



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): 4

Subject of the Lesson: Esfandiyar Sends Bahman to Rostam

Background Knowledge for the Teacher:

The next morning, Esfandiyar and his companion rode till they reached the River Hirmand, the border of Rostam's territory. A suitable place was selected and the group pitched camp in customary fashion. In Esfandiyar's pavilion a throne was placed, and his warriors assembled before him.

After everyone relaxed, Esfandiyar ordered his son Bahman to come before him and said to him: "Saddle your black horse and dress yourself in a robe of Chinese brocade; put a royal diadem studded with fine jewels on your head so that whoever sees you will single you out as the most splendid of all warriors and know that you are of royal blood. Make your way to Rostam's palace but do so at a leisurely pace. Greet him from me and flatter him with eloquent words."

Esfandiyar continued and said, "Bahman you will say the following: "No one with any sense ignores a King's commands. A man must be grateful before God, who knows eternally what is good. If a man augments what is good and holds his heart back from evil, God will fulfill his desires, and he will live happily in this fleeting world. If he abstains from evil he will find paradise in the other world; a wise man knows that in the end his bed will be the earth, and his soul will fly up toward God. One who can distinguish between the good and evil of the world will be loyal to his king. You've lived for many years and seen many kings come and go in the world. If you follow the way of wisdom, then you know that it was not right for someone who has received so much in the way of wealth and glory from my family to have refused to visit Lohrasp's court. When he passed on sovereignty over the land of Iran to his son, Goshtasp, you paid no attention. You wrote no congratulatory letter to him, you ignored the duties of a subject, you didn't travel to his court to pay homage; you call no one King. There never was such a king as Goshtasp, not for fighting, feasting or hunting. He has adopted the pure faith, and injustice and error have hidden themselves away; the way of God shines out like the sun, and the way of demons is destroyed. King Goshtasp is offended by your behavior. Goshtasp has said to me that Rostam is so wealthy that he gives no thoughts to us."

I have come from Iran to put you in chains and take you to his court. If you will go along with this and give up your contemptuous way, I swear that I will make the King take back his words, and that your glory will shine with splendor once again. My father is my King, and I am his subject; I can never refuse his orders. Your whole clan—Zavareh, Faramarz, Zal and all the rest should hear my words and take my advice. When I take you bound before the King and then go over your faults with him, I'll



calm his anger and make him forget all thoughts of vengeance. I'm a prince and I give you my word that I will not let even the wind touch you.

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, the students can work on the activity listed below.

Activity for Students:

After reading, students will answer comprehension questions about the story created by the teacher. 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.

Possible discussion questions:

- What would make the King send his son to his death?
- Esfandiyar knows that this trip will cost him his life, why does he obey his father? Why won't he listen to his mother and wait until the King passes away to sit on the throne?
- Why does Esfandiyar ask Bahman to wear such lavish and expensive clothing before visiting Rostam?
- What do you think Rostam will do after hearing Esfandiyar's message?

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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