



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): Lesson 5

Subject of the Lesson: Zal and Rudabeh Meet

Background Knowledge for the Teacher:

Rudabeh's five servants promised to help Rudabeh to meet with Zal. The girls went along the brink of the river picking flowers where they came to a spot where Zal had set up his camp. Zal saw the girls and asked them where they came from. They told Zal about Rudabeh, King Mehrab's daughter. They told Zal about her inner and outer beauties and how Rudabeh wished to see him. Zal instantly fell in love with the descriptions. Zal told the girls to tell Rudabeh secretly to meet Zal at her own palace. Zal found out that Rudabeh lived at the top of a tower. Rudabeh let down her long black hair so Zal could climb up to her room. Zal didn't wish to hurt her, so he used a rope instead. They promised each other their love and hearts. Zal was worried because Rudabeh was a descendant of King Zahhak. He knew that King Manuchehr, King of Iran, and his father Sam would oppose this wedding.

Zal decided to write a letter to his father, Sam, and ask for his support. When Sam read Zal's letter, he didn't know what to do. Sam remembered that he promised Zal and Simorgh at Alborz Mountain that he would grant Zal's wishes no matter how big it was. He gave Zal his blessing for the wedding and promised him to write a letter to King Manuchehr.

When King Manuchehr read Sam's letter that Zal and Rudabeh, Mehrab Kaboli's daughter, a descendant of Zahhak wanted to get married; he was furious. He asked the Mobeds and astronomers what they foresee of this union would be. After studying the stars, they gladly told King Manuchehr that a son shall be born to Zal and Rudabeh, a hero full of power and glory and there shall not be his like in Iran.

Lesson for students:

Teachers should begin the lesson by asking students what they remember about the previous story. If students do not remember anything, review some key points about it. The teacher will use the information in the "Background Knowledge for the Teacher" section to go over the next story in the Shahnameh. After reading the rest of the story to the students, the students can work on the activity listed below.



Activity for Students:

1. After reading the story, the students will imagine that they are Zal in the story and write their own version of Zal's letter to Sam asking for his support to marry Rudabeh.
2. Watch the shadow play "Feathers of Fire" from Kingorama with your students.

<https://vimeo.com/ondemand/feathersoffire>

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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