READING SHĀHNĀMEH
IN THE CONTEXT OF MESSIANIC EXPECTATION

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ABSTRACT

The Shāhnāmeh (the Book of Kings) is the most famous work in the Persian literature. It has been a bridge between the ancient and the post-Islamic culture in Iran. It has also had a great impact on the Persian culture and literature since the book was written. It furthermore, is the last major utterance in a series of attempts made by several authors to recreate the Iranian narrative under the new religion of Islam, which had become a dominant factor in the Iranian society. By the time Ferdowsi was writing the Shāhnāmeh, the culture had compromised upon several issues between Islam and ancient Iranian beliefs. The syncretism of two cultures happened in a discoursive narrative that strongly wanted to see the past as the model in order to shape the future. This discourse, which could be called the messianic expectation, had not only shaped several revolts and social movements prior to Ferdowsi’s time, but it has also formed the Persian literature and thought in its main basis. The Shāhnāmeh is created in this environment and because of its function among all groups of people; it is placed in the heart of a movement, which is politically and literarily called the "Sho'ubeih Movement." This thesis brings to bear the Shāhnāmeh in this context. The first chapter comparatively deals with the discourse in its three major branches, which are ancient Zoroastrianism, the mainstream Islam sect, Sunni, and finally the syncritic Shi'ite. To show the influences of both Zoroastrianism and Shi’ism in the Shāhnāmeh, the effects of Zoroastrian basis on the concept of space, time and cause are examined in the next two chapters. In the following chapters, the syntax of the main stories, from the point of seasonal myth, has been examined. It is in this context that the main topoi and archetypes are being singled out.
Dedicated to my mother and my wife
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Near the opening of the Shāhnāmeh Ferdowsi says:

"Do not consider this (the poem) as a lie or fiction,
Do not see it as a deceit or false justification.
Take whatever is acceptable to reason,
The rest interpret as symbols and meaningful statements."

There is a problem here that raises a major question: why does Ferdowsi have to explain this to his reader, and why does he have to draw a line between real and unreal?

The problem goes back to the separation of Iranian mythology from its religions backgrounds. These myths were understandable to Mazdeans of the per-Islamic era, because they used to live under a regime of truth that was contextualized by the Zoroastrianism. Thus myths as the symbolic accounts of the structured system can be read and interpreted easily. In the advent of Islam, because of the separation between the mythical and the religious sources we see a culture in which a desacralized religious

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universe and demythicized mythology are formed under a different religion named Islam. In this culture, that is similar to the Greek, ancient myths and history become cultic materials – which are one step away from literary and artistic topoi – rather than religious beliefs. The *Shāhnāmeh* from this point of view is closer to Greek literary works than its primary source the *Avestā*. As we know, “not a single Greek myth has come to us in its cult context” and we know them “as literary and artistic ‘documents,’ not as sources, or expressions, of a religious experience bound up with a rite.”¹ Iranian myths have also survived in this way, though in a way they are culturally more cultic than the Greek, because the critical parts of them, such as the apocalyptic myth, have become part of the Islamic sects such as Shi’ite and Isma’ili. And by the same token they mostly survived in an Islamized form in the traditions of the various rural populations. In the *Shāhnāmeh*’s case specifically, myths are less cultic and more literary and artistic in nature, because its author, for several reasons (especially not using deliberately Islamic forms and concepts) did not treat them as religious materials. Moreover people of his time did not see the myths in their original context. Had they seen them in that way, sources such as the *Xodāināmāg(s)* – that were probabl kinds of religious narrative – would survive. People of Ferdowsi’s time saw the ancient myths out of context, and therefore they had no complete significant system to understand or interpret them from the origin source’s point of view or see them as part of their reality. Deev as an existing being, then, was not part

of their cosmology, instead, Satan and “jinn” had become part of their religious reality. As a result Ferdowsi had to advise them here and there to “see Deevs as the bad people.”\footnote{Davis, Dick, personal communication.}

In this respect the *Shāhnāmeh* is an epic like the Iliad; nonetheless there are differences between the two works. Homer’s work represents the triumph of the literary work over religious belief. Ferdowsi’s work, however, represents an attempt to praise the past in order to put things in the right path, on the one hand, and to predict the future in a literary form on the other hand. Furthermore, the Iliad as the last version of the myth, separated from its religious source, is shaped in an epic genre. *Shāhnāmeh* too is an epic work separated from its religious source; however it is just a version of the myths rather than the last or the “only” one. It, indeed, has occurred in a living mythological atmosphere, and is embodied in a living language that is still spoken. Because of that the mythological stories of the *Shāhnāmeh*, as Dick Davis points out, have not been frozen in time and language.\footnote{For more information on “the epic era” in Persian literature see *Hamāsehsarāi dar Iran* by Z. Safā.} They have been alive and changed throughout history.

The poem (written in 10\textsuperscript{th} century) was composed by Ferdowsi in a remarkable era of Persian history. It was around this time that Persian epics, among the historical and literary genres, flourished\footnote{Tur Anv. R. 1363, p. 109, col. B. 35}. The *Shāhnāmeh*, in comparison to other epics, has had a unique position and function in Persian literature as well as in the Iranians’ world view in so far as it is influenced by the historicized mythology of Zoroastrianism. On the one hand, it is generally believed that the *Shāhnāmeh* came after a series of mainly prose *Shāhnāmehs*, which were compiled or written by different authors with various beliefs and interests; and on the other hand, it was a major influence on all epics and romances...
written since then. As has been mentioned by many scholars, the work has been more popular than any similar text, among both scholars and Iranians from various backgrounds, for centuries.\(^1\) It has fascinated Zoroastrians on the one hand, and Shiites, Sufis, and Isma‘ilis on the other. The *Shāhnāmeh*’s importance to Iranians of various beliefs and ethnic backgrounds raises a significant question, viz: what kind of qualities or characteristic elements does the *Shāhnāmeh* have that make it so compelling compared to other such works? For years almost everybody lived in the Iranian cultural hemisphere believed that it was Ferdowsi’s language and literary techniques that made it so unique. It is undoubtedly his techniques that put the work above the other epics; however, there seems to be something more than that in the *Shāhnāmeh* that gives it a more emblematic significance than other texts that are apparently of a similar nature.

As we know, there are several epic works such as the *Garshāspnāmeh*, *Bourzounāmeh*, and *Bahmannāmeh* that have similar qualities in terms of language and literary skills and even themes and motifs; however, they have not become popular at all, or historically significant. At the same time we see works such as *Dārābnāmeh*, *Eskandarnāmeh* and *Abu-Muslemnāmeh* that have been popular at least for a period of time\(^2\), despite the fact that these works, as we know, display neither outstanding literary or linguistic skill. Why is that?

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\(^1\) Edward Browne is one scholar who has a negative opinion of the Ferdowsi’s work. He believes it is a simple boring story filled with repetitions. See: *A literary history of Persia*, by Edward G. Browne, Cambridge [Eng.] The University press, 1951-1953, pp. 206-209.

\(^2\) There are some evidences that show the story of *Abu-Muslemnāmeh* used to be narrated in many tea houses in Iran and Afghanistan even in the last century. There is a section of the story in the Margaret Mills’s taped unpublished collection from Herat. Also see Kathryn Babayan’s *The Waning of the Qizilbash: The Temporal and the Spiritual in Seventeenth-Century Iran*, dissertation on Safavid history.
The answer to this question would be, one could say, that all of these texts – even *Bourzounāmeh* – in fact, have been contextually fashioned according to a grand narrative in which the combat between Good and Evil, the destiny of the world and man, and expectation of the just king or messiah were the major themes and motifs; whereas the works such as the *Garshāspnāmeh* use the same motifs and techniques aimlessly and without creating any path to the great expectations of the readers for a hopeful end.¹ It seems that the grand narrative at that epoch functioned as a discourse presenting the foremost questions to be addressed if a compromise between Iranian beliefs and ideas and their Semitic counterparts was to be effected. Furthermore, it seems that the grand narrative, as a paradigm or ‘regime of truth,’ in Foucault’s term², neither had come out of vacuity nor vanished in the next century or so, and that is why the works of the first group were produced one after another in the first place and had also a discursive function for their readers later. To find the reasons behind this phenomenon, it is vital for us to portray the grand narrative according to, at least, two aspects: the Zoroastrians’ perspectives, which played the major role in Iranian cosmology for two millennia; and the Muslems’ perspectives which became an opponent, in many respects, to the ancient Iranian religions. Then it is necessary to examine the themes and motifs that not only worked as the discursive devices and created the most crucial questions that society

¹ There is a difference between the literary works such as the *Shāhnāmeh* and the folk-adventure works such as the *Samak ‘Aliyār*. The first group of works nostalgically celebrates the pre-Islamic Iranian world in order to show the real path and road to future, thus the heroes of these are mostly knights and nobles. Whereas the second group, have influenced by the post-Islamic situations and visions, praises the city heroes that fight for a just legitimate king despite the unjust one that is in power. For more information on this see: Mehrdād Bahār, *Jostārī Chand dar Farhan-e Iran*, pp. 75-128.

needed to find answers for, but also worked as meaningful words (signifiers) to make meaningful sentences out of the Persian epic narrative. Drawing the outlines of the most crucial motifs in the Shāhnāmeh and their places in this grand narrative will be the ultimate goal of this project. For doing so, in the first chapter, a general picture of the ancient and new religious ideas in Iran will be drawn in order to show the broad spectrum of the whole mentioned grand discourse. How Ferdowsi deals with this discourse and uses the conceptual devices will be the last part of this chapter.

Then, in the second chapter, and in the light of the previous chapters, the plot and the temporal duration of the Shāhnāmeh, in general, will be outlined in order to show their similarities to Zoroastrian traditions of seasonal myth. The third chapter will examine the literary units, the motifs and topoi, of the Shāhnāmeh that function in both the grand narrative and in the other epics which were created under this discourse. Here the Shāhnāmeh will be compared to historical and literary texts in order to single out the motifs, topoi, and the choronotopes that have shaped Iranian epics in general, and the Shāhnāmeh in particular. It is through this procedure that we will be able to bring the other dimension of the Shāhnāmeh into the picture and show how the poem has treated the major elements of Iranian religious ideas. The last chapter, which is the second part of the thesis, deals with the age of Kay-Khosrow by reactualizing the grand narrative in the light of rites in order to show their units and devices in the narrative syntax.
To deal with the *Shāhnāmeh* methodologically we needed to use both reductionism and structuralism as Levi-Strauss describes:

Science has only two ways of proceeding: it is either reductionist or structuralist. It is reductionist when it is possible to find out that very complex phenomena on one level can be reduced to simpler phenomena on other levels.... And when we are confronted with phenomena too complex to be reduced to phenomena of a lower order, then we can only approach them by looking to their relationships, that is, by trying to understand what kind of original system they make up. This is exactly what we have been trying to do in linguistics, in anthropology, and in different fields.\(^1\)

In the first part, in which we are going to deal with the complex myths and ideology behind the poem, our approach will be structural. In this case comparing the systems among the ancient Iranian, Islamic and Irano-Islamic cosmology and ideology would be the best method. In the second part, however, in which we are going to deal with schemata, motifs and topoi of the *Shāhnāmeh*, the reductionist method would be handy, because we deal with the archetypal models in comparison with the ones articulated by Ferdowsi. Reducing the characteristic elements of the stories' units into the simpler models helps us here to make a simple model for the discourse that Ferdowsi had to deal with. It also helps us to speculate as to the untold end of the work

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CHAPTER 2

READING SHĀHNĀMEH IN THE CONTEXT OF MESSIANIC EXPECTATION

After the advent of Islam, especially in the early centuries, Iran was an arena not just for war over political power, but also war over religious, philosophical, and ethical ideas as well as over the country’s social structure. In these battles Iranians divided into three groups: those who tried to maintain their pre-Islamic traditions; those who left their heritage behind and became, if we may say, orthodox Muslims; and finally those who searched for a compromise between these two religions.

The first group, who were largely Zoroastrians, saw Arabs as demonic invaders who came to destroy the great empire of Good. Following this argument, in the first century or so of Islam, they tried to take back their country. There were several revolts in the next centuries. The revolts of Bābak Khoramdin and Māziyār were the most important ones, though historians have reported minor and local revolts as well. These revolts, two centuries later, were replaced by literary efforts, in which Zoroastrian scholars, on the one hand, by rewriting their religious texts in Pahlavi tried to preserve
their religious notions and traditions;¹ and on the other hand, by opening the debating channels between themselves and the Muslim scholars tried to defeat the devilish religion in this per se discursive battle field.²

Close examination of these texts teaches us that Zoroastrianism, as an ethnic religion reserving goodwill solely for its people, had a major crisis in its belief system, and that this played a great role in its effectively defeat by the Islamic religion.

This crisis, which had started by the time of Sāsānids, became one of the important causes that brought the Sāsānids Empire to its knees when the Arab conquerors came in the 7th century. Furthermore in the post-Islamic society of Iran the crisis apparently became a basic cause for many to convert to the new conquering religion. This crisis has been considered by scholars such as van Vloten in his book about the Abbasid revolution³, Corbin in his comparison of Zoroastrianism and Shi’ism,⁴ and the Iranian anthropologist, Mehrdād Bahār, who has drawn attention to the messianic expectations as one of the major causes in the Zoroastrian cosmologic crisis,⁵ in the light of the Zoroastrians’ expectation of the messiah predicted by Zoroaster. This crisis could

¹ Most of the Zoroastrian texts that survive were written in of the post-Islamic era.
² Ulama-e Islam”, which was written in Persian in the late 12th century is the most important text in this respect. ‘Ulama-e Islam, From B. N. Dhabhar, Persian Rivayats (Bombay 1932), P. 437 ff. ‘Ulam-e Islam originally is a part of Fahlavi Revayats, but the Persian edition of this book does not have Ulam-e Islam, maybe because of the censorship.
³ Humphreys, R. Stephen. Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry, (Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1991), P. 117. Humphreys says: “Van Vloten’s account is more nuanced than is often supposed. For example he does not posit a crude radical interpretation of the revolt in Khurasan, but a socio-political one: it was less a question of Persians against Arabs than of oppressed subjects (mostly Iranian) against a ruling class (mostly Arab). Likewise, although he stresses the movement’s use of messianic themes and symbols and links these to a specifically ‘non-Arab’ extremist Shi’ism, he recognizes that the Abbasids also had to appeal to the moderate and sober Shi’ism of Khurasan, which looked to the House of the Prophet not for a savior but simply for a just ruler”.
⁴ Corbin, Henri. 1960, Terre celeste et corps de resurrection de l’Iran masdeen a l’Iran Shi’ite (La Barque du Soleil), Paris (Persian translation).
Also from the same author: Az Ostoreh tā Tārīkh, Agah Publication 1987, chapter 8.
begin from the fourth century because, according to the Zoroastrian cosmic system, it was around this time that Zoroaster’s millennium was expected to end and Hoshidar’s millennium to begin. The uprising of Mazdak, a “fake messiah (prophet),” could be studied under this premise, as could the acceptance of Prophet Muhammad by Iranians such as Khājeh Nizām ul-Mulk.\(^1\) However, as history and historicized myths tell, the expectation did not end with the appearance of Muhammad, not simply among Zoroastrians and other Iranian religions, but also among the Islamic sects such as Shi’ism, Isma’ilism, and so forth which, according to the Siyāsatnāmeh were “half of the population of the Kohestān and ‘Iraq.”\(^2\) It seems clear therefore that the messianic expectation lasted for several centuries after the advent of Islam. The echo of the messianic notion, indeed, is not just in the Pahlavi texts, but also all over the Arabic and Persian sources, negatively, as is in the Siyāsatnāmeh, or positively as is in Hamza’s and Ferdowsi’s works in early centuries or Noqtaviāns in the Safavid time.

