are creedless, they are not welcome in Meyadi society. A self-avowed *Szaugite* will find it difficult to reintegrate into Meyadi society. There have been known *Szaugites* who have earned the respect of a city by doing menial labor and were permitted to ask for forgiveness to the leaders in order to rejoin society. Thus, violating tradition does not go unpunished.

THE IISHRA

THE TAINTED BLOOD



Inherently, all Meyadi are considered royalty and descendants of the fet-Maydi. Beginning with the Covenant, from that point on the tainted blood of Azirat's make spread over countless generations and years, the first bearers of the tainted blood came to rule and were hailed as royalty for their pure, and strongly tainted blood. The strength of one's ties, however, varies greatly across the board; depending on ancestry, and luck.

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

UNFIT <5% DILUTE 15% IOTA 25% CLEAR >50% PURE >70% HERALD 90%

The *Iishra* is considered the true chart that determines one's purity, and worthiness of royalty. To do this, a '*Bloodscale*' is utilized; a cone-shaped instrument of brass with six levels for the blood to flow down into.

Depending on where the blood stops flowing and easily rests, is what determines the blood's level of purity. Higher purity reigns supreme, and foul-tasting blood is preferred.



FAITH & BELIEFS

THE LISTENERS OF AZIRAT

"It was Azirat the Scorpion, wielder of the whip and ruler of Currents who first wrote." - ¶3, Eldest Dawn



In the Meyadi faith, the world itself rides upon the carapace of its scorpion-god, Azirat the Keeper of Currents, the Shaper of All Things Below, and so on, is greatly revered. It is said he made the world from three insects, two which brought clay for land, and sulfur for life, forming the land upon his stomach. The third insect bore nothing, and was put to death to make true life from. As time went on, an outcast known as Neb-Nefer willingly put himself to death for his comrades survival, dying in a poisoned oasis; but he lived. Azirat and Nefer formed a pact there, in return for life, and being the herald of good will. Now, his poison waters the fields, and Currents flow.

"TO LIVE IS TO DIE"

The world was created when Azirat was submerged, floating alone in endless magma. From his young carapace emerged three insects: one bore clay, the second carried sulfur, while the third bore nothing in his pincers.

Taking the clay, Azirat made blackened islands upon his stomach. Failing to cultivate life with sulfur alone, he took the third insect and put him to death in the sulfur, thus life sprouted, the magma became blessed sands which shaped the rest of the world before the waters took its place. After a meaningful conversation, Azirat convinced the two insects to inhabit his new world and multiply, which eventually made all of the creatures of the earth.

“KEEPER OF THE CURRENTS”



The *Currents* are the representation of change. As the combined force of heat and air, how even a gust of wind across desert dunes can change the shape of things. Or, how the big or small events in life can mold a person, for the better or for worse. The Current is an abstract concept, more closely related to abnormally hot winds, such as one would encounter in the arid world. Feeling warm winds when one has no hope, is considered a sign of salvation – evidence that the Great Scorpion walks with you. Azirat is the Keeper of Currents, who commands fate itself.

“THE COVENANT OF NOXA”



How the Listeners of Azirat first arose, is through the exile of three pilgrims from their tribe, punished to death by walking the Dunes of Death – a cruel punishment in those times. After many days, the men were already sick and dying, they only had enough for two men. A blind man by the name of Neb-Nefer shook his head, and wandered off to die. Happening upon a poisoned oasis, he waded through the icy pool, his body pulsed in pain before he finally died.

Azirat, who thought well of his strong will, and willingness of sacrifice, brought him back to give him the key to the deserts in return for his life and utmost devotion. There, at the First Oasis near Noxa, the covenant was formed. From there, all came under the banner of the Great Scorpion.

"For his sacrifice was rewarded with salvation, for it was the Man who chose the path of self-destruction that will be hailed and enlightened." – ¶ 10, Eldest Dawn

“THE SACRED SIXES”

The confession of belief is known as ‘the Sixes’, named after the six verses that once recites as a vow, or affirmation of belief. It is considered highly sacred, and of great importance:

I THERE IS NO HIGHER EMINENCE THAN TO LISTEN.

II HE IS THE NOXIOUS, THE MOST SUMPTUOUS, HE IS THE TRUE GIVER AND RECEIVER.

III BEFORE HIM, I AM THE SUPPLICANT, AS ALL WILL BE.

IV MAY HE BESEECH THE CURRENTS IN LIFE AND IN DEATH.

