



FEZANA Age-Appropriate Lesson Plan

Subject Category (circle one): Religion/Ceremony History Prayer Gathas
Comparative Religion **Shahnameh**

Age Group (circle one): PreK-K Grades 1-3 Grades 4-5 **Grades 6-8** Grades 9-12

Lesson # (if applicable): 3

Subject of the Lesson: Birth of Sohrab

Background Knowledge for the Teacher:

Tahmina gives birth to a boy, Sohrab. After a single month had passed, it was as though he was a full year old. At three years old, he began the exercise of the battlefield; by his fifth year he had acquired the courage of lionlike men and when he reached his tenth year, there was no man in the land who would be able to stand in combat with him.

One day he came to his mother and asked her, "I have asked you so many times but never got a straight answer. What shall I say when someone asks me who my father is? If the answer to my simple question is kept hidden from me again, I will have no choice but to leave." After hiding the truth for so many years, Tahmineh finally said, "you are the son of the hero Rostam, the elephant bodied, sprung from Zal Dastan son of Sam and from Nariman.

Tahmineh then brought a letter from Rostam which she showed him secretly, together with three rubies and three purses of gold sent for him by his father from Iran at the time when he was born. She continued to say, "Afrasiyab, the king of Turan, must not know about you being the son of Rostam as he is the worst enemy of your father. On the other hand, if Rostam finds out about you being such a great warrior, he will summon you and your mother's heart would suffer the torments of grief".

Sohrab replied, "it would not be possible for anyone in the world to keep this thing concealed". I shall raise an army from Turks and bring down Kay Kaus (Kay Kavus), King of Iran, from his throne and make my father, Rostam, king of Iran and then with the help of Rostam, we will bring down Afrasiab from his throne and I will be the king of Turan.

Lesson for students:

The teacher will use the information in the "Background Knowledge for the Teacher" section to go over the story. After reading the story to the students, the students can work on the activity listed below.

Activity for Students:

After reading, students will pick from the following:

- Write a letter from Sohrab to Rostam introducing him as his son and telling Rostam about himself
- Write a letter from Tahmineh to Rostam informing him about his son being born
- Imagine what the letter from Rostam included. Write a letter of what you think Rostam wrote in the letter to Sohrab



Sources:

1. *Shahnameh: The Persian Book of Kings* retold by Elizabeth Laird
2. *Shahnameh: The Epic of the Kings* by Abolqasem Ferdowsi (Translated by Reuben Levy)

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