The second group, whose vast majority was mainstream Muslims, believed Muhammad was the man whose coming all religions, both Persian and Semitic, had foretold. Some writers who articulated this opinion in their works, mostly those who worked for the government, were statesmen such as Nizām ul-Mulk. Unfortunately, we cannot find any particular event in their works or document that shows a direct link between the issue of the messianic crisis and historical events such as Muslem or non-Muslem revolts. In addition we cannot find any text that would markedly claim that the

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\(^1\) see: Nizām al-Mulk, Siyār al-Malīk (Siyāsatnāmeh), edited by Hobert Dark, ‘Entesharat-e ‘Elmi va Farhangi, Tehran 1372.

\(^2\) Ibid, p. 279. By Iraq he means both Irao Ajam and Iraq Arab.
issue was the major cause or even a cause in the early revolts against Islam or the reason for conversion. Nevertheless there are some signs and passages that could be evidence for the links between these events and the problem of a messianic crisis. For instance Nizām ul-Mulk has devoted several chapters of his book, *Siyāsatnāmeh*, to the fake messengers (khavarej-yan) from ʿAjam (Iran). He does it because, apparently, there was such a problem on the hands of officials. He says they were the Gabri(s) (either Zoroastrian or Dahri), Rāfezis, or Khoramdins who were fifty percent of the population of the west part of Iran. Destroying Islam, he goes on, by their “bad” religions (bad mazhab) was their main goal; needless to say by Islam he meant the mainstream Sunni sect whose followers were the majority in most Islamic lands. He also points out there were some Khavarej(s) from Shām (Syria), Yemen, and Andalusia who tried to bring new religions as well. He only details, however, histories and anecdotes concerning those who appeared in ʿAjam. The first person he talked about is Mazdak whose advent was several decades before Muhammad’s; then, he recalls Sinbād’s story of rising to avenge the murderer of Abu-Muslim (we should not forget that the author did not consider Abu-Muslim as one of these messengers, though he claimed that Sinbād had told his followers of Abu-Muslim’s soul flying like a white dove out of his body right before Mansour Davāneqi killed him; and hence this soil shared a castle with Mazdak and

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1 The word Khavarej here means people who were out the Islam (not Muslim or became un-Muslim).
2 The word ‘dahri’ means time in Arabic and could be a term for Zūrnā in post-Islamic society of Iran. Dehkhodā in his dictionary under the word dahri says: a person who denies Divinity and believes that dahr (zamān) is agential source.
3 See footnote 2, page 10.
Mahdi).\(^1\) In chapter forty-six he tells of the advent of Bāteniyān and Ghermatiyyān; he follows this with the story of Khoramdinān.

To describe his point of view on this matter I would like to take a closer look at a passage from the story of Mazdak. After the conversion of king Qobād to Mazdakism, Anoosheh Ravān, his son, invites a mobad from Pars in order to show his father that Mazdak’s proclamation is totally a charade and that he is not the true messenger. When the Mobad meets the king he tells him that “he (Mazdak) knows a little bit of astronomy, but he has read the horoscope wrongly (which means that as an astronomer, Mazdak was right about the time for appearance of a new messiah, but according to the mobad he had interpreted it wrongly).” He goes on to say that “a man will come out in this millennium (gherān\(^2\)) and will claim that he is God’s messenger”… but he will neither be “from ‘Ajam nor a fire worshiper;” on the contrary “he will be an Arab… and will deny Zoroaster as well as Mazdak.”\(^3\) As we can see, the author, in this passage, tries to prove two things: the fake claim of Mazdak as a messiah; and the truth in the claim of Muhammad as the prophet whose religion will destroy the idols and the fire temples and

\(^1\) Nezām Al-Mulk, ibid, p. 280.

\(^2\) Gerān is generally defined from two points of view. One is the ancient Iranian cosmology under the movement of seven stars in 12000 years – from cosmic spring equinox to the next one in 24000 years – millenium (one thousand years) is one twelfth of it. The other one, which is apparently under the influence of Mesopotamian mythology, is shaped by the movement of Venus in seven thousand years. One millennium in this system is about 1500 years. Khayam (in Norouznāma) believed in this system. Birouni swings between these two systems. Under the first system he believed there were three kinds of gerāns and under the second system he mentioned four gerāns. See;, pp. 207-208, and ka and kb (\(\text{ک} - \text{ک}) preface, Jalāl Homā’i.

According to Biruni there are for gerāns: small gherān, 20 solar years; medium gherān, 240 solar years; and great gherān, 960 solar years, he, however, adds that some people believe that there is a greatest gherān with 2940 solar years (p. \(\text{ک})\). There are some similarities between this system and Zoroastrian system of 3 thousands and one thousand millennia. See: Al-Tajhind, p. \(\text{ک})\.

\(^3\) Nezām Al-Mulk, ibid, p. 265.
will last until the apocalypse\(^1\). In short, this group has replaced their heritage by the Islamic one, and thus their traditions have been completely Islamized.

The third group is a complicated one with a wide range of religious and philosophical notions rooted in ancient and newer traditions and mythological concepts belonging to Mesopotamia, Greece, and India. Most of these religious, philosophical, and mythological ideas and thoughts were vaguely assimilated into the Islamic sects or schools of thoughts in the first two centuries after the advent of Islam, under the Umayyad and early Abbasid dynasties, even though they developed a clear-cut form only in the next four centuries. The processes of syncretism between the old ethnic religions, especially Zoroastrianism, and the new universal religion produced various results. Shi’ism, being a major Islamic sect has had a great deal of influence on other sects from the early years, after the death of the Prophet. Beyond that Shi’ism has also suffered greatly from its own internally incoherent system of thought and mythology. In some areas, such as the apocalypse and resurrection the clash between Iranian materials and Semitic materials is so obvious that the Shi’ite writers loudly proclaim it. These arguments led Shi’ism to a crisis that gave birth to numerous sects and schisms; nonetheless – and this is the foremost point that this thesis are trying to make – these sects and thoughts share the basic mythology, rituals, and ideas, with, of course, some minor differences in their interpretations. In order to demonstrate this we will consider Shi’ism as the mother of the other sects. There are two reasons for this: first, it has drawn

\(^1\) The last part has been adapted by Shi’ite scholars with a little bit of change in the last part. They say Muhammad is the last prophet and there wont be another prophet, however one of his sons will come before the apocalypse and after killing all bad people and creatures will reign for 57 years (this number has borrowed from the Zoroastrian system). See: M ölā Bāqer Majlesi, *Mahdi-e Mow'ed*, vol. 13 of *Bahār al-‘Amvār*, translated into Persian by Ali Davānī, Dār al-Kotob Islami (Tehran 1378), pp. 1066-1139.
together all the four segments of every religion: the concept of Divinity, principles and beliefs, myths, and finally, rituals.¹ And second, its system of cosmology is almost as symmetrical as is the Zoroastrian system’s; in fact it is a replica of the Zoroastrian one. It should be mentioned that not every religion has all four segments. But Iranian religions, either pre-Islamic or post-Islamic ones, evidently have all the features, even though their aims and images are not similar or may differ from each other; their features may even change internally and in the course of history.

The scope of this present work does not allow for an analysis, or even a summary, of the complex ensemble of Iranian cosmology and eschatology, but in order to portray internal changes in Zoroastrianism let us have a close look at the image of god(s) in its system through the centuries. As is implied by late Achaemenian petrography, Iranians considered several gods – or more precisely Ahurā Mazda and six aspects of him² – in their religious system at that time, though Ahurā Mazda was the head of the pantheon.³ For instance, Mithrā who, as the god of war and promise, was being brought back in the gods’ hierarchy system at that time, was not in any way equal to Ahurā Mazda but he had a crucial role in the religious belief.⁴ In fact he is the one who has the power of creation but not in Gāthā. It is in Mithrā (Mihr) Yašt that we could find this function. As

¹ Krappe, Alexandre Haggerty. *Mythologie universelle*, Payot, Paris 1930. Translation into Persian by J. Satā, p. 3. According to Krappe all religions have four segments: Divinity, principles, myths, and rites.
² It is notable that there was not a specific name in Gāthā for God’s aspects at that time. ‘Emshāspand is the name that will appear in later Avestā. See: M. Bahār, *Adyān-e Asiyā‘i* (Asian Religions), Nashr-e Cheshmeh, Tehran 1375 (1994), p.42.
³ Ahreman is an equal brother to him in this era, and just in one passage of Gāthā, the oldest part of Avestā. In this era the triangle of gods is: ‘Ahurā Mazda (head); Sepand-minoo or ‘Asha in-between; and Ahreman in the bottom. Bahār (p. 46).
Dumézil points out, the relationship and position of Ahurā Mazdā with Mitrā is exactly like that of the archetypal couples in Indo-European mythology, especially the oldest one Mithra-Varuna in the Indian system. However we should not forget that he, as far as the sources indicate, was neither considered as an equal god to Ahurā Mazdā nor did he become a member of the ‘Emshāsparōdān (six god-dieties Eyzad(s) following the head of the hierarchy, ‘Ahurā Mazdā). Eventually, according to Pahlavi theological texts as well as other sources, in the Sāsāniān era ‘Ahurā Mazdā became the only god and the rest became more like angels than gods, yet Mitrā was not one of them (that is why the word “Eyzad” signifies imprecisely both god and angel in Zoroastrian literature. This central aspect of Sāsāniān culture and society – its official religion – is clouded by overall ambiguities.

God, as described in theological texts, had a human figure in both the Achaemenian and Sāsāniān epochs, just like Eyzadān in this system and angels in Islamic beliefs. There are a number of texts that could be referred to, but Ardvirāfnāmeh among them is the best, because there are comparative versions of it. The original one, like all Pahlavi texts, was written in the early Islamic period; and the second one, which was a verse translation of the former one into Persian, was composed in 14th century by Bahrām Zartusht Pazhdu, a poet contemporary of Hāfez. We read in Ardvirāfnāmeh that after taking ha’oma and Bang (a product of opium) the soul of Ardāvirāz flies to heaven and

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2 See Dumézil and Bahār on this.
3 The triangle of powers in this era has two versions: Zoroastrian orthodoxy that was like the Achaemenian one; and Zurvānī one in which Zurvān was supreme; and Hormozd and ‘Ahreman in the bottom angles. Bahār (p. 55).
4 He has also written the *Zartushtnāmeh*, which is an important apocalyptic source to this work.
hell to see the conditions of good people and bad people in those places. In this spiritual journey he finally meets 'Ahurā Mazdā (God) in the Gartmān (or Garzmān: the empyrean). As described in this version Ahurā Mazdā has a human figure that could be seen by a mortal, at least a holy one. In chapter eleven we read when Ardāvirāz reached the fourth sphere (Garzmān) he saw 'Eyzadān, and then Vahoman (Bahman), the most important one, greets him:

1) [t]hen Vahoman stood up from his throne. 2) And held my hand with the good thought, good talk, and good behavior and took me to the 'Ormazd, Emshāspandān, and the other holy people (ahlovān). 3) Vahoman said: ‘this is ‘Ormazd’ (Ahourā Mazdā). 4) I wanted to pay homage to him. 5) He (‘Ormazd) said to me: ‘homage to you O Ardāvirāz."

As was mentioned before, a verse translation of this book, into new Persian, was made by the minor poet Zartusht Bahrām Pazhdou (14th century). In this poem the work underwent a number of changes. Ardāvirāz in the sphere of khoursheed pāyeh [not the empyrean], instead of seeing Ahurā Mazdā sees a flashing light that had never been seen before, and the light talked to him through Soroush (Gebre’il (Gabriel) is his Islamic counterpart). The text is a little vague on this matter; the author neither describes God as

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1 There are several people who have had this journey, either in Zoroastrianism or Islam; Tansar is another mobbed who went to heaven. Prophet Muhammad and Abu Yazid Bistāmi (the later one was a Sufi figure in 9th century and only Sufis believe he went to heaven as it is for Māh-e Nakhshab, Isma’ili figure) are the famous ones in Islamic sects who went to mi’rāj (the nocturnal ascension of Muhammad). For Tansar’s story see: Nāmeh-e Tansar (Tansar’s Letter to Goshnasp), edited by M. Minovi and M. E. Rezwani, Enteshārāt-e Khārazmi, second edition, Tehran 1354 (1975). For Abu Yazid Bistāmi’s me’raj see Eliade, M. A History of Religious Ideas, Vol 3, pp. 125-127.

2 Around this time (Sāsānian era) Ezadān and ‘Emshāspandān were mostly considered angels, though in Achaemenian time they were most likely gods or aspects of god.

a human figure nor says that the light was God himself.¹ Light here, as is obvious, shows the Islamic influence on the image of God, for the reason that, according to Islam, God does not have a human image, since he is not material; instead he is described by adjectives or nouns of agency, because he is the source of power, not the power itself, whereas God in Zoroastrian notion is both power and the source of power.² God’s names in Islam are either adjectival or agential and cover all good characteristics that he possesses or the power (agential source) he produces.

We can go on and give another example from the Shāhnāmeh comparing this with the Pahlavi text of Kārnāmak Artakhshir Pāpakān. This part of Shāhnāmeh is obviously a reproduction of the Pahlavi text, but with the minor changes. One of these changes is significant in terms of the conception of Divinity. After overthrowing and killing Ardavān, the last Arsacid king, Ardashir of Pāpakān married his daughter. Then her brothers sent her a letter asking her to kill Ardashir. She made a poisoned drink and gave it to her husband. At this moment Varjāvand Āzar Faranbaq (fire of dabirān³)

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¹ There are two quotes on this matter that show our point clearly:

نورا (اردوریز) بهمین (ایزد) گرفت نست ناگاه
چو یا همه برهم گان چندبی/بدیم پایگاهی
سروش گفت پیش گاه بزدان/نیماری بیم سبک برد بی فرسان (39)

Or ...

چو بهنشم سخن زان خوب پیمان///سروش بر زانجا تا گرومان
بدانجا عاجز و حیران بماند///در آن انوار سرگردان بماند
ز یاقوتست میهنداشتی آ///و یا ماند چرخشید در خشان
بسمتی بیکوت و روشنی آر هور///دو چشم من بزدان خیره زان نور (43)

² As power itself Zoroastrian God’s image is close to the one in Indian religions, also if we see him from the Zurvanite concept, ‘Ahoura is both the power and the source of the power.

³ Apparently it is the fire of the middle class, or administrators. This fire belongs to Sāsāniāns, as the fire of the king belonged to Kyāni dynasty especially Kay-Khosrow and the fire of working people belonged to Lohrāsp dynasty. See: Farahvashi, Bahram. Farhang-e Zaban-e Pahlavi (Pahlavi Dictionary), Tehran University Press 1358, under āzar faranbaq.
appeared like a red rooster and spilled the drink with its wings. Just at this time a cat and a dog lapped at the drink and died. Ardesthir realized that she had poisoned the drink.¹

This story has entered the Shāhnāmeh with a slight difference. The plot, cause, characters, and result are the same, but the role of Divinity is changed. As we saw in the former text, a supernatural metamorphosis happened suddenly and the fire changed into a rooster; here, however, the girl brings it with shaky hands; the king sees this and becomes suspicious and thus throws the glass down, and asks for four hens (instead of a rooster) to taste the drink; then the hens² died. As it is clear, here in the later text the supernatural elements are completely eliminated.³

This is, of course, meaningless, unless we see it in the perspectives of Zoroastrian and Islamic divinities. In Islam, either Sunni or Shi’ite, no one can see God or his Angels. The Prophet is the only one who could see Gabriel. Holy men and saints, according to Shi’ism, Isma’ilism, Sufism, and so forth, could see the angels in their dreams. Hence seeing a Divine person while awake in the Shāhnāmeh could be considered as a non-Islamic sign.