V HE IS THE WORLD, AND THE WORLD IS HIM.

VI HIS TRUE NAME IS AZIRAT, AND NEVERMORE SHALL I UTTER HIS NAME.

“THE THREE TAILS”

👁️ AZIRAT; God of all that is corrupt; poison, decay, erosion. The God of life and of murder, and the body of the tails.

🌿 TAL'ASKE; Tail of creation, recreation. Life, fertility, and peace.

○ TAL'FAI; Tail of time, trickery, riddles, bells. Without form.

✍️ TAL'PHIID; The aspect of war, honor, wrath, strength, and blood.

AZIRAT

THE GREAT SCORPION

The Worldmaker, the Shaper of All Things Below, the All-Ruling, and most importantly, the *One*: Believed to be what brought the Meyadi to the forefront of history and prominence, the Faith of the Meyadi is one of their strongest aspects. The Meyadi are considered *Listeners* from birth — that is, a worshiper of *Azirat, the Great Scorpion*. An almighty, and omnipotent deity of poison, decay, perseverance and who controls the *Currents*. With his three great pincers who represent his extensions: *Tal'aske*, *Tal'fai*, and *Tal'phiid*, who are considered to be aspects of the One — Azirat.

The One is eternally undying. Legends tell of seeing true manifestations of him in the wild, as token signs of perseverance, and the same legends which told of his undeath, even in the face of great peril and the woes of time. It is believed that the very world is Azirat, the earth, and its crust being his carapace and very skin; guiding the people of his universe, through the *Greater Currents* that threaten his children. Wild scorpions are signs of good luck, not something to be killed or kept as a pet, even. Considered an extension, and personification of the Almighty himself.

His personification is that of a deeply red scorpion, appearing in a wide range of sizes; ranging from as tiny as a pebble, to as colossal as a great forest. His three tails, all sharp as razors, represent his three aspects — and just as any scorpion, he bears two great pincers, powerful enough to wield both the world and its shattered peoples within.

"Thy people wander in ruin I see; I shall unite the people under your banner, and hand you the key to the Deserts, and the very Currents which course through it; in return for your utmost devotion. You swear by your life, and by your peoples' will — you swear by your Eyes, that our Covenant be upheld; so this I offer you." — The Covenant of Noxa

MUSIC & ARTS



For ensembles and bands, some sort of percussion instrument such as a leather drum, bongo, or a bone rattle is commonly used to keep the beat of songs. Singing in long, drawn-out lyrics is usually traditional. These are the two most important aspects of Meyadi music. In addition, flutes are commonly used as a highlight or lead instrument in a particular song's wild composition.

The arts and crafts is something usually only taught to the more educated Meyadi, who are entrusted to create consistently good artwork. However, carving is a traditional practice, something that all Meyadi are supposed to be capable of doing to immortalize memories. Using stone or clay tablets, and canvas are the most commonly used for art.

Mosaics and paintings are very commonly used in architecture everywhere, using more muted colors. But in places of importance or of great religious value, dazzling and expensive colors are reserved. It should also be noted that the name of Azirat is never spoken, only his titles are allowed.

FAMILY STRUCTURE



The Meyadi accept both patriarchal, and matriarchal families. However, the patriarchal line of succession is traditionally superior, with the eldest being the most respected, and most supreme within the family – and who is usually regarded as Clan Father. That honor can go to women, as well, for it is perfectly acceptable for a woman to reign as Father of a clan. The extended family is considered close among the Meyadi, it is regarded as just as important as one's closest family. This establishes the family circle; who share resources and responsibilities among each other for mutual dependence.

The men are traditionally the providers, hunters, and protectors of the family. While the women stand responsible for the family's home. However, role reversal is not unheard of, especially in times of drought or great need. Throughout history both men and women have been teachers, warriors, and prominent leaders.

Ancestry and memories are a great virtue among the Meyadi - something to be remembered, and revered. Therefore, it is not uncommon to see ancestral worship among Meyadi families, who take great pride in their ancestor's actions and accomplishments, no matter how small. The children are considered the key to a greater future, their spirits are not to be beaten; discipline among family members is often gentle, in fear of shattering a child's spirit through harsh means. Furthermore, it is expected of a child to learn through seeing, and then through doing. A very traditional means of teaching.

FASHION & BATTLE GARB



The most optimal choice of fashion for the average Meyadi is thin, breathable clothing. Something long and thin is often very fashionable and both practical to cope with the extreme heat. That is not to say the more well off Meyadi like to dress fashionably with the cost of less heat suppression.

