



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): 5

Subject of the Lesson: Rostam and Sohrab- Part 2

Background Knowledge for the Teacher:

Review the last sections from Lesson #4 before continuing: Sohrab goes to Iran, King Kae Kaus (Kae Kavus) sends for Rostam, King Kae Kaus insults Rostam, and Rostam's scathing reply.

The reconciliation:

King Kae Kaus once again realized his folly. He agreed with Gudarz and sent an apology to Rostam. Some of the paladins along with Gudarz carried the king's message to Rostam and asked him to forgive the king, who, though ill-tempered, was good at heart and had a noble disposition. Rostam was also told that by leaving Iran he was not punishing the king, but the entire nation, as it will be the people who would have to bear the brunt of the attack of the Turanian. Rostam, however, was very firm. He maintained that he was not a servant of the king, and the king had no business to treat him so rudely.

When Rostam was not convinced, Gudarz tried another stratagem to convince him. He tried to appeal to the vanity of Rostam by telling him that the king, soldiers and people of Iran were thinking that he had left Iran because he is afraid to face the young paladin of Turkistan. All the soldiers and paladins think that if the great Rostam is not ready to face this young paladin, they stand no chance before him, and so all are deciding to desert the war and flee. This argument touched a chord in Rostam's heart and after some further persuasion he agreed to return to Iran.

As soon as King Kae Kaus received the message that Rostam had agreed to come back to Iran, he was jubilant. He made elaborate preparations to receive Rostam, and when he finally arrived, the king greeted him with profuse apologies. He asked forgiveness for his rudeness and blamed his natural disposition for his uncouth behavior and fits of anger. Thereafter both the king and Rostam accepted each other's respective superior positions, and the king declared a feast to commemorate the reconciliation.

March towards the fort of Sapid:

Immediately the following day, the Iranian soldiers along with Rostam and other paladins marched towards the fort of Sapid which Sohrab had captured and where the Turanian army was stationed.



When Houman, the Turanian commander, and Sohrab saw from the fort that the Iranian army was approaching, Houman was distressed and tense, but Sohrab was confident of himself and his ability to fight against any warrior. He was also excited about the prospect of meeting his father, Rostam.

Death of Zindeh-razam :

The Iranian army was stationed some distance away from the fort of Sapid. At dusk, Rostam decided to go to the fort in disguise to take stock of the situation in the enemy camp and get any information possible. He hid in a dark corner and spotted Sohrab sitting calmly discussing the stratagems of war. He was flanked on one side by the Turanian commanders Barman and Houman and on the other side was his maternal uncle Zindeh-razam, who was the prince of Samangan. He was specially sent by Tehmina, the mother of Sohrab, to identify Rostam and facilitate the meeting between the father and the son.

Zindeh-razam saw some movement in the distant corner where Rostam was hiding so he went to investigate. Rostam was not able to identify Zindeh-razam in the darkness. Zindeh-razam too saw the silhouette of Rostam but failed to identify him, and tried to raise an alarm. Rostam immediately silenced him and dealt a powerful blow to his neck, rendering him lifeless. Thus, the only link was gone who could identify the father with the son.

When Sohrab realized that Zindeh-razam had not returned for a long time, he sent an attendant, who returned with the tragic news of the death of Zindeh-razam. Sohrab was grieved at this loss and immediately realized that an intruder had entered the palace. He told his men to prepare for the war and decided to launch an attack the following day.

Rostam returned to his camp and gave the news of war preparations in the enemy camp to King Kae Kaus. He even described the grandeur of Sohrab to the king and other Iranian paladins and asked them to be prepared to face an attack any time from the Turanian.

Sohrab takes stock:

The following day, Sohrab mounted his black horse and climbed to a strategic point from where he could take stock of the Iranian army. He called Hazir, the commander of the fort of Sapid whom he had imprisoned and asked him to identify the different tents with the hope that he could get some clue to the identity of Rostam. Hazir properly identified the tents of all other paladins, but when he came to the tent of Rostam, he lied that the tent was that of a newly recruited warrior from China. Hazir's intention was to protect Rostam – the greatest asset of the Iranian army, from any unsuspecting attack by the enemies. Sohrab was dejected that he could not get any information about Rostam.

Thereafter, Sohrab sped off alone towards the Iranian camp and went straight to King Kae Kaus's tent where he challenged the king to send any of his warriors to fight him. King Kae Kaus was terrified by the gigantic looks of Sohrab and immediately sent Toos to summon Rostam to take on this great warrior. On receiving the urgent message in his tent, Rostam immediately prepared himself and set off for the battlefield.



Lesson for students:

The teacher will use the information in the “Background Knowledge for the Teacher” section to go over the story. The complete story and activity will probably take multiple classes to complete. After reading the story to the students, the students can work on the activity listed below.

Activity for Students:

After reading, students should 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. Students will also begin to create and perform a play about the story of Rostam and Sohrab.

Sample discussion questions:

- How do you think the story will play out now that the only link that can identify the father to the son is dead?
- Why did Rostam enter the enemy camp in disguise? What was he hoping to gain?

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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