



## 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):** 6

**Subject of the Lesson:** Rostam Greets Esfandiar and Zal Gives Advice

### Background Knowledge for the Teacher:

When Bahman reached Esfandiyar's camp, he told Esfandiyar everything that Rostam told him. The next day Rostam came to visit Esfandiyar. Rostam said: "I have asked God continually to guide you here as you have now come, in good health and accompanied by your army. Let us discuss things with wisdom, courteously and kindly. I will not try to snatch any advantage from our conversation, nor will I lie to you. Happy is the king who has a son like you; happy are the people of Iran who see your throne and your good fortune and woe to whoever fights against you."

Esfandiyar embraced Rostam and greeted him warmly and respectfully. Rostam asked Esfandiyar to delight his soul by coming to his house. Esfandiyar thanked Rostam and said: "It would be wrong to ignore your wishes, but I cannot turn aside from the king's orders. You should quickly do what the king has ordered; place the fetters on your own feet, because a king's fetters are no cause for shame. When I take you before him, bound like this, all the guilt will rebound on him. I would rather serve you; I won't let you stay in chains beyond nightfall, and I won't let the least harm come to you. Believe me the king will not injure you, and when I place the crown on my own head, I will give the world into your safekeeping."

Rostam said: "We are two noble warriors, one old, one young, both wise and alert but I fear that ambition for a crown and glory has perverted your soul. I'll agree to anything you wish except to be chained: chains will bring shame, the ruin of my greatness and ugly aftermath. No one will ever see me in chains alive; my mind made up and there's nothing more to be said."

When Zal heard from Rostam what had happened, his aged mind was troubled. He said, "What are you telling me? You're filling my mind with darkness. Since first you sat in the saddle you've been a righteous warrior, proud to serve your kings and contemptuous of hardships. But I fear your days are drawing to an end and your lucky stars are in decline."

The seed of Zal will be eradicated from this land, and our women and children hurled to the ground as slaves. If you're killed in combat by a young man like Esfandiyar, Zabolestan will be laid waste, and all our glory will be razed and cast into a pit. And if he's hurt in this encounter, your good name will be destroyed: everyone will tell the tale of how you killed a young prince because of what he'd said. Go to him, stand before him as his subject and if you can't do that then leave, go and hide yourself in some corner where no one will hear of you".



Rostam replied: “Old man, don’t take what I have said so lightly. I have fought for years and have experienced the world’s good and evil. I encountered the demons of Mazandaran. I fought against Kamus and the Emperor of China whose armies were so mighty the earth trembled beneath their horses' hooves. But if I now flee from Esfandyar, there will be no castles or gardens for you in Zabolestan. I may be old, but when I put on my tiger skin for battle it makes no difference whether I face a hundred maddened elephants or a plain filled with warriors. I've done all that you’re asking me to, I read the book of loyalty to him; he treats my words with contempt and ignores my wisdom and advice. If he could bring his head down from the heavens and welcome me in his heart, there's no wealth in my treasury, no weapon or armor, that I wouldn't give him. But he took no notice of all my talk and left me empty handed.”

Zal said, “I have given you my advice, and may you follow it.” They both prayed throughout the night.

#### **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 write down their predictions for what they believe will happen next in the story. 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 do you think Rostam should do?
- Esfandyar realizes his father’s request is unjust. What do you think will happen if Esfandyar doesn’t follow the King’s orders?
- If you were Bahman what would your advice to Esfandyar be?

#### **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)

**Background Knowledge for Teacher Prepared by:** Mahnaz Behmardian

**Lesson and Activity for Students Prepared by:** Tanaz Karai

**Edited by:** Tanaz Karai

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