We can summarize the characteristic of Irano-Islamic religious groups, under these four essential fragments, into three categories, as represented in the following table.

² In this line, Ferdowsi just says a hen drinks and dies.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Iranian religions: Mainstream: Zoroastrianism</th>
<th>Semitic religions: Mainstream: Sunni sects</th>
<th>Irano-Semitic religions: Mainstream: Shi’ite (the compromise ideas)</th>
<th>Similarities and dissimilarities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concept of Divinity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In this category, the second and third groups are pretty much the same. Post-Islamic Zoroastrianism, in Iran, has undergone the influence of second and third groups;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In God(s); human figure God; fights with Evil as the counterpart; both power (nature) and source of power; his job: conducts the last battle with evil; devil is also human figure; Ahreman is also human figure with a different goal; he wants to destroy the good creation (man is main creation)</td>
<td>In God; adjectival figure (noun material at all); ultimate power; devil is one of his creations; source of the power (above the world); he has done his job (the creations) and watches men’s behavior; Satan is an angel, so he has a human figure and God’s elements as well; his duty is set by God to astrar people</td>
<td>In God; adjective figure (with the faded elements of human figure); devil is one of his creations; he has already done his job and now rests; Satan is an angel with a mixture of human and divine features; his duty is set by God to lead man astray</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principles: aim of creation; duty of man</strong></td>
<td>God is the ultimate fighter; man is only the auxiliary for him; God’s fight is against devil and his creations, not evil people; his justice is his constant fight with Ahreman; Victory of good over devil is fate; so at the end devil and his devilish forces will be destroyed; Man’s duty on the earth is helping God in his fights against the</td>
<td>God is the ultimate decider; he created the world because he wanted to test man’s desires; his justice (‘Adl) separates good people from evil people (Satan’s task is defined under this formula); God (good) is always victorious, either on the earth or the other world (hell or heaven); this world was created in order</td>
<td>First and second groups are extremely far from each other on the principles. The third group, however, has compromised on the role of God and the task of man. This compromise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God is the ultimate decider; he created the world because he wanted to test man’s desires; his justice (‘Adl) separates good people from evil people (Satan’s task is defined under this formula); God (good) is always victorious, either on the earth or the other world (hell or heaven); this world was created in order</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1 Texts such as Minovi Kherad, Zātspram and Bondahesh describe them as the shiny one (‘Ahrūā) who smells good; and the ugly one (Ahreman) who smells bad. See Zaeher, Part II. Texts.
2 There are numbers of example for this in Persian literature; for instance, hand of God in this expression: God’s hand will be with you (دست خدا به همراهیت).
3 This duty is clearly articulated in Sufism better than Shi’ism.

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**Table 1: comparison between three major religions in Iranian traditions**

19
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 continued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>devil; heaven is his reward if he does so, otherwise he will be punished by going to hell for three cosmic years after that they go to heaven and hell will be disappeared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are two kinds of myth in this section: 1. seasonal myths which deal with the story of creation, world and man; 2. myths of heroes, which deal with the goal of creation and the task of man. So they are going to be dealt with in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| two rows separately. | is created to set an exact time for their battle. Fate kills the devil and his creatures at the end of time in order to destroy his kingdom (the dark world). Second level of creation: creating plants (barsam), animals (cow), and man (Geyomarth) by good in order to empower the creating force and to get help from them in his battle with devil (principle: fate; and duty of man); the creation of evil creatures (hunger, lust, and death) by the devil to limit good [by the force of mortality] in order to destroy the good kingdom. Cosmic year shows this battle with the weather elements. Mythology of creation has three sections: the beginning deals with the story of creation (material world and man) by good, and at the same time the creation of bad creatures by the devil; the middle section shows the ritualistic battles of good and people to hell forever. Therefore, the world has a beginning and end (it is linear time); the cosmic year has the resemblances to the Zoroastrian cosmic year. Man in this world has come to obey his God. Satan is doing what God let him to do. contradiction in their system) as God’s assistant in the battle with the devil (this concept is borrowed from Zoroastrian belief system). There is an ultimate battle between the messiah (God’s representative on earth) and evil’s people (instead of Evil himself in the Zoroastrian system). This is the third contradiction, which is a result of an important compromise between the myths of two first groups. As a result a philosophical argument is raised among these sects over fate and freedom. The Shi'ite formula, which is one of the most crucial principles in this religion, is “no absolute fate, no absolute freedom, but something in between.”

| This compromise is shaped the temporal duration and seasonal plot in the Shāhnāmeh as it is in the most religions in the third group. | |

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1 There are number of stories and poems on this matter in Persian literature; the essence of these works is a critical question of the contradicted elements that God created in the nature man and world. Nāser Khosrow’s qasideh is the most revealing one. see Nāser Khosrow, Deevān-e Nāser Khosrow, edited by M. Minovi and A. A. Dehkhodā, Donyā-i Ketāb, third edition, Tehran 1372 (1993), pp. 364-68.

2 لاچر و لاتوفیتن بیل امر بین امرين
| Myth of hero | Man’s duty is helping Ahurā in His battle against Evil. Fate has already written the result; a ritualistic battle fashioned the epical narrative in a broad sense. | Man’s duty is obeying what God wants; virtue, therefore, forms man’s behavior. | Man’s duty is to obey God; however he is also the one who should help God’s representative (the messiah) on the earth. Man has to follow two paths: obeying God; and fighting with God’s enemies. | Group three, there is a mixed story from both extremes regardless of their beliefs; creation myth from Islam, and myth of the end of the world, and in the heart of the apocalyptic narrative the myth of coming messiah from the first group. The *Shāhnāmeh* shows both sides clearly. On the myth of creation, the narrative is brief; however, on the myth of hero and the duty of man |

Table 1 continued

evil during the seasonal times: domination of good in spring and summer and domination of bad in the autumn and winter; and the end: final battle and end of the material world. Time of the material world is linear because the material world has a beginning and the end is written from the eternity, victory will also be with Good (principle: fate)
Table 1 continued

| Rituals | According to the myth of creation and death (seasonal myth): two major rituals: Norouz and Mehregān; these two rituals also show the two sovereignty dynasties: Solar dynasty (jamshid = Yima); Lunar dynasty (Feraydon = Abteen and Avestean and Vedic Apam Napāt); six rituals (Gāhanbār) according to astrological myth of cosmic year. According to the duty of man, fate, and the messianic myth: ritual of wars between Good and Evil | According to the duty of man (myth of obeying God): sacrificing sheep; fasting; and pilgrimage in order to expel evil and get close to God. | A mixture of both rituals. According to the myth of obeying God: sacrificing; fasting; and pilgrimage. According to the myth of heroic: ritual of war. According to the seasonal myth: Norouz and Mehregān; and also some of the Gāhanbār(s). |

23
Before going back to the *Shāhīnāmeh* to see how these elements and myths have been presented by Ferdowsi, we have to provide an answer to a critical question. Why should we see Ferdowsi's work in this context? The answer is complex but in fundamental terms we can say that Ferdowsi here deals with pre-Islamic myths no longer contextualized by other elements of the religious system of which they had formed a part. Separated from the concept of Divinity and principles of the religion these myths were scattered archetypal motifs and stories from the past, which lived in the deepest layers of the collective unconscious of the people, and apparently produced the conceptions of being and reality that inform arguments over certain issues such as the notion of apocalypse. For this reason, Ferdowsi's effort can be seen as a historicizing of the pre-Islamic myths once they had lost their overt religious context. History here has worked as a neutral text that could be contextualized according to different interpretations. Obviously, this is the case for every mythical story which is separated from its original context, because the way Ferdowsi dealt with these materials was almost the same as that adopted by those who wrote the universal or local histories, although their attitudes towards the materials were more dependent on their specific religions. For instance, Al-Tabari in the first forty pages of his remarkable work has tried to deal with the meaning of the time before and after creation. As we can see, he answers the questions that have been raised by his society.¹

¹ Al-Tabari, Muhammad Jarir, ْرُكُبَةُ الرَّسُولِ ْعَلَىِّ ِبَعْضِهَا ِبِاَلْمُعَلِّمِ ِمُحَمَّدِيِّبَنِ جَرِيرُ إِلَىِّ عَلِيِّ بنِ أبِي طَالِبِ، صَبْرِيُّ، صَبْرِيُّ: مَكْتَبَ مُحَمَّد، 1965. Vol. I, pp. 1-40. On the contrary, in the biography of Prophet Muhammad he mythicizes history in order to put it in the religious context.
Nevertheless, these materials, however scattered they were, had to be contextualized according to some belief or rather value system, otherwise they would be only some sparks which had simples from their source of fire and would disappear after a brief gleam; *Garshāspnāmeh* and *Bahmannāmeh* are the best examples of this. These two, free of any belief system, are at best adventurous romances that have used archetypes and topoi out of the cosmic or messianic narrative.

All sources from that era tell us that the arguments among the religions, which in fact were over ways of seeing the world, were hinged psychologically on one idea and only one idea: the will to write destiny, or more explicitly, to be a partner for Good’s representative as he spreads justice on the earth. This tendency toward the determined future is, overall, the foremost distinction between Irano-Islamic religions and other Islamic religions, in the post Islamic era of Iran. Therefore the crucial question of what the future will be is the one that generally grew from the cosmic idea of the world on the one hand and Iranian religious ideas in particular on the other hand. Furthermore, it is under this fundamental idea that the concept of time and the duty of the hero are defined.

Ferdowsi historicized the ancient Iranian myths, as others did, but for him history was not unrepeatable. It is, of course, linear to him, because it is determined by fate. In other words it started at some point in the past and will end at some point in the future. Nevertheless history, overall, is repeatable to Ferdowsi. His point of view toward history is the opposite of Hegel’s. For the latter, history is “free and always new, it does not repeat itself; nevertheless, it conforms to the plans of providence.”

however, history is like nature in which things repeat themselves for ever. Ferdowsi is not and cannot be out of this system or rather discourse, because if he was he could not believe what he said or stood for. Destiny is something that was written thousands of years before him and will become manifest in the future. Ferdowsi, as his work shows, was still within nature and could not detach himself from it; in other words, history, in his eyes, is not free and unrepeatable.

Time, for Ferdowsi, and history in his eyes, is linear and cyclic at the same time. Millennia are linear with a beginning and end. They are not repeatable in one sense and this is that the good creations and bad creations of each millennium belong to it and cannot go on to other millennia. According to Zoroastrian mythology, the devils of each millennium will be killed by the messiah of that millennium; hence they cannot go on to the remaining millennia. There are some exceptions to this role: Garshāsp, Dzahhāk, Kay-Khosrow and so forth. The first one is asleep until the apocalypse, and Dzahhāk is imprisoned in a cave in Damāvand until that day. Kay-Khosrow will come back from his refuge in the mountain. Garshāsp, on that day, will wake up in order to kill Dzahhāk.¹ Additionally, at the end of the material world, Ahreman and all his devilish creatures will be destroyed forever.

However, history is repeatable for God and man, though man, in the material world, cannot go from one millennium to another, apart from those exceptions mentioned above. Other than these, people go directly to heaven or hell from their time until the judgment day.

¹ According to Bondahesh Sâm will kill Dzahhāk in that day. Bondahesh, edited by Bahâr, p. 128.
But time, considered as a whole unit, is cyclic and repeatable. In this sense, time, at the end, by going to paradise goes back to the first day of the world. This repetition has a meaning, and, as Eliade says, “it alone confers a reality upon the events.”¹ Ferdowsi, under this notion, historicizes the myths to repeat their meanings, and mythicizes history in order to present unrepeatable events and meaningless characters as repeatable events and significant archetypes. In the first section of the poem, which is from the story of Giyomarth up to that of Bahman,² he narrates the myths chronologically; nevertheless the events and characters are stylistically repeated in the topoi and the archetypes that are scattered throughout the work. In the second section, he does the reverse, at least with four reigns: Ardeshir, Bahrām-e Gour, Anoushe-ravān, and Khosrow Parviz. In these stories, as we will see in the next chapters, historical events are transformed into mythic topoi and archetypes.

The cosmic year for Ferdowsi, with its beginning (Norouz) and end (Andargāh), as we will see, bears both concepts of time. Every era (millennium) has a start and an end in which a devil appears to destroy the kingdom of Good, and later a king and his hero rise to kill or imprison (in case of Dzahhāk) him and rule justly for a few years (according to the Zoroastrians, fifty-seven years). This is the providence that repeats every thousand years and finally in the last repetition returns man to the place he came from (garō-dēmāna = paradise³). The cyclical structure of time, despite what Babayan

¹ Ibid. p. 90.
² According to Bertles Shāhnāmeh has three sections of mythical, epic, and historical. The first two sections, accordingly, covers the mythical and epic parts...
³ (garō-dēmāna) = the house of harmony.
claims,\(^1\) is hardly found in the *Shāhnāmeh*. At first glance it is cyclical, because as myths the stories are shaped by the divine models, but the poet has not narrated the story of creation in the beginning as well as the last two millennia or so; therefore we deal with history here rather than mythology. Besides that, each millennium has its own events, although the prototype events that lead the millennium to its end are the same. In other words, we have different events and characters, but with the same functions; however, the meanings could be opposite in respect to the dominant narrative, for instance, the story of Goshtāsp in the *Shāhnāmeh*.

The *Shāhnāmeh*, in this discourse, shows vividly that not only has Ferdowsi consciously chosen the materials but also dealt with them deliberately; his sensitivity towards non-Persian narratives is the first sign that leads us to this conclusion. To make this more explicit it is as well to examine his attitude towards Arabic history and mythology. As is obvious, he has tried to ignore these traditions entirely. Ferdowsi, unlike other comparable authors, completely ignores the Islamic story of creation that has traditionally come as the beginning of the historical texts. Not telling the history of Iran after Yazdegerd – i.e. during the post-Islamic era – is another indication of that awareness.

Nonetheless, Ferdowsi talks about the Tāziyān (Arabs) as a nation; and in each time, he does so the story is completely negative. The first time is when he tells the story of Dzahhāk (the demon), and the second time is when Rostam Faroukhzād, the Iranian

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\(^1\) Babayan argues that time in the *Shāhnāmeh* has a cyclic structure, though she does not give any specific example. See: Babayan, Kathryn. *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiah*: Cultural Landscape of Early Modern Iran, Cambridge University Press 2003, pp. 9-45.
commander in the battle of Qādeşiyeh, writes his famous letter to his brother and predicts the future of Iran after the Arab invasion. Both times the Tazi(s) are strongly demonized. Yet these are not the major reasons for the question of how and why Ferdowsi has dealt with the discourse of his time. In order to demonstrate the major reason we have purposely to see the text from the religious perspective [– though nobody sees it as one –] to make ourselves able to compare it with the religious ideas on both sides. There are some signs and techniques in the text that could be singled out in order to trace the religious notions and myths. In process of doing this we will also identify the archetypes and motifs.