The lower class prioritize practicality over all else, but simple patterns can be seen from time to time with the workers and craftsmen of society. While the middle and upper class burghers prefer to dress fashionably, they value class and perception highly, dressing with vivid colors, intricate patterns, and in stripy regalia. The wealthy like to dot their skin with pearls, rich colors, and dress like kings and queens, in spite of heatstroke.

Throughout history, the special armors of the Meyadi have evolved with time and necessity, beginning with simple and effective rags and brass helmets, to the Imperial regalia from the golden age of the Meyadi; gold inlays, brazen masks, and cold steel with the colors of kings.

Serving the Emerald King, the soldiers under his command wore a thin gray linen with chainmail on top, then a thick covering of golden lamellar plating was standard alongside the red headcover which buckled at the shoulder, hanging gracefully. Finally, a bronze face-mask of the Emerald King was worn by each soldier; considered extensions of the king's will, which made wars more personal and face-to-face. It proved very effective on the battlefield.

WARMER WEATHER CLOTHING MALE

HIGHER CLASS



MIDDLE & LOWER CLASS



WARMER WEATHER CLOTHING FEMALE

HIGHER CLASS



MIDDLE & LOWER CLASS



COLDER WEATHER CLOTHING MALE

HIGHER CLASS



MIDDLE & LOWER CLASS



COLDER WEATHER CLOTHING FEMALE

HIGHER CLASS



MIDDLE & LOWER CLASS



BATTLEGARB



The standard uniform of the King's Guard; a long, layered blue and dark red dress clad with the insignia of the king, a red sash tying the dress together at the waist with two curved swords resting in their sheaths.

The black and gold gilded vambraces crept upwards to the white sleeves and hood, culminating at the iron mask attached to the face, held together with a golden clasp tied around the guard's head with a red and black band. Their boots were simple, and had a slight upwards curve at the ends.

A nomadic scout of the dunes; a short red dress with a green bandolier of darts strewn across the chest, layered over a long shirt of chainmail and brigandine, extending to chain and plated vambraces at the wrists. Tied around the waist is a leather belt adorned with sheaths, rope, daggers and pouches.

Finally, a black and gold hood is worn over the signature owl's mask, obscuring the wearer's identity and granting the prying eyes of the owl.



NOTEWORTHY MEMBERS OF CULTURE



King Mezhindiyem II fet-Maydi "the Emerald King" -

The King who cheated death. Known as the king to shepherd a golden age for the Meyadi, one which would make the dreams of imperium reality. He was also known as a tyrannical king to many, as one who waged war carelessly. Famously, he is immortalized through his famous emerald mask, which was used to cover his fleshless face – abominable, even for Meyadi standards; an incident with the undead horde that plagued the lands once gave him such a feature.



Reyhán Melláyyem -

Considered the greatest rider of the Alendi, archer, and scout among the steppes and dunes; for a time she was considered nonliving, a ghost who passed without trace. Raised among the more temperate mountains, she was a gifted equestrian from a very early age and grew to be quite stocky for a mountain-born woman. In her teens, she defeated the Champion of Azzalnü in a joust and won the title with a fake beard and name. It was not until years after when she was employed as a scout for General Tal'phiid, that her true skill and identity were revealed. Brown-haired, of lighter tone and colorful eyes, she was considered a brute, and not deemed suitable for any marriage. She perished alone on the battlefield, forever immortalized by a bronze statue somewhere in the dunes.



King Neb-Neffer the First Ascended (fet-Maydi) -

The First Ascended, a prophet of the Unnameable and His will – After being brought back to life at the pool near Noxa, he went on to lead the banner of a broken clan into the embers, only to arise a phoenix in the sky; crowned as king within three months. He was an utmost humble king, blind and weak of skin though strong of mind and heart. Under his rule, there came to be a maxim to unify under, and he sought to make the lands prosperous. He lived unnaturally long, dying at the age of 180, causing much distress to the kingdom.



Queen Mune-hazhra fet-Maydi -
The most prominent Queen of the Meyadi, this pale, face-scarred woman who was born under the sign of the moon, brought the longest unbroken period of peace to the kingdom, heralding under this period of peace many architectural projects; the Palace of the Moon, the grandest royal palace was constructed in her time and has been in use ever since. She was also known for her poetry skills, exceptional beauty, and scarred features, dressing in long, colorful regal robes and white face paint, she set the standard of beauty for many decades, even after her death.

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