



## 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 and Sohrab-Part 3

### **Background Knowledge for the Teacher:**

Review the last sections from Lesson #4 and 5 before continuing: Sohrab goes to Iran, King Kae Kaus (Kae Kavus) sends for Rostam, King Kae Kaus insults Rostam, Rostam's scathing reply, The Reconciliation, March towards the Fort of Sapid, Death of Zindeh-Razam, and Sohrab takes stock.

### ***Sohrab meets Rostam:***

Both the great warriors -Sohrab and Rostam – came face to face with each other and decided to go to a secluded place for a duel. While on the way, Sohrab felt affection towards Rostam and asked him whether he was Rostam. To put him off guard Rostam replied that he was a very small warrior in comparison to the great Rostam.

The two great warriors went to a secluded place and started their duel, first with spears and swords, and then with mace and bow-arrows. The duels between the two were so fierce that their weapons got worn out and their horses became tired, but none proved superior to the other. Finally, at dusk they stopped the duel for the day and decided to meet again the next day for a weaponless duel.

Rostam had never faced such stiff competition ever before. He was feeling frail and weak. He was dejected to such an extent that he even sent a message to King Kae Kaus not to continue the war in event of his death, because no one in Iran would be able to match the strength of Sohrab.

On the other hand, Sohrab was feeling guilty for the duel firstly because of the age difference and secondly because he was feeling a strange attachment towards Rostam. He dreaded the possibility that he may actually be fighting against his own father.

### ***Rostam deceives Sohrab:***

The following day Sohrab and Rostam met again. Sohrab once again appealed to Rostam to reveal his identity as he was feeling a great affection towards him, but Rostam misunderstood his tender sentiments as a young warrior's ploy to outsmart him and did not reveal his true identity. He challenged Sohrab to a duel in which he felt powerless.

Within no time Sohrab flung Rostam to the ground and sat on his chest. As he was about to pierce his heart with a dagger, Rostam played a trick on him. He stopped Sohrab saying that it was against Iranian rules of war to strike the opponent the first time he is flung to the ground. Sohrab took



this to be true, and partly due to his bravery and partly due to his large-heartedness, let Rostam go. It was only when Sohrab returned to his camp and narrated the incident to Houman that he came to know that he was deceived.

On the other hand, Rostam was shaken by the events of the day. He prayed to God and asked back for the strength, which he had voluntarily surrendered when his feet had started sinking in the ground due to the weight of his body. He got back his strength and reinvigorated met Sohrab the next day in a hand-to-hand combat.

### ***The last duel:***

With renewed strength Rostam started fighting Sohrab, and soon got an upper hand over him. At the first opportunity he toppled Sohrab on the ground and before the winking of an eye thrust a dagger in his heart. This took the young warrior by surprise, as he had expected a reprieve for the first time. He cried foul against Rostam and lamented that now he would have to end his life without being able to see the face of his beloved father, to find whom he had undertaken this campaign. He, however, warned Rostam saying that he had killed him by treacherous means, and when his father Rostam would find this out he would seek him out from anywhere in the world and take revenge.

Rostam was shocked to hear this. He asked Sohrab about any evidence that he was Rostam's son and Sohrab ripped open his armor and showed him the gemstone, which was tied to his arm. This was the same gemstone which Rostam had given to his wife Tehmina and instructed her to give it to their child for identification. When Rostam saw the gemstone, he took the head of his son in his lap and screamed in agony. He was inconsolable when he realized that he himself had brought about the death of his son.

When Rostam did not return to the Iranian camp by evening, the other paladins became worried and went searching for him. On seeing Rostam's horse standing alone in a corner, they jumped to the hasty conclusion that he might have been killed in the duel by Sohrab and immediately rushed to King Kae Kaus to give him the news. King Kae Kaus immediately sent a messenger to the Turanian camp to ascertain the fate of Rostam.

However, it was Sohrab who was breathing his last. The young warrior was, however, happy and content that he had finally found his father. He made a final request to Rostam to spare the Turkish and Turanian soldiers as now without him they would be rudderless and will not be able to fight the mighty Iranian warriors.

Rostam immediately set off to fulfill his son's last wish. When the Iranian camp saw Rostam, they heaved a sigh of relief but were worried to see him in such a disheveled state with clothes torn and eyes red with tears. Rostam narrated the unfortunate incident of his having stabbed his own son with his own hands. The entire Iranian camp was shocked at hearing this news. Rostam sent his brother Zavareh to Houman, the Turanian commander, to relay to him the tragic news. Houman, who had nurtured Sohrab in the arts of warfare, was also stunned by this news. He put the blame of the whole tragedy on Hazir who had knowingly concealed the identity of Rostam from Sohrab.

Zavareh returned to the Iranian camp and informed Rostam that Hazir was the culprit behind this tragedy. Mad with rage, Rostam rushed to even scores with Hazir. He was about to kill him when other warriors intervened and pacified Rostam to spare Hazir as whatever he had done, was with good



intentions. Rostam let off Hazir and immediately sped off along with Toos, Gudarz and Gastaham towards his wounded son.

### **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.

The following are some possible discussion questions:

- Why do you think Rostam did not suspect Sohrab being his son?
  - Sohrab resembled Rostam and other male family members
  - Sohrab tried many times to find out if his opponent was Rostam.
- Why did Sohrab feel affection toward Rostam, but Rostam did not feel the same affection toward Sohrab?
- How would you re-write the story to change the outcome?
- What is the moral 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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