Adopting this approach we see the author excludes ambiguous concepts such as Divinity, religious principles, and the myth of creation. Although there are a few Iranian traditions which can be found in the Shāhnāmeh, his attempt shows that he, intentionally, has narrated a moderate Islamic version of beliefs. Let’s examine some of them.

First, the concept of Divinity, during this segment of the Shāhnāmeh remains exceedingly vague. There are, of course, political reasons for this elusiveness; nonetheless we can see a compromise on the concept of Divinity throughout the text. Each section of the poem normally starts with a short passage in which Ferdowsi talks to his readers directly and then gives a skeletal blueprint of the following story. This is called the ‘berā’at-e ‘estehlāl’[^1] in Persian rhetoric manuals (literally: eagerness to see the crescent). Normally in this part, the poet starts talking philosophically, then he describes the reason for telling the story, his source, and finally projects a summary of the

[^1]: براعت استهلال
narrational elements of the story intentionally to make his readers involved. In these parts, whenever he talks about God, the reference is undoubtedly to Allah, because in all cases God is represented as adjectival and agential. It is the same even at the beginning of the poem which starts with the famous line

به نام خداوند جان و خرد///کزین برتر اندیشه برنگرد

There are several articles on this section and the poet’s concept of God. On one side, scholars such as Amin Riyahi believe that Ferdowsi was Rafezi (a Shi`ite), because in these lines he articulates his notion of god as the power of creation that man is not even capable to imagine. These scholars especially emphasize line five in which the poet affirms that ‘you cannot see him – because he is not a material sensible, human figure – therefore do not bother your eyes.’ On the opposite, there are scholars who argue he was Zoroastrian, because, in these lines, he says God is nothing but thought (خرد). To support their hypothesis they bring the story of Zurvān and his sons into the discussion; however, the image of God is a problem in their arguments. As was mentioned earlier, God in both Zoroastrianism and Zurvānism has a human form; this is true even of Zurvān, though is considered to be purely abstract. S/he, according to Bondahesh, becomes pregnant with

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2 ز نام و نشان و گمان و برتر است////دگارنده برندنده پیکرست
4 به بینندگان افرينده را//////نبی، مرجان دو بیننده را

Ibid.
his sons, Ahurā and Ahreman, and his womb will be torn apart by Ahreman in order to come out sooner than his brother and become the ruler of the material world.¹

There are, of course, some elements in the text that support both cases; however it does not attest that Ferdowsi was precisely Zoroastrian or Zurvānī, or closer to being a Shi’ite in the sense that we know, simply because these elements can be seen in all Irano-Islamic religions and mythologies. Ferdowsi’s religion could be a mixture of these religions and sects, but not essentially Zoroastrianism, Zurvanism, Shi’ism or even Rāfezi² and of course not Mojasamieh (materialist) or Dahrieh (literally: time³) either.

There are, however, other concepts of Divinity in the text too. These concepts belong primarily to Ferdowsi’s sources, and can be found in the narration and parts of the stories that Ferdowsi has recreated. Why is it recreation and not creation? Simply because these stories existed centuries before Ferdowsi, and there are numerous texts that prove this claim. Either the works such as Ayātkār Zarirān, Kārnāmak Arīaxshir Pāpakān, which could be the original sources for part of the Shāhnāmeh or for Zoroastrian literature that narrates similar versions of Ferdowsi’s stories. Furthermore,

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¹ Bohnshesh, edited by Bahār, pp. 36, 47, 111, 163.
² This is the closest guess, because Nezāmi ‘Arouzi, one hundred years after the death of the poet reported that Ferdowsi did not get his award, because some people in Mahmud’s court said that he was Rāfezi, and the reason for that was precisely line five, mentioned above. Apparently they read the line differently. According to their claim this line means there is no God, simply because you cannot see him. This reading is far from the concept that Ferdowsi describes here or in the other lines before and after this particular line. Another interpretation, which we had already, is completely suitable with the image of god in both major Islamic sects: you cannot see him, because he is not material. Nezāmi ‘Arouzi, Chāhār Maqāleh, edited by M. Qazvini and M. Mo‘in, Enteshārāt-e Jām, Tehran 1375 (1996), pp. 75-83. Doulatshāh (14th c.) has used this source; however he says Ferdowsi was Rāfezi and Qermati. He mentions Qermati for no reason. He used it, apparently, because this sect was the one Mahmud destroyed. Doulatshāh, Amir. Taṣkerat al-Sho‘arā, edited by M. Ramazānī, Enteshārāt-e Padideh (Khāvar), second edition, Tehran 1366 (1987), pp.41-5.
³ I believe that it was the closest religion to Zurvanism in post-Islamic era. Khayām has been known as Dahri, especially among Shi’ite scholars, for centuries.
the text itself could help us to prove this claim. Every branch of the stories in this text has its specific vocabulary that can rarely be found in the other branches, for instance spatial terms in Rostam’s stories are different than in the Kiyāniyān’s – though they are more similar to one another in comparison to those used in the Dzahhāk and Alexander stories. This differentiation may be helpful to us in categorizing Ferdowsi’s sources, though this is not task for us here.¹ Comparing the vocabulary of the stories with each other is a crucial key for this. The Comparison of the names and terms for God in the two major and largely parallel stories of Kiyāniyān and Sistāniyān of the Shāhnāmeh, for instance, give us a certain picture of this matter. Close examination of the stories, line by line, shows that every time we have a story about Rostam’s family, or one related to him, words such as ‘roozegār’, ‘bakht’, ‘akhtar’, ‘zamān-eh’,² and so forth are more often used; whereas, the words for God in the Kiyāniyān parts are mostly ‘ye khorād’ ‘Dādār’.

¹ The grammatical structure also could be a great factor. For instance we see more Pahlavi elements in Bījān o Manijeh than in other parts, for example the way the poet makes rhyme with vowel ‘A’ in this part: (vol.V, p. 14, l. 127)

Or

(p. 15, l. 154)

Some scholars such as Safā believe that Ferdowsi has not used this vowel purposely. They claim that this weakness has happened in his early work (some claim this story was composed before any other stories). But they have no explanation for this suffix in the stories of Rostam o Esfandiyār, or Geyoumarth, Hushang, and so forth; in which this vowel appears quite a few times. Furthermore the first part of the story, unlike their claims, is one of the most beautiful pieces that the poet ever wrote. For more information about this suffix in Pahlavi see Ahamad Tafazuli, Tarikh Adabiyyāt-e Iran-e Pish az Islam, edited by Dzāleh Amuzgār, Inteshārāt-e Sokhan, Tehran 1378, pp. 11-33. The poet himself claims that the story is a direct translation from Pahlavi:

² These are the names for Zurvān, they also mean fate, angel of death, and the time for death. Zaechner believes that Darang-Khotāi was originally Dāru-Xotāi that indicated the gods Vāy and Zurvān, (Zaechner, p.89)
'Yazdān,' 'Ormazd,' and so forth, which do not indicate fate or time. Moreover fate, in the Sistān stories, has a more fundamental role than in the other parts. The story of Zāl is one of the best examples of this. Zaehtner has referred to this story as a Zūrvānī one, especially the part in which Zāl goes to Manouchehr’s court to get permission for his marriage with Rudābeh. Here, Zāl is summoned by the king to appear before the mobeds to answer a series of questions on religious matters. Zāl is required to answer six questions put to him by mobeds. His answers, as Zaehtner points out, contain all the essential elements of Zūrvānī cosmology:

The ‘house of eternity’ and ‘this transitory abode’, surely the infinite and the finite Zūrvān; day and night which are the Light and the Darkness, ‘both’ of which ‘are Time’; the day, the month, and the year – the Division of finite Time; the two arms of the firmament (s(i)pihr) which distribute joy and sorrow – the goodly and the evil Spīhr; the wood-cutter Time – the god of death’ and finally, as if obligingly to substantiate our thesis, the demon Āz.

He continues “Time, the firmament, fate, and death and the blank unknowable Infinite beyond – and everywhere fear and care and anguish: this, reduced to its simplest elements for simple minds, is the religion of Great and Just God, Time.” Zaehtner rightly identifies all the Zūrvānī elements of the text; however he hardly mentions the

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1 The best example is Isfandiyār’s comment about Rostam’s duties. This comment shows the differences between his religion and Rostam’s:

سرابره را گفت دیروزگار // که جمشید را داشتی یه کار کجا راه یبدان همی بار است // همی خواستی اختران را درست

کنون ما خداون جان تیم است // به پیش وی اندر چه جاماسب است

ناتشته به یک دست یا زره دسته // که با زند و است ام دست از برهنت (94-888-271)

The frequency of the first group of words in Sistān stories are approximately twice as the second group, and all of them refer to time, fate or god. These words in the Kiyānid section indicate time or era as an adverb or none. The second group of words, however, are always signify god with his characters such as generosity, justness and so forth.


3 Ibid.
linguistic factors, not only in this part, but also in the other Sistān stories. For instance, seeing people as prey e.g. by using the word shekordan (شکردن) to show the way Time (Demon of death = Astowhāt) kills people, which is very common in these parts, but rarely appears in the other parts\(^1\)

\[\text{دروگر زمان است و ما چون گیا/// همانش نیره همانش نیا}
\[\text{بی پیر و جوان یک به یک نگرد/// شکاری که پیش آیدش بشکرد}^2\]

There are more examples in ‘Rostam o Sohrāb’ and ‘Rostam o Isfandiyār’. Here in these stories we see the words ‘āz,’ ‘darang,’ and ‘zamān’ come more frequently and in most cases they are proper nouns. ‘Rostam o Shuqād’ is a good example too, especially as regards the myth of death.

Another linguistic example, that could indicate different sources, is the different names for God and Evil in stories such as Dzahhāk. Despite the fact that the author has usually used the words Ahreman (Devil) and Deev (demon) in the first section of the epic, as soon as the story of Dzahhāk starts we frequently see the word ‘Eblis’ (the Quranic word for Devil) instead of Ahreman. We may assume that Ferdowsi has used it unconsciously. It would be the case if he also used it randomly in some other parts of the epic too; and, of course, without any association with the original identity of the main character of that story. Here Dzahhāk is Tāzi, so his devil-leader is Tāzi too. Another example is the story of Alexander which mentions no evil principle at all. It is interesting

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\(^1\) The myth of death in Zurvānism has a specific image, with elements such as hunting, breaking the bones of the victim, and so forth. The death of Dzahhāk’s father is one example of it.

to note that in these stories the myths and the rites of death are far from the Islamic traditions. We will explore this later.

To sum up, Ferdowsi’s personal image of God is more Islamic than ancient Iranian. However, God in the stories may have Zoroastrian or Zurvāni images; and despite the fact that God has slightly different images from one story to another overall, his image indicates more Islamic characteristics than the ancient Iranian images.

When we consider the religious principles, the second part in the former table, the Shāhnāmeh shows complicated and paradoxical elements and images. First of all, Ferdowsi does not praise the kings such as Kāvus and Goshtāsp who, according to the Avestā, were great; especially the later who was first the believer and supporter of Zoroaster’s new religion. Goshtāsp was the king of Zoroaster (under the pattern of messiah and his hero); the one who accepted the ‘Best Religion’ (Din-e Behi) and helped the prophet to spread his religion all around the world. Although he is the king of Zoroaster, Goshtāsp here in the Shāhnāmeh is a liar and a murderer who just wants to keep the throne for himself at any price. He, here, becomes an antagonist, simply because he plots against his son in order to push him away from the throne, whereas he, like Dzahhāk, had done the same thing to his father to get his throne before his death. Ferdowsi tries to establish a kind of statement that is diametrically opposed to the Avestā. In this statement he tried to keep a distance from certain Zoroastrian stories. Nonetheless the values behind such statements are similar to the principles of Iranian religions, if not to Zoroastrianism. Here he and his heroes (Rostam, Rostam Farokhzād, and so forth) stand for the values and principles that can be found deep in the ancient Iranian
mythology and religions. Rostam has a duty and that is fighting for Iran, even against his own son. At the same time he has to fight for his name (reputation), because man without a name is nothing. He basically believes that nothing can be taken from the material world but the name. Ferdowsi here, as we could see, refers to history as a container that keeps the archetypal values and characters in itself. From this perspective, the Old Iranian values shine through. It is the same with the relationship of Good and Evil, though Evil, according to Islamic principles, is not equal in power to Good (God). The text on this matter is vague, however, the principle of fate, the ultimate fight for justice, and so forth, through the stories, leads the readers to the main concept of dualism in Iranian thoughts.

As a result, there are gaps within these levels. The gap between the segments of divinity and principles is clouded by the blurred images of God and the vivid aim of the ultimate fight. The inconsistency of the text, especially as regards precise terms such as the names of God is a direct result of vagueness. A further clouded area is within the principles and the myths that we will consider later. In some parts, such as those mentioned above, the text shows obvious contradictions; however the principles behind them, as far as the historicizing of Iranian mythology is concerned, go back to their Indo-Aryan traditions. Here, as Eliade points out, “the metaphysical concepts of the archaic world were not always formulated in theoretical language; but the symbol, the myth, the rite, express, on different planes and through the means proper to them, a complex system of coherent affirmations about the ultimate reality of things, a system that can be

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regarded as constituting a metaphysics.”¹ Hence on this level, one may say, it is the archetypes and symbols that communicate with the mind of the reader. But we should not forget that there is a huge difference between modern and medieval readers of Shāhnāmeh. For us who do not see the text from the mythical point of view, the language of the symbols and signs is unclear, which is why we always translate it to an understandable system of language, - which is text plus the comparative contexts from other sources; while the medieval reader just sees it through his/her belief system, that is in fact within the framework within which the work was composed.

The myths and the rites (two last segments of a religion) are the most unchanged parts of the poem when we compare them with ancient Iranian traditions. The structure and the meaning of the epic, as is evident, have slightly changed in order to accommodate post-Islamic issues. Additionally, the syntax of the narrative, like the order of the sentences in a given language, has altered in order to smooth out the contradictions that have been created between two systems. The same method has been used for sensitive rites such as marriage and its ceremonial presentation in the myth,² and the myth of death and its rituals.³ As we will see in the next chapters, there is a mythical battle underneath the stories of the Shāhnāmeh. This battle is writing the destiny of ‘Iranian justice’ within the framework of Islamic law and culture. The ultimate battle in all groups, which in fact is the mythical one, happens right in the heart of the religious system that integrates all four segments and at the same time, dissolves them in its magical narrative discourse in

² V. the marriages of Zāl and Rudābeh, Rostam and Tahmineh, and Bejan and Manijeh.
³ Killing of Murdās by his son Dzahhāk, and the funeral ceremonies of Isfandiyār and Alexander.
order to legitimize the new regime of truth. Nevertheless the mythical war can have no
winner or loser par excellence. The only winner, in a sense, is the new grand narrative
that contextualizes post-Islamic issues and agendas within the ancient Iranian language of
mythology. There is no doubt that religious belief, which is the main source for creating
or keeping certain myths, has a crucial role to keep, reject, or reshape the myths in order
to harmonize them within the other segments of the given religion. Ferdowsi has
gathered, or better selected the ancient stories of Iran, and at the same time ignored the
Arab-Islamic counterparts, to make an ‘Iranian paradise of archetypes and motifs’\(^1\)

In the next three chapters we will try to examine this paradise in detail. The first
chapter will compare seasonal myths in the \textit{Shāhnāmeh} and in the ancient Iranian myths,
which are to some extent, a branch of Indo-European mythology. In this context we will
attempt to itemize the archetypes on the one hand; and analyze them on the technical
levels that have a role in the temporal and structural style of the work on the other hand.
In the third chapter the character of heroes will be examined. In this method, the motifs
and the choronotopes of the stories will be analyzed in order to contextualize their role
and meaning. And finally in the last chapter, ritualistic elements and factors will be
brought into the study in order to show the harmony of the all elements at all levels in
order to foretell the future in the last part of the poem, that is in the letter of Rostam-e
Farokhzād.

\(^1\) On the paradise of archetype see Eliade, \textit{The Myth of the Eternal Return}, part II.
The *Shāhnāmeh* has had a crucial function within, and influence on, Irano-Islamic society. In this respect, it is the hinge that makes the links between the past and the future of Iran. Additionally, it is an interpretation of the past, which dominantly belonged to Zoroastrian ideology, in the light of the new Islamic belief. This interpretation shows that the battle, which has been long and tiresome, will end with the victory of Good. It is according to this interpretation that the function of the book would have been revealed to the minds of medieval readers.
CHAPTER 3

SEASONAL MYTH: THE COSMIC YEAR AS A SCHEMA IN THE
SHĀHNĀMEH

If there is a paradise of archetypes in the sky, which man is looking forward to reaching, belief demanded that, to some extent, there should be a replica of this on the earth too. Indeed this could be a reversible effort by man to create a microcosm of heaven on earth and at the same time visualizing the heavenly life in the other world. Both acts, for man, could have equal semantic values: one gives weight to insignificant earthly events and actions; and the other gives human kind a goal to live for. In other words, mythicizing history, and historicizing the myth, or recording the materials in a sense, could be among the methods pre-modern man had to see or define the world. For this reason a cosmologic system, at least in Iranian culture, was attentively invented as a tool to build and, at the same time, define the world, life, sovereignty, and so forth. This could also be the case in the Shāhnāmeh, in which the processes of mythicizing history and vice versa took place extensively; and at the same time, through temporal organization, space, and causality have been noticeably modified. To draw an outline of
this form we need first to sketch the pre-Islamic scheme of Iranian cosmology in order to single out elements in the *Shāhnāmeh*. The principles here are not the mythological or historical changes in the cosmology through the centuries,¹ because we are not dealing with these changes in order to show the differences between texts; rather, they are used to show the similarities between this cosmology and the one that has been applied in the *Shāhnāmeh*.

To do so, the cosmology, as well as its elements in the *Shāhnāmeh*, will be studied as a literary artifact. There are six main structural devices in each story;² three of them, that we deal with in this chapter, are: space; temporal organization; and causality in terms of the schema in which the stories are shaped. These parts can be studied according to a central system, namely plots, though space is not necessarily considered a crucial part of this process. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy to describe space first, because it has a significant meaning in the *Shāhnāmeh*.

**Pattern of Space**

There are at least three kinds of ‘space’ which interact with each other in an artwork such as epic, drama, or painting. The most obvious one is the physical space, the artwork as material object or physical event in the space/time continuum it inhabits. Like

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¹ This problem has been dealt with by many scholars and writers. Here we are going to use their work to make a general comparison between pre-Islamic thought and the *Shāhnāmeh*.
² There are different hypotheses on this. Aristotle’s thesis posits six parts ‘[e]very tragedy, therefore, must have six parts, which parts determine its quality — namely, plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle, song…. However, from the structural view they can be reduced to three main devises, namely, plot, time, and space. For Aristotle see: On Man in the Univer: Poetics, edited by Louise R. Loomis, Geramercy Books, New York 1971, p. 426. VI. For a structural approach see: Tzvetan Todorov, The Poetics of Prose, translated by R. Howard, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 1977.
any physical terrain, the physical space of an artwork can be measured, touched, or in the case of drama, walked through.

A second kind of ‘space’, to extend the metaphor, is the artwork’s meaning space. This complex dimension has to do with what the work represents or expresses in terms of conceptual significance and symbolic structure. The meaning space in an epic work such as the Shāhnāmeh is the motif set, characters, and actions represented – e.g., the battle between Good and Evil, and the division of earth based on that. Thus, earth divisions are crucial to this matter, because these are the replica of the cosmos. The distinction between real countries and mythological ones is part of the discussion here. As the authors of Ritual Art and Knowledge explain “meaning space is likely to have many levels or dimensions ... and various features of the overall structure mirror or model aspects of our experience” – or cosmic perception here – “In short, when we speak of meaning space, we are viewing artworks as ‘maps’ rather than as additions to the territory, that is, as articulate sign systems semantically linked to the world in a variety of ways.”

The third kind of space that Williams and Boyd called virtual space is a term that has been borrowed from optics as well as aesthetics. This space is more difficult to talk about and may be easily overlooked. It refers to a complex and heterogeneous set of interrelated features. For instance, in Rostam o Sohrāb the killing scene is quite to the point. At this level, we use ‘space’ in part metaphorically, in which a separate time/space

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1 Williams, Ron G. and Boyd, James w. Ritual Art and Knowledge: Aesthetic Theory and Zoroastrian Ritual, University of South Carolina Press, 1993, pp. 16-17.

2 Ibid, p. 17.
is created which we experience as virtually real in its own right. We will experience the scene as real action in the present. It is perceived as actual behavior though technically it is counterfeit. Virtual space is a combination of the two spaces above, however in this part we will only deal with the meaning space as a map which represents the cosmic space as an archetype and draws the mythological geography that can be found in the Shāhnāmeh as well.

The meaning space in the Shāhnāmeh, as in other Persian epics, has two specific characters, the space in which historical or documented events take place, and the space in which the stories occur. The former, that has closest elements to history, covers both interior and exterior spaces of palaces, courts, as well as battlefields, countries, and so on. These are the most realistic places, compared to the latter that can be only found in the Shāhnāmeh in the mythical view; though they do not indicate any significant elements of real life by any means. Thus courts, castles, and so forth which are symbols of power, are only portrayed from the outside. In most of the stories the poet describes them by cliché phrases such as ‘its summit was in the nebula′ that just show the greatness of its owner, or how strong the building is. The pictures, however, are a little bit different in the historical section of the Shāhnāmeh; there more realistic details of the courtyards could be found, especially in the stories of Bahrām-e Gour, Anousheh-ravān, and Khosrow Parviz. Although the Xavarnaq palace, in the story of Bahrām-e Gour, is described interiorly as well, yet its geometrical details in general give us an astro-
mythological picture of the cosmic world. Thus it is still described according to mythical rather than realistic criteria. Meaning space maps the stories in a grammatical order that, with time and plot, represents the schema of the Shāhnāmeh. In this schema, which we will talk about later, the most important events are the creation unit – creation of time and the new millennium, the units of the battles of the heroes against demonic creatures and people – the epic part of the Shāhnāmeh especially gives the best examples, and finally the apocalyptic unit which represents man’s efforts in the last battle and the sovereignty of the messiah-king before ending the world.

The battlefield is another space that can show realistic details, nonetheless, it is, in most cases and especially in the mythical section, described in a non-realistic fashion. For instance, in the battle of Rostam and Sohrāb from the mythical section, all the elements are drawn from an unfocused blurred picture, though some natural effects such as a mountain, water, and so forth are there. In an overall view one must say that all of these special elements are under the influence of the mythological and ideological concepts. Therefore they should be analyzed as meaning (or in some extent virtual) spaces rather than geographic places – physical spaces, which were characteristically shaped under the pre-Islamic Iranian cosmology. To typify the spatial elements of the Shāhnāmeh, thus far, we have to outline the Persian cosmic concepts comparatively.

The most characteristic basics of the mythological principal of space in the Shāhnāmeh deal with the concept of two or three forces of good and evil, and later of the void. To see this clearly, it is first and foremost necessary to outline the skeletal pattern

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1 Though the picture of the palace in Nezāmi’s Haft-Peykar has been geometrically described better and in a more sophisticated manner, Shāhnāmeh also shows some geometrical elements and indications.
of space in the *Shāhnāmeh*. There are two distinctive spaces in the mythical section: Good space, as we may say and Evil space.\(^1\) The first thousand years or so of the material world (Giti) is ruled predominantly by Good. Giyomarth is the first king of this section, and Jamshid is the last one. There is no specific nation in this section, and the kings reign over both man and animals. They, as Ferdowsi marked ‘... had no enemy’ except Ahreman.\(^2\)

There are only two demonic interactions in this section, in the first a demon kills Siyāmak;\(^3\) later Hushang, the son of Siyāmak, captures all demons. Apparently there is a cut in this part and the story’s continuation comes later in the story of Tahmureth, the son of Hushang. In this story again, demons are captured by the new king and become his servants. The demons were useful to the king and people, because they taught them the alphabets. The second demonic act Mythically deals with the twofold nature of the ancient Indian-Iranian god, Yama, who is Jamshid in the *Shāhnāmeh*; however, we will consider him only with regard to space for now, and later on when we will deal with the characters and archetypes we shall talk about him in more detail. It is noticeable that this demonic act is indeed considered as a sin, because Jamshid, the good king, is the one who commits it. To be more precise, the first part of Jamshid’s story shows that the world is heavenly and safe, because he does whatever God wants him to do. As a result there is

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\(^1\) As mentioned before for Bertles, the *Shāhnāmeh* is divided into three sections - mythical, epic, and historical. To make it easier, here, we will follow Bertles’s scheme.

\(^2\) (Moscow edition, vol. 1. p. 29, l. 21.)

\(^3\) (Moscow, p. 30, ll. 33-37.)
no illness or death all over the world and people are happy; following this he creates the castes, organizes society and puts people in their social ranks. In other words, Jamshid is a just king who does everything he can to bring peace and comfort to people and animals. He makes the world three times bigger in order to give more space to growing inhabitants.\(^1\) Besides this, he teaches people sciences, alphabet, sewing, and so forth. Later, however, he becomes an egoist and thinks that he is god. As soon as he declares this, his ‘fareh’ and people leave him and his kingdom breaks apart.

In this section the whole world is in one geographical space, the word Iran is hardly mentioned; and the word Turān or the name of any other country is not mentioned in any way. To put it in other words Iran, in this part, is the whole world; although this is not emphasized at all or insisted upon. Jamshid is the only king who reigns over the entire world. He has no opponent, and at his time Ahreman and his creatures have no power at all. Ahreman and his creatures do not, it appears, share the material world with good creatures. However, Jamshid sins and loses the throne and in his place Ahreman climbs up toward power. By changing his character, Jamshid starts to praise himself as god, the only god; by this act he ceases to be a just king. People abandon him and as a result his fareh (glory) departs from him, and then his kingdom is invaded by the most demonic king, Dzahhāk.

Spatially, in the story of Dzahhāk, too, the whole world consists of one unit while it is in the hands of the most dreadful demon of all time. Space, here, as well as other related features, shows the opposite qualities to those of the Jamshid era. Death, drought,

injustice are the most characteristic features of this part, yet there is still one kingdom. Iran and India are mentioned as two different lands besides the Tazi land; however they are under one ruler, Dzahhāk.

Thus far, stories have taken place in two separated spaces of so called Good, Iran, and so called Bad, Tazi. The good and bad elements are chronologically separated too; hence, every good element has a counterpart on the other side (out of its space and time). In other words, the world has two mirror images of exactly opposite elements on each side, though these two worlds do not exist at the same time, but come one after the other. Existence of one causes the evaporation of the other.

The first two three thousand years of Zoroastrian cosmology are exactly similar to the scheme we can see in the Shāhnāmeh. The 'world year', according to Greater Bondahesh, is 12,000 years (i.e. with twelve millennia corresponding to the twelve months of the calendar year). Zoroastrians could not accept the idea of an infinite repetition of historical events, so they divided the cosmic year into four three-millennia. And to show this chronologically they tried to fit real events into a grand theoretical scheme, a process which Greater Bondahesh has explained explicitly. This is the table that Mary Boyce made following the G.B.;\(^1\) the first two parts are the ones with which we are dealing here:

\(^1\) Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism, edited and translated by Mary Boyce, Manchester University Press, 1984, p. 21.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-3000</td>
<td>Ahura Mazda, with foreknowledge of the need and means to destroy evil, brought his creation into being in an invisible or spirit (menog) state. The Evil spirit, rising from the deep, perceived this creation. He shaped the lesser evil spirits and attacked. Ahura Mazda cast him down helpless by reciting the Ahunvar prayer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3000-6000</td>
<td>The Evil Spirit lay prostrate. Ahura Mazda gave material (getig) form to his creation, shaping the world in seven stages, with one plant, animal and man.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6000-8969</td>
<td>The Evil Spirit broke into and polluted the material world, destroying the plant, animal and man. From their seed grew all existing plants, animals and men. From their seed grew all existing plants, animals and men. Yima reigned first over mankind, and all other events of Iranian myth and ancient epic took place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8970</td>
<td>Birth of Zarathushtra.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9000</td>
<td>Beginning of his millennium. He received his revelation, and began to preach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9012</td>
<td>He converted Kavi Vishtaspa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9013-9969</td>
<td>A time of goodness followed by slow decline, leading to the present day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9970</td>
<td>Birth of the first World Saviour, Ukhshyat-ereta (Pahl. Ushedar).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10000</td>
<td>Beginning of his millennium. He will lead the forces of good and overcome evil. A new time of goodness will again be followed by slow decline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10970</td>
<td>Birth of the second World Saviour, Ukhshyat-nemah (Pahl. Ushedarmah).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11000</td>
<td>Beginning of his millennium. He will again lead the forces of good and overcome evil. A new time of goodness will again be followed by slow decline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11943</td>
<td>Birth of the third World Saviour, Astvat-ereta, the true Saoshyant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11973</td>
<td>He will begin the work of Frasho-kereti (Pahl. Frashegird), with resurrection of the dead, the last judgment, and final conquest of evil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12000</td>
<td>History will end. The Kingdom (Khshathra) of Ahura Mazda will come on earth, and he will reign in bliss for ever.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Persian cosmic year

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1 The seven stage world apparently is a Mesopotamian idea; nonetheless it is frequently seen in the Zoroastrian texts such as Zand Vahoman Yasn. It is traceable in the Shāhnāme too, and we will deal with it later in this chapter.
For the first three thousand years Ormazd\(^1\) reigns over the whole world (both Meeno and Giti), and Ahreman is unconscious at the bottom of the ocean. In this world, that is nothing but pure light, Ormazd starts to create plant, the cow, and man (Giyomarth). Then Ahreman wakes up and starts to destroy the good creations, and at the same time creates evil creatures in order to demolish the good kingdom. He comes to the material world and kills the chosen plant, chosen cow, and Giyomarth.\(^2\) So far, as is obvious, the *Shāhnāmeh*, in terms of space, is completely similar to the Zoroastrian cosmology in that it indicates two separated spaces, chronologically and geographically.\(^3\)

The next section, which is the epic section in Bertles’s terminology, starts immediately after the last fight of Feraydon with Dzahhāk. Feraydon captures and imprisons Dzahhāk in Damāvand, then reigns over his kingdom, which is still the entire world. But when his death arrives he partitions the world into three countries and gives them to his sons: the west, Rome, to Salm, Iran to Iraj, Turān to Tur. Besides *Shāhnāmeh*, the story also appears in Pahlavi sources. For instance in *Ayātkār i Jāmāspik*, the most ancient variant of the account, we read:

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\(^2\) Yet between these, Time is stronger than the others (ibid). It is interesting that Shi‘ites’ messiah is also called Imām-e Zamān.

Two lines down it says “Between them (Ormazd and Ahreman) is a vaqium (buffer, void), which is called Vāi and is a mixed force of both.

\(^3\) This killing is repeatedly referred to in *Shāhnāmeh*, though in the epic section the plant and cow have been personified. We will deal with this later.

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Three sons were born to Frētōn: Salm, Tōz, and Ėrič were their names. He called all three together to say to them: "I will divide up the entire world between you; let each of you tell me what seems good to him so that I may give it to him." Salm asked for great riches [vas-hēriḥ], Tōz for valor [takikih], and Ėrič, who had the kaviani Glory [xvarrah i kavān: the Avestan x'arānah] upon him, for law and religion (dāt u dōn). Frētōn said: "May what each of you has asked for come to him." To Salm he gave the land of Rome [zamik i Hrōm] down to the sea coast; to Tōz he gave Turkestān and the desert down to the sea coast; and Ėrānsāfr [the Iranian realm] and India, down to the sea, fell to Ėrič. At one moment [...?] Frētōn lifted the crown from his head and put it on the head of Ėrič, saying: "My Glory is established on the head of Ėrič until the morning of the renovation of all the living world; O honored one, may the royalty and sovereignty over the children of Tōz and Salm belong to your children."¹

As soon as this division becomes the reality, we see three separated spaces formed noticeably: good space, Iran; bad space, Turān; and an intermediate space that has tendency toward the bad, Rome. This division, however, does not persist for long and disappears after Tur and Salm kill Iraj and later Manuchehr kills Tur and Salm. Nonetheless it establishes the fundamental principal of good and bad separated by a void, which is the major motif for the rest of the epic part of the work. Thus in Manuchehr's time, again, the scheme is restated, though in a slightly different form. Turān, as before, is regarded as the bad space, in which a demonic man, Afrāsiyāb rules; on the other hand Iran keeps its good position vis-à-vis Turān; but, Rome is replaced by Sistān and disappears from the poem's foreground for a long time.² Sistān, however, becomes a void space right between Iran and Turān, which sides with the good for the whole period up to Lohrāsp's kingship. The position of Sistān as an intermediate space shows the great role of a third party in the Iranian cosmology. We shall return to this matter later. From

¹ Ayātkār i Jāmāspik cited from G. Dumézil's The Destiny of a King, the University of Chicago Press, 1971, p. 14. In Ferdowsi's version Fereydon dons a frightful disguise and observes the behavior of his three sons. It should to be mentioned that this part of the story is partially omitted from the Moscow edition: G. Mohl's version, however, has it entirely (as has Khaleghi Motlagh).

² Until the story of Goshtāsp.

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the kingship of Lohrāsp on the text does not show the mythical concept of space clearly, nevertheless, the motifs and concepts are still there and work through narrative elements.

Examining texts is necessary; however, it is also essential to highlight the fundamental Iranian dualistic thought, which has fashioned the whole of ancient cosmology, in comparison [with the other ideas of triangle power-god, foreign or domestic, on the contrary.] In short, and in terms of space, two separated cosmoses that oppose each other by any means are the most common spatial setting to be seen in Persian epics, especially the Shāhnāmeh. Yet, this principle which is also presented in Indian as well as Mesopotamian cosmology, also exhibits the triple spaces according to the triple god triangle. Syncretism of these cosmologies can be occasionally seen in Pahlavi texts and even in the petrography of pre-Islam epochs.

In the accounts of the cosmology that have come down to us it is not always possible to draw a clear distinction between what may be called Mazdean cosmology as a dualistic system and other Iranian systems such as the Zūrvānīte. Among texts, the Indian Bondahesh pays more attention to the dualistic idea and less to the triangle power-god thought, in which Zūrvān (Time) is a supreme deity over Ormazd (Ahūrā) and Ahreman. There are also texts such as ‘Ulemā i Islam, Zātsparm, and Greater Bondahesh, which represent a supreme deity above or between Ahūrā and Ahreman. ‘By far,’ Zaeheer points out, ‘the fullest account of the Zoroastrian cosmology that has come down to us is that of the Bondahesh’¹ (both versions). This work has been preserved in two versions, known respectively as the Indian and the Greater or Iranian Bondahesh.

¹ Zaeheer, p. 81.
According to Zaeher the ‘Indian’ account is consistent and may reasonably be supposed to derive from a single source. However, into the middle of this account the ‘Iranian’ version inserts a long passage throughout which Zamān (Zurvān) is the principal character.

According to the *Indian Bondahesh*, the dualistic concept is typified by two forces: Ormazd (Ahurā); and Ahreman: “[i]n the beginning Ormazd was on high and dwelt in the endless Light (*dēn*). Ahreman was in depths and dwelt in the endless Darkness: he was slow in knowledge and his will was to do harm. With the first was associated all that was good and beautiful; with the second all that was evil and foul.”¹ The former is infinite in both time and space, except for the spatial border made by Ahreman. The later, however, is limited by Ormazd in both time and space. In the *Shāhnāmeh*, these two spaces are represented in the stories of Geyomarth down to Jamshid as the good space; and Dzahhāk as the bad. We will come back to these points again when we discuss the role of god in Iranian cosmology, in the third section of this chapter.

There is also another space which has been considered in the aforementioned texts more or less, which is an in-between space associated with Vāy. Zoroastrian texts show a great deal of confusion on this issue. Vāy, as a god, has a counterpart in Indian cosmology namely Vayu. Evidence suggests that Vāy was considered as a supreme deity above the Iranian gods, especially in the eastern part of Iran, whereas Zurvān has

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apparently come from the western areas, close to Mesopotamian cultures.\textsuperscript{1} Vāy, in both the Avestā and the Veda is associated with Vāta (Pahlavi Vāt, Persian bād), the wind. His name means simply ‘he who blows’, and according to Zaechner in Sanskrit Vāyu comes to mean simply ‘the wind.’\textsuperscript{2} Zaechner adds “originally Vāyu appears to have been the supreme deity of a people unconnected with the original Zoroastrian community. Like Zurvān and Mithra he is not a moral deity; but unlike Mithra the evil side of his character was so marked that the Mazdāh-worshipping Zoroastrians who adopted him forced to split his personality into two.”\textsuperscript{3} Then he became an intermediate god between Ahurā and Ahreman. Vāy is praised in the Rām Yašt as the ‘Eyzad of victory and is described with the adjective of ‘Uparo Kairya meaning upper hand (Persian: zebar dast).\textsuperscript{4} Apparently this shows his function and position as the wind. It is also notable that in the Veda he always appears with Indra, the Indian god of war. Nonetheless, Zaechner believes “[h]is name is Vāyu because he pursues (vayemi) both the creation ofOrmazd and that of Ahreman: he is the ‘catcher’ (apayate) for he catches both the creations.”\textsuperscript{5}

The story of Manuchehr in the Shāhnāmeh is markedly important, because this is the point when the Sistānian branch of the stories, which takes a crucial place in the epic first appears. Or in other words, it becomes a magnified center for all the stories of the

\textsuperscript{1} See Zaechner on this.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid, p. 83.
\textsuperscript{3} Ibid, p. 82.
\textsuperscript{4} Pourdavood, Yasht-ha, vol. 2, p. 137.
\textsuperscript{5} Nonetheless, he believes that the passage from Gāthā, in which Ormazd and Ahreman are mentioned as a twin is entirely mistranslated. He says: though their knowledge of the Gāthā language was doubtless rudimentary, they nevertheless seem to have known that yēmā meant ‘twins’, and accordingly translate ‘two brothers’. But for them the admission that Ormazd and Ahreman were brothers was fatal… Fortunately for them the word araš occurred in the third line of the stanza. Disingenuously ignoring the fact that araš meant ‘rightly’ and replying on the ignorance of others, they proceeded to turn the Avestan araš into the demon Ariš(k) (Envy)! Zaechner, ibid, p. 80.
book. As regards space, the Sistānian stories show a great deal of similarity to the concept of Vāy Khotāi. Vāy is a god between Ormazd and Ahreman, and has two aspects, good and bad. The part that is closer to Ormazd is good; the other side is bad, because it is close to Ahreman. Here in Shāhnāmeh, up to the sovereignty of Goshtāsp, Sistān exists as a void space between Iran and Turān. Rostam, the king of Sistān, is not of course supreme in relation either to Iranian kings or their Turānian counterparts; nonetheless, he is more powerful than they are. Although he is a subject of the Iranian kings, he is the one who saves them from enemies and bestows their crowns on them.

Rostam and his country could be friendly or hostile to both Iran and Turān. In his long reign, Rostam is always on the side of Iran (good) and against Turān (evil), yet there is a short story about his control over Turān for seven years after the death of Siyāvash. There he is not at all against Iran, but he reigns in Turān while Afrāsiyāb is still in power and destroying Iran’s cities, the text, compare to other sources, is completely vague on this.

As well as Rostam himself, an iconic figure in the whole Shāhnāmeh, there are also some other signs that indicate the dualistic nature of Sistānian kingship. The genealogy of Rostam, for instance, goes back to both the Iranian Sām and Garshāsp, and at the same time to the demonic Dzahhāk. The line of Zāl also goes back to the Iranians and symbolically to the Simorq (the enemy of Iran, in the view of Isfandiyār). Rudabeh, the mother of Rostam, is half Indian, half Tāzi, from the line of Dzahhāk. Shuqād, Rostam’s brother and murderer, has a mixed race too. Sohrāb, the son of Rostam, is half
Turk half Sagzi.¹ Rostam and Shuqād could be considered as twins, because they functionally appear like a two sided man, or rather split as characters, the former as a purely good hero and the later as wholly evil.

The significance of Rostam’s role and the position of his land between two forces become understandable when we see them in the light of the destiny of the world. He and his land have at least two roles, making a distinctive partition between good and bad to keep them apart completely, and helping Good in the final battle against Evil. Thus the third era (6000-8969), which is recognized by the attack of Evil, still occurs in separated spaces, but not separated geographic lands. Later this geographic view changes totally, in Goshtāsp’s reign, after Arjāsp is killed, Sīstān becomes a hostile country to Iran, and at the time that Bahman is in power it disappears from the epic. The stories of Homāi and her son, Dārāb, occur in a totally different milieu, again in this part the enemy, the only enemy, is one country, Rome, and there is no void between the good and evil areas. In the story of Alexander the whole Iranian pattern disappears and the entire world again is controlled by just one king, Alexander; the fundamental principle of Iranian cosmology, the motif of good and evil, is omitted completely. In Ferdowsi’s version of this story Alexander is good, while from the Iranian point of view, which can be seen in Pahlavi texts such as Kārnāmak Artaxshir Pāpakān, it is uncommon; therefore spaces do not signify or rather should be read under a different cosmology, which is not Iranian for sure. In the story of Ardashir Sassani, again, the motifs of good and evil are embodied in the two characters of Ardashir as the savior and Haftvād as a devil; however

¹ This could be read as a race or country. The text is not clear on this.
here all the events happens in Iran. Apparently mythicizing the historical event is the reason for seeing this story in this way, because Ardeshir took the throne by eliminating the Arsacids, another Iranian dynasty. Some religious elements that are found in the story, both in the Pahlavi version and Ferdowsi’s, attest to this claim. There is no mythical pattern for the spaces in the rest of the epic, and the historical events occur in the real places, yet Rome is the major enemy of Iran for the most part. At the end, again, the cosmic conception of good (Iran) and evil (the rest of the world apparently) is reestablished.

The world, in Iranian tradition, is divided into seven parts (kishvar, Avestan karšvar). The seven regions is a common concept in antiquity and the middle ages in Iran.¹ As Arthur Christensen has pointed out:

The central kišvar, the xvaniras (Avestan xvanirath), comprises the entire world, surrounded by the Vourukaša ocean, the other kišvars being fabulous worlds inaccessible to man. It is only with divine assistance – or rather, as others claim, with the aid of the dev – that one can cross over the ocean which separates these kišvars from the xvaniras.²

But this division is hardly found in the Shāhnāmeh. The conception, in other words, does not play a significant role in the progression of the stories, or rather; it works as the dualistic world: one big island in the center, which is Iran, and six regions that are

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¹ Besides the geographers, Hafiz has also used this concept:

شهرهست پرکرمشه و خوبان ز شش جهت // چپدر نیست ورنه خربدار هر ششام
Or

شیراز و آب رکی و این باد خوشرنیسیم // عیش مکن که خال رخ هفته کنن کاست

detached from it by an ocean. Beneath this, according to Dumézil, one perceives a division into five with the four cardinal points and the center.\(^1\) However there is no center in the *Shāhnāmeh*, neither in the first section where two lands are totally separated by space and time; nor in the second part, in which Iran is in the west, Sistān in the middle, and Turān in the east; nor later in the stories of Lohrāsp is dynasty, nor in the historical part.

The ancient Iranian cosmologies show four kinds of cosmic concepts: the seven-land vision, the five, and the three; and a two-land vision underneath the last one. Nonetheless, neither seven regions nor five regions, but the three, dominantly, and the two regions, rarely, are the cosmic forms that have been utilized by Ferdowsi. This perception of the world has something to do with the human delegation of divine sovereignty (the sin of pride) as well as functional values. There is a connection between the concept of divided lands and the principles of divided social functions. The legend of Yima (Jamshid) in India and Iran delivers both conceptions; nonetheless the simplest type is a partition among brothers.\(^2\) In Pahlavi accounts Yima sins once, and ‘three *x*ārənāhs’ (Yasht 19) or ‘three portions of *x*ārənāh (Dēnkert)’ abandon him. The glory leaves him three times. This is also the case in Ferdowsi’s account, but with some differences. Jamshid, after populating the world, divides society into the three functional castes of king-priest, the military, and laborers. Later he sins (thinks that he is god) and his glory, or rather three glories, flies away.

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\(^1\) Ibid, p. 10.
Three glories here are three kinds of fires that indicate three classes.¹ These fires throughout the *Shāhnāme* designate three dynasties: fire of kings (*ātur farrobag*) Jamshid was the first king in this dynasty; fire of military men (*ātur gušnasp*) this fire belonged to Kay-Khosrow; and finally fire of labors (*ātur burzēn-mihr*).² We shall come back to this later. The division of the earth is carried out by Feraydon. Dumézil believes that Jamshid, Dahâke, and Feraydon are three aspects of the one problem known as Yima. He adds however, “it is easier to think that the Iranian Yima, dispossessed by the Zoroastrian reform of his function as king of the beyond, has reunited upon himself legends that were primitively bound up with two distinct rituals of earthly kingship.” There is indeed a parallelism within the story of three Jamshid, Dzahhâk, and Feraydon one after the other on one hand, and the stories of the three brothers, and later three kings of Iran, Sistân, and Turân on the other hand. The studies of Dumézil show the series of three kings corresponds to the inherited Indo-European conceptual pattern of three social functions: (I) sovereigns/ministers of state/priests; (II) warriors; and (III) cultivators/herdsman as producers of wealth.³ According to Pahlavi texts, several names can be found for the three-king pattern, for instance: 1) Hushang, 2) Taxmō Uropa

¹ Ferdowsi says he divides the society into four classes, however the last two classes are the same, one is farmer, and the other is craftsmen. See Moscow edition, vol. I, p. 40, ll. 15-30.

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(Tahmorrres), and Yama (Jamshid) in the Yašts.\footnote{Yašt, 19, 23-33.} As we can see, one is good (Feraydon), one is bad (Dzahhāk), and one is two-sided (Jamshid). In the story of the three brothers, Salm is the one who plays the role of two-sided king, though he sides with Tur completely. And in the case of Rostam and his kingdom, he as an in-between force is with the good.

To sum up, three kings on the earth, and three functional castes are earthly aspects of the ancient triangle of force-gods and their three different spaces, which, in Shāhnāmeh, has been used as a dominant motif throughout the mythological section, as it is traceable in other epics such as Abu-Muslemnāmeh.\footnote{The war of Abu-Muslem has three stages; in the first he fights with Nasr-e Saiyār, governor of Khorasān. After defeating him, in the second part, he fights with governor of Isfahān, Hamadān, and Musel. The last war, finally, is with Marvān.}
CHAPTER 4

TIME, TEMPORAL ORGANIZATION, AND HISTORY: IRANIAN TRILOGY

Time in the Shāhnāmeh, as in other narrative genres, has a crucial role, either as a structural device or a cosmic concept. It is a tool, with the plot, that shapes the duration and schema of a narrational work; in this case it is called temporal organization. Behind the temporal organization, however, is always a concept or philosophy that coordinates the structure of narrative with the given (background) discourse. To appreciate the work, the reader that departs from the discourse has to make connections among the units and devices that embody that discourse in order to understand the meaning behind it. To do this he needs first to study the concept of time behind the text, and then to examine the durations and causality system of the work which have been created under that concept. Studying time and time related matters in the Shāhnāmeh, in relation to archaic cosmic systems, could help us understand the narrative discourse of Ferdowsi’s time better. It is also a constructive way to denote the archetypes and motifs that have been used in the poem. The meaning and functions of these, again, could lead us to their semantic value in the narrative discourse.

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Having said that, it is essential to have a close look at the Iranian cosmic system first, with a comparative perspective towards the Indo-European versions on one hand, and the Islamic-Mesopotamian on the other hand, with the purpose of singling out the basis of the work. Thus, we will study time under these three main headings: as a cosmogonic concept in which again the Shāhnāmeh exhibits slight differences from one group of stories to another; as a temporal organizer which shapes the duration of every period (namely age, millennium or schema and the duration of the whole work again as the great schema); and finally as a structural device that creates the units related to the seasonal myth, and the hero who embodies the narrative discourse. The last one will be separately measured in the next chapter, because it could work as a device or narrative unit in order to actualize the mythological rituals inside of each schema. The one before last, however, shapes the schema overall, and thus it as an organizing device that may be applied by a narrator (or rather writer) to form the story under the paradigm discourse; for instance, the whole period of Kay-Kāvus down to Kay-Khosrow is a schema with certain units that are used to bring forth the mythical meaning and comprehend the discursive agendas.

There are some studies on time in the Shāhnāmeh, such as Sarkārāti's essay on the three ages of the poem in comparison to cosmic speculation in Zoroastrianism,1 or Arthur Christensen's inquiry in which he calculates approximately the number of the

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years that Giyomarh lived or reigned. He also brings other works into the discussion to show the differences that are found among the sources. Nonetheless, time has not been comparatively studied as a structural device or cosmological system, especially in the context of messianic expectation as we are going to deal with it here in this chapter.

It is, therefore, essential to deal with the cosmic conception of time first. What we wish to emphasize here is that, in the Iranian conception, there is a distinction, characteristically, between history (whether followed or not by infinite time) and the cosmic year. In fact these are two separate philosophies with different perspectives. The “history,” apportioned to the universe, involves the destruction of sinners, the resurrection of the dead, and the victory of eternity over time; whereas, the cosmic year is associated with the traditional doctrine of periodic regeneration of the world through an annual repetition of the Creation. Suffering, thus, could be seen as the consequence of man’s acts in history. Regeneration of the world or the limited time, on the contrary, is a fated act imposed by God or infinite Time that molds both the fate of man and the providence of the material world.

_Shāhnāmeh_, in these respects, indicates both notions here and there. Yet, both, as the narrative tools, work so hand in glove that it is hard to discern which one has more weight and influence on the poem than the other. The doctrine of periodic regeneration, called “Great Time” from now on, has a dominant role in shaping the stories that deal with messianic speculation; whereas, there are schemata that are shaped by the motif of “sin/suffering,” in both mythical and historical sections, which is the main principle of

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the concept of history. A closer look shows us that for most of the work these two notions appear alternatively. In other words, after one schema with the main archetype of sin/suffering could be a schema with the main archetype of creation-destruction-recreation or vice versa. But at the same time there could be a schema with both archetypes, schemata of Jamshid-Dzahhāk-Feraydon and Kāvus-Afraisīyāb-Kay-Khosrow are the best examples for the latter version. The schema of Feraydon-Tur/Salm-Manuchehr followed by the period of Nowzar-Afraisīyāb-Kay Qobād is good example for the former version. Nonetheless, the concept of a cosmic year or the regeneration of time is a constant recurrent paradigm and ultimately brings the work together.

Time, in ancient Iranian thought, could be either a power itself, or the ultimate weapon in the God’s hand. In a word, infinite Time is the most powerful force in the whole universe. This statement could be readily considered as a Zurvanite notion, but we can find it in Zoroastrian literature and in a broader sense Iranian cosmology, before and after Islam, since time, in both beliefs, indicates the ultimate tool in the hands of Ormazd or Allah. From a Zoroastrian perspective, Ormazd is the one who is infinite in two dimensions of time and space, with an exception where he is limited to the space of Darkness in the ‘bottom’. Evil however is limited in both dimensions. There are two worlds, Menog, the divine one or infinite ‘house of song’ which is governed by Ormazd, and Gitig, the material world, which is limited in space, time, and sovereignty. The latter has a beginning and an end, chronologically, dimensionally and effectively. The story of the material world has been repeatedly told by Iranian sources, either in epics or in religious literature. Time in this myth plays crucial roles, structurally, functionally and
notionally; however there is not a single concept or system governing the presentation of time, neither in the Shāhnāmeh nor in the other works, such as the *Zand Vahoman Yasn, Bahman Yašt, Jāmāspnāmeh*, or the *Mahdi-e Mo’ud*, as a Shi’ite text.\(^1\) Time in the Shāhnāmeh, noticeably, indicates different notions from one group of stories to another. In the Keyânid related stories time is a tool in the hands of god; he has created the Giti and let there be two kinds of sovereignties, good and evil, alternatively in certain periods of time. Time in the Sistānian branch of stories, however, is presented as god, the one who writes the fortunes, changes the nights and days, seasons and years, and finally represents death and the angel of death.

In post-Islam, around the time that the Shāhnāmehs were written or compiled, time was a controversial and sensitive subject. On one side was, apparently, the Iranian concept of time as a force, part of god, if not the god himself; the other side of the debate was the Islamo-Mesopotamian notion of time as a subject that God created on the sixth day, by creating the light (sun and moon).\(^2\) Furthermore, there were questions such as whether the creation happened before time or after time, or what the duration of the world is, from eternity to apocalypse: seven thousand years, according to Akkadian cosmology, nine or twelve thousand years according to Zoroastrianism or Zurvanism. Or how the apocalypse would occur, and who would come, and from which land. Zoroastrians

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\(^1\) The first three accounts are Zoroastrian apocalyptic texts and the last one is the thirteenth volume of *Bahār Al-Anvār* by Alāmeh Majlesi, the Shi’ite cleric of 17\(^{th}\) century. This volume is very important to Shi’ites, because it is about the apocalypse and reappearance of Mahdi.

\(^2\) Debate can be found, directly or indirectly, in those writers who had been relatively affected by the Iranian traditions, for instance see the debate of Tabari, the historian, in his first 40 pages of his remarkable history. Tabari, *Tarikh-e Al-Rasul va Al-Mutuk*, Vol. 1, p. 14-19. On page 15, he emphasizes that time was created after the creation of sky and earth, later he adds: ‘creatures and men’, apparently, ‘were created before zamān (time), seconds, sun and moon’ (P. 19).
expected their messiah, Hoshidar, to appear from Khorāsān. At the same time Mahdi, who is not mentioned in the Qurʾan, was the messiah that some Islamic sects and heresies were, and still are, expecting. In fact, Mehdi’s occultation and reappearance at the end played a considerable role in millenarist crises in that era and subsequently for sects such as Kasaniya, Ismaʿiʿli, and Shiʿite. For these sects, as for Zoroastrians, he, the messiah, was the one who would destroy tyranny and turn the world into an earthly paradise – resurrection or regeneration of the beginning – for a short period of time before apocalypse (five to seven years for Muslims, and 57 years for Zoroastrians). The Epiphany of the Mahdi, as Eliade points out, will inaugurate for the Muslims an age of justice and prosperity unequalled on earth.\footnote{Eliade, M. *History of Religious Ideas*, vol. II, p. 122.} This is the paradisal sovereignty that Zoroastrians have been depicting for centuries. In a certain sense it can be said that these religions expect the paradisal beginnings to be repeated by their messiah.

Mazdeans, who have lent most fundamentals of this notion to the aforementioned sects, were obsessed with time, and constructed it as a coherent, symmetrical, and dominant system. Ancient Iranians, and primitives as well, who could not detach themselves from nature, believed the whole existence was a repetitive cycle of warm and cold, life and death, good and evil. Thus, in their obsession with cyclical time, there were certain traces of the ancient doctrine of creation-destruction-recreation that still survived. This doctrine leads directly to the heart of the notion of ‘regeneration of time’ or the archaic doctrine of a periodic regeneration of the world as appears in Indo-European cosmology. Therefore, Iranian cosmology is framed by the notion of the limited duration.
of cosmos to some specific number of millennia on one hand, and on the other that history and it's inter repetitions will finally cease in time.

The theory of "Great Time", which is originally Indian, is found in conjunction with the myth of "successive ages." Like Indians, Iranians knew the myth of the four cosmic ages. A lost Zoroastrian text, the *Sudkar-nask* (whose content is preserved in the *Dénkart*, IX, 8), referred to the four ages: gold, silver, steel, and mixed iron. The same metals are mentioned at the beginning of the *Zand Vahoman Yašt* (I, 3), which, however, somewhat further on (II, 14), describes a cosmic tree with seven branches (gold, silver, bronze, copper, tin, steel, and a mixture of iron), corresponding to the seven planets in the Chaldaean astrological concept – each of these planets governs a millennium.

"The age of gold" always occurs at the beginning of the cycle or first millennium. In both doctrines – that of cyclical time, and that of limited cyclical time – the first age is recoverable; in other words, it is repeatable, as Eliade remarks, an infinite number of times in the former doctrine, and once only in the latter. In Mazdean texts, and the *Shāhnāmeh* as well, the time of Giyomarth is equal to the age of gold, and the replication of it is traceable in Hushang/Jamshid's story, or those of Kay-Khosrow and Bahram Gour of Ferdowsi's *Shāhnāmeh* and Nezāmi's *Haft Paykar*, as well as the paradisal beginning at the end of the Hoshidar's millennium, or Hoshidarmah, Sushiant in the Zand Vahuman Yasn (ZVY) or *Jāmāspnāmeh*, and the *Mahdi-e Mo'ud* in Shi'ism.

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1 The terms "Great Time" and "successive age" are borrowed from Eliade. See Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, pp. 112-113.
2 Quoted by Eliade, ibid. p. 124.
3 *Zand Vahman Yasn* (from now on ZVY), edited by S. Hedayat, (I, 3) and (II, 14), pp. 30-31
4 Ibid. p. 113.
As cyclical time, the doctrine is under the influence of the Indian cosmic system. Indian speculation, as Eliade points out, amplifies and orchestrates the rhythms that govern the periodicity of cosmic creations and destructions. The smallest unit of measure of the cycle is the Yuga, the “age”. ¹ A complete cycle, or “Mahāyuga, is composed of four ages (Great Times) of unequal duration, the longest appearing at the beginning of the cycle and the shortest at its end”. The Kṛta Yuga is the first age, which lasts 4,000 years, “plus 400 years of dawn and as many of twilight; then come the Tretā Yuga of 3,000 years, Dwāpara Yuga of 2,000, and Kali Yuga of 1,000 years (plus, of course, their corresponding dawns and twilights). Hence a Mahāyuga lasts 12,000 years.” ²

These ages are similar to the four ages that have been depicted in the Mazdean prophetic texts, such as the ZVY, Jāmāspnāmeh, Dēnkart, Zātsparm, and so forth. As was mentioned earlier, according to the ZVY there are four ages in Giti.

(6) Ormazd said to Sepitimn Zoroaster: ‘the one stemmed tree that you saw (in the dream that god appears to him) is the Giti that I created. (7) Those four branches (of that tree) are four ages that would arrive. (8) That of golden is the one that you and I talk religiously, and King Goshtāsp converts to religion, and breaks the body of demons, and demons that avoid being visible, do covertly. (9) That of silver belongs to King Ardeshir Kay (Bahman). (10) And that of steel is the age of King Anousheh Ravān Khosrow son of Kovāt (Qobād). (11) And that of mixed iron (gomikhteht). In this period disheveled hair demons who are from the gene of Anger would reign." ³

The Zātsparm divides the Giti into four equal durations of 3,000 years; however, Ahreman who is in a state of preknowledge, or unconsciousness, in the first six millennia, attacks the kingdom of Ormazd in the beginning of seventh millennium and kills

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¹ Ibid. p. 113. Qerān, in Islamic literature, is the closest one to Yuga.
² Manu, I, 69ff, Mahābhārata, III, 12,826. Quoted in Eliade, ibid.
³ Pahlavi Gomikhteh (گومیخته) = rotten, polluted, corroded, and also mixed.
Giyomarth (First man). The last six millennia, in this and some other texts, are called mixed time (gumézišn), because Good and Evil creatures intermingle together and their battle for the sovereignty of the world goes on constantly. The last six millennia, accordingly, are divided into two “Great Times” of 3000 years. At the end of the first three-thousand, 7-9th millennium, the epiphany of Zoroaster (paradisal beginning) occurs and justice spreads again all over the earth for a short period of time. In the next “Great Time,” which is divided into three millennia, Hoshidar, Hoshidarmāh, and Soshiān appear consecutively at the end of each millennium.¹

In both texts, as much as it is clear, the concept of four ages is depicted by the insignificant differences concerning the length of each age. Nonetheless they particularly have one thing in common with their Indian counterpart and this is the unequal duration of each age. The same thing can be found in the Shāhnāmeh. The major act, which symbolically accomplished each duration, is killing or imprisoning the demons; the next act is recreating the age of gold. Accordingly, the act of demolishing of demons should be hypothetically seen at the end of the tenth, eleventh, and finally twelfth millennium.

In each age, thus, three major acts would take place: creation-destruction-recreation. In the eve of the seventh millennium Giyomarth, as well as Barsam (holy vegetable) and Barmānion (the cow, which is Barmāyeh in the story of Feraydon in the Shāhnāmeh), are killed by Ahreman.² These are the first sins made by Evil himself in order to end the age of gold. Ormazd, in order to stop evil and at the same time prepare

¹ Zádspar, p. 72. Quoted in Bahār, Pauheshi dar Asātir-e Iran, p. 72, note 5.
² In Shāhnāmeh’s version this is Siyāmak who is killed by Khazarvān Deev, instead of his father Giyomarth.
for the last battle, creates Giti, the material world; and creates the existing beings that live in the age of gold, from the seed of vegetable, cow, and Giyomarth. According to the Shāhnāmeh, Khazarvān/Seyah Deev, Dzahhāk, and Afrāsiyāb are three demonic personas that destroy the heavenly kingdom of Ormazd on earth during the 7th, 8th, and 9th millennia. On the other hand, there are Hushang, Jamshid, Feraydon, and Kay-Khosrow who recreate it. These names, however, have not come in any part of ZVY; instead Zoroaster is the one mentioned as the first messiah of the first three thousand years (the "Great Time") at the end of tenth millennium. By recreating the paradisal beginning, according to the ZVY and Zarātushtnāmeh, Zoroaster winds up the last millennium of the "Great Time." The next three millennia are the replications of Zoroaster's age, but in the shorter durations, which again make the schema similar to the Indian speculation of cosmic years. Thus, to make the needed terminologies clear, let us add that each schema here is structurally equal to one duration of creation-destruction-recreation, whether it occupies a "Great Time," millennium, or just a period of a millennium.

Ferdowsi, undoubtedly, has used this prototype structurally and conceptually, as he has used other extra-models inside each schema, and we shall talk about this later. Nevertheless, we have to be cautious about the schema, because for some reasons that we shall come back to later on it recurs with different concepts in different places. According to the schema of the creation-destruction-recreation, which could be considered as the main plot of the work, highlighted by demons' attacks or kings' sins in every schema, there can be found seven ages from Giyomarth down to Kay-Goshtāsp.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literary genre</th>
<th>Good/Creation</th>
<th>Sin/Or be killed</th>
<th>End of male line</th>
<th>Evil agent/Destruction</th>
<th>Messianic act/Recreation of good</th>
<th>hero</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Mythical</td>
<td>Giyomarth</td>
<td>Killed Siyāmak</td>
<td>Khazarvān Dev</td>
<td>Hushang</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Mythical</td>
<td>Tahmoreth</td>
<td></td>
<td>demons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Mythical</td>
<td>Jamshid</td>
<td>Jamshid sins</td>
<td>Captured two daughters of Jamshid by Dzahhāk</td>
<td>Destruction Dzahhāk, Abduction of Jamshid’s daughter</td>
<td>Feraydon</td>
<td>Kāveh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Mythical/Epic</td>
<td>Feraydon</td>
<td>Killed Iraj</td>
<td>End of male line</td>
<td>Salm-Tur</td>
<td>Manuchehr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Mythical/Epic</td>
<td>Nowzar</td>
<td>Nowzar, unjust</td>
<td>End of male line</td>
<td>Destruction Afrāsiyāb</td>
<td>Kay-Qobād Found by Rostam</td>
<td>Zāl/Rostam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Mythical/Epic</td>
<td>Kay-Kāvus</td>
<td>Sins/faults Kāvus / Siyāvash; Tus/Forud</td>
<td>End of male line, Bejan o Manijeh Changes the situation</td>
<td>Destruction Afrāsiyāb</td>
<td>Kay-Khosrow Found by Giv</td>
<td>Rostam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Mythical/epical and including historical person(s)</td>
<td>Lohrāsp/Goshtāsp</td>
<td>Sins/faults Goshtāsp</td>
<td>Abducting Isfandiyār’s sisters</td>
<td>Arjāsp, Abduction of Isfandiyār’s sisters</td>
<td>Zoroaster/Goshtāsp</td>
<td>Zarrir/Isfandiyār</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 the motif of sin/catastrophe in the first section
The schemata 1, 2, 4, and 5 are formed by the simple concept of the attack on
good by evil without any reason.\(^1\) The rest of the schemata are a combination of the two
motifs of sin/suffering and messianic expectation. As we can see in these schemata,
again, the triangle of gods, which we already talked about in the second chapter, is the
functional archetype for the first and second part of the plot: good, void (the king who in
the best case makes a mistake and in bad cases sins), and evil; messiah/king comes to end
this period and unites the lands. The first king, according to this pattern, is normally a
just king; in some cases he becomes unjust, for instance Jamshid. The second king is the
good one who becomes unjust in the second half of his reign – if the first king is just the
second or third one will be unjust – e.g. Kay-Kāvus and Goshtāsp come after just kings.
Hence the second king, like Vāy, has a double sided character. The first part, which is
closer to the just king, is good; and the second part, which is closer to the evil king, is
bad. It is his sinful or unlawful acts that lead society and nature to catastrophes, and can
thus be considered as the cause of historical change. Disasters and calamities occur
sometimes in both society and nature and sometimes in just one of them. Catastrophic
events leave sovereignty to the evil king. This is the major consequence of the historical
cause, which is at the same time one of the important parts of the cosmic battle of good
and evil. The unjust king in the second part is typically the replication of Vāy or Zurvān
with the void space between good and evil; for instance Kay-Kāvus and Goshtāsp who
with their greediness have a tendency towards evil from the beginning. The first of
Kāvus’s transgressions, considered as sins here, are the invasions of Māzandarān,

\(^1\) Schema 2 can be hardly considered as an age, because it is not completed at all. Schema 4 does not
completely match with the others, because, it somehow relies on Feraydon’s fault.
Hāmāvarān, and then his flying to the skies. Following these events we have two stories, in which two sons - of his hero, Rostam, and his own - were killed. Kay-Kāvus, in these stories, is not a direct cause; however, his mistakes lead to the bloodshed of Sohrāb and Siyāvash.¹ Kay-Khosrow does not sin himself, but by killing Forud, Tus does. As a result Iranians get killed massively.

Tyranny and calamity are the effects of the acts carried out by the evil king in every schema. Dzahhāk and Afrāsiyāb provide the most famous examples. Tyranny and calamity will always be ended by the triumph of a messiah/king whose duty is to put an end to unjust demonic reign and reestablish the age of gold.

With the reign of Bahman the epic section comes to an end, and the historical section begins, first with historical figures, then with the historical events.² Nonetheless, the stories form the very same plot and temporal organization not just in Goshtāsp/Bahman’s age, but even in the Sāsānian epoch. In a sense, the historical materials are narrated in the same mythical fashion and with the purpose of evoking a metahistorical meaning rather than as a collecting or recollecting of history. In other words, they are dominantly and most likely fashioned in the way that legends have been dealt with in the first and second section. As the Chadwick’s note “The memory of the collectivity is unhistorical.” and they go on “[t]he memory of historical event modified, after two or three centuries, in such a way that it can enter into the mold of the archaic

¹ Sohrāb dies at the end because Kāvus does not give Rostam the remedy that he has in his treasury. In the story of Siyāvash his fault is bigger; here he wants Siyāvash as a commader to give up his moral tear the peace treaty, kill the hostages, and attack Turān. Siyāvash, instead, gives up the throne and exiles himself to Turān where he is killed by Afrāsiyāb.
² Bahman, and earlier Zoroaster and Goshtāsp, are historical figures that appear in the mythical section, whereas most of the events of their time are unhistorical.
mentality, which cannot accept what is individual and preserves only what is exemplary."¹ "The reduction of events to categories and of individuals to archetypes,"² carried out by the consciousness of ancient people down to our day, is the major reason for transforming history into myth. The triangle of forces, however, is the main tool used to mold the events into a schema. Here are the schemata that are outlined in the historical section:

² Ibid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literary genre</th>
<th>Good/Creation</th>
<th>Sin/Or be killed</th>
<th>End of male line</th>
<th>Evil agent/DeSTRUCTION</th>
<th>Messianic act/Recreation of good</th>
<th>hero</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8) Epical</td>
<td>Bahman</td>
<td>Bahman/Homāi</td>
<td>By abandoning her son</td>
<td>Romans</td>
<td>Dārāb</td>
<td>Dārāb himself¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Historical, With the sense of epic</td>
<td>Dārāb</td>
<td>Dārāb/Dārā/ Ardavān</td>
<td>Sāsān son of Bahman disappeared</td>
<td>Alexander Haftvād (Roshanak, daughter of Dārāb)</td>
<td>Ardeshr grandson of Sāsān son of Bahman</td>
<td>Ardeshr himself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Historical</td>
<td>Shāpoor</td>
<td>Ormanzd/Bahrām/Bahrām/Bahrām/Nersi (these people were just, but their function is otherwise)</td>
<td>Male line ends</td>
<td>Romans/Arabs/Māni</td>
<td>Shāpoor II</td>
<td>Shāpoor II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) Historical</td>
<td>Ardeshr (brother of Shāpoor)/Shāpoor of Shāpoor/Bahrām of Shāpoor</td>
<td>Yazdegerd the criminal, Choosing Khosrow not Bahrām Goor, this unit has the same function that the motif of end of man line does.</td>
<td>Turks</td>
<td>Bahram Goor unlike Jamshid makes a few mistakes first then becomes a just king, Turks attack because of his mistakes</td>
<td>Bahram Goor himself</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) Historical</td>
<td>Ormazd of Yazdegerd/Pirooz</td>
<td>Pirooz</td>
<td>Khoshnavaż</td>
<td>Blαʃh/ Qobād</td>
<td>Sουfzāi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) Historical</td>
<td>Qobād</td>
<td>Qobād (killing Soufzāi/ converting to Mazdak)</td>
<td>Mazdak</td>
<td>Anoshe Ravān</td>
<td>Anoshe Ravān</td>
<td>Anoshe Ravān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) Historical</td>
<td>Anoshe Ravān/Ormazd</td>
<td>Anoshe Ravān (killing his son Ormazd (criminal))</td>
<td>Romans/Arabs/Turks</td>
<td>Khosrow Parviz</td>
<td>Bahram Choubineh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ The king and hero are apparently the same when he begins the new era or dynasty, for instance, Feraydon who could be considered as an archetypal example; but there are some exceptions to this too, for example Bahrām Goor and Anosheh Ravān.

Table 4 the motif of sin/chapasrophe in the second section
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>15</th>
<th>Historical</th>
<th>Khousro Parviz</th>
<th>Khousro (killing Bahrām)/ Qobād/ Shirouyeh/ Ardeshir/Gorāz/ Pourāndokht/ Āzarmidokht/ Yazdegerd</th>
<th>End of male line</th>
<th>Arabs</th>
<th>/Yazdegerd/</th>
<th>Rostam Farokhzād</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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The most revealing thing here is that the schema, as the tables show, is a kind of repetitive plot with almost similar actions and units, in all sections. Thus, it categorically falls into the theory of cyclical time, which is a reflection of Karma in the theory of history. The repetitive ages or schemata, at the same time, shape one “great schema” with a unique outcome, which is the apocalyptic battle between Good and Evil at the end, Shāhnāmeh has narrated the replica of this event in the stories such as Feraydon or Kay-Khosrow.

There is a contradiction here between these two concepts. One constructs the story of the world from the cosmic point of view within a limited cyclical time; and the other one sees it from the medieval perspective of history, in which replication of events happens with the purpose of teaching moral lessons to man. Cause and effect in the former are set by the supreme power before creation and would not be changed under any circumstances; whereas in the latter case, cause and effect – as god’s laws – are predictive but at the same time can be prevented by the acts of a just king in particular and man in general. On one hand, there is Dzahhāk whose nature is devilish, regardless of Jamshid’s sin, and his destiny is to be killed by Garshāsp before the ending the world; on the other hand we have Jamshid who loses his “farreh,” life, and kingdom as a consequence of his sin, which can be reckoned as a series of preventive acts. His sin finally creates a situation in which a tyrant king like Dzahhāk can overthrow him. He has the chance to stop the incident, but as soon as it happens Dzahhāk gains power and nobody can put an end to his sovereignty except the messiah of that millennium. In other words, the divine law of sin/suffering is unchangeable, but in action it can be prevented
by man. Because Dzahhāk's acts are the result of his nature that cannot be changed under any circumstances, he is killed or overthrown according to the destiny that has been written in eternity before his time or the Creation. Jamshid, on the other hand, is punished by his God and people for his sins. There are omens that indicate his sins or faults: clouds stop raining, trees stop fruiting, lands stop cropping, and people stop supporting their king; in this time the human life decreases from 1000 to 100 years.\(^1\) "It will be a time when the wicked will prey as enemies upon the good, when neither law nor order nor military discipline will be observed, when none will respect gray hairs, or do the offices of piety, nor take pity upon women and children."\(^2\) These are the astrological doctrines popularized in the Greco-Oriental world most of which, or at least comparable ones, can be found in the prediction of Rostam Farokhzād at the end of the Shāhnāme or in the ZVY and Mahdi-e Mo'ud.\(^3\) The most dreadful thing that happens under this situation is the division of lands into three or more countries. Mazdean texts see the division of the world as Jamshid's sin, but in the Shāhnāmeh this does not happen until Feraydon.

Kings sin, but it is society that has to suffer. Here again we see a kind of predestined concept, which is written by man but under a law or order that has been carved out by the supreme force. This is the concept of history that was widely popular

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\(^1\) Like the duration of a millennium that decreases from 3000 to 1000 years. The schemata of the Shāhnāmeh decrease successively.

\(^2\) Divinac Institutions, VII, 17, 9; Cumont, p. 81; quoted by Eliade, ibid. p. 127.

\(^3\) Shāhnāmeh, Moscow edition, pp.318-321, II.88-133.
ZVY, pp. 68-70.
Mahdi-e Mo'ud, pp. 944-958.
in the medieval period and apparently Ferdowsi, as well as writers such as Tarsusi and Bighami, have molded their works according to it.

Both philosophies existed in antiquity too, and in most later traditions. Under the first philosophy, as was mentioned earlier, cosmic systems with their periods and expectations have been fashioned. The Iranian tradition, like other Indo-European branches, was preoccupied with the symmetrical ages whose destinies are written in eternity. Under this notion, in Iranian beliefs generally rather than just in Zoroastrianism, man’s duty is nothing but helping good in his battles against evil and his creatures. The battles occur in a hierarchical fashion. In other words, everybody’s task is fighting against his counterpart: Ormazd against Ahreman; supreme angels (Seven Imshâspandân) against seven devils (Kamâleh Deevân); “farehmand” king or messiah against the demonic king; his hero against the demon’s hero; and so forth. Furthermore, everybody has a period of time to carry out his duty. In fact, this is one of the most important principles among the Iranians. The “history apportioned to the universe is limited”, Eliade points out, “and the end of the world coincides with the destruction of sinners, the resurrection of the dead, and the victory of eternity over time.”\(^1\)

The cosmic year, according to astronomers such as Biruni and Khayâm, has been circumspectly categorized under three or four different durations; three is rare but a four age concept is dominant, both in Pahlavi and Persian texts. According to the dominant notion, although in details there are differences from one source to another, there are four

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\(^1\) Eliade, ibid. p. 129.
kinds of conjunctions ("qerān(s)"): the greatest conjunction (qerān-e aqdam\(^1\)) with the length of 2940 years or so, equal to the "Great Time"; the great conjunction (qerān-e a'zam) with the length of 980 years, equal to a millennium; medium conjunction (qerān-e owsat) with the length of 245 years or so, which has been seen as equal with the age of a dynasty; and finally, the smallest conjunction (qerān-e asqar) with the length of 20 years, which is equal with a single reign’s duration.\(^2\) We do not see such details in surviving Pahlavi texts; nonetheless, the concept is implicitly there and Pahlavi sources can be presumed to have been the major sources for the post-Islamic texts, either in Persian or Arabic.

On the other hand, the concept of Indian karma, too, has had a great influence on Iranian religious thought. This notion has especially influenced the second philosophy, in which the concept of history as cