



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: King Goshtasp Persuading Esfandiyar to Conquer Rostam

Background Knowledge for the Teacher:

Esfandiyar was stunned by Goshtasp's desire. He said: "What you are asking me is to fight against an old man whom King Kay-Kaus called a conqueror of lions. From the time of king Manuchehr and king Kay Qobad all the kings of Iran have delighted in him, calling him Rakhsh's master, world conqueror, lion-slayer, crown-bestower. He is a great man, one who entered a pact with Kay Khosrow, the King of the Kings." King Goshtasp said: "If you want the throne and crown, gather your troops and take the road for Sistan, bind Rostam's arms and lead him here. If Zavareh, Faramarz and Sam trick you, drag them all on foot to this court.

Esfandiyar answered: "Enough! It isn't them you're circling round, you are not pursuing Zal and Rostam— I, your son, am singled out by you to die; your jealous passion for your sovereignty has made you want to rid the world of me. So be it! Keep your royal crown and throne. Give me a corner to live alone. I'm one of many slaves, no more; my task is to perform whatever you may ask." Goshtasp replied: "What would treasure, an army, the crown and throne be to me without you. To conquer Rostam, choose experienced cavalry from our army, weapons, troops and cash are all at your disposal. Any holding back will be because of your own suspicious mind." Esfandiyar replied: "An army will be of no use to me in this situation. If the time to die has come, a commander can't ward it off with troops. "Troubled by thoughts of the crown and by his father's words, he left the court and made his way to his own palace.

Katayun, weeping and in turmoil of emotion, faced Esfandiyar and said: "I've heard you are to capture Rostam, the master of sword and mace. Rostam is a horseman with a mammoth's strength, a river's force is nothing against him. He ripped out the guts of White Demon. When he sought revenge for the death of Seyavash and waged war on Afrasyab, he turned the world to a sea of blood. Don't throw your life away for the sake of a crown; no king was ever born crowned. Your father's grown old, and you are young, strong and capable; all the army looks to you. Don't let this anger of yours put you in harm's way. There are other places in the world besides Sistan; there is no need to be so headstrong and so eager for combat. Please pay attention to my words, they come from a mother's love."

Esfandiyar became sadder and said: "I know it would be wrong to kill Rostam and no good can come of the King's plan. There is no one in Iran who's finer or more noble than Rostam. But how can I ignore the King's order? How can I refuse such a mission? If God wants it, I shall die in Zabol, but if Rostam accepts my orders, he'll hear no harsh words from me. I will take my young son Bahman with



me to the battlefield to teach him what fighting means. I don't need to take any army with me; men from my own family and a few noblemen will suffice."

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 first 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 Katayun to Esfandyar to read as he travels to battle with Rostam
- Write a letter from Esfandyar to Goshtasp about how he feels in this situation

Students will also discuss the lesson/moral of this section of the story. They can also discuss where the characters might have made changes to their actions to change the events of the story.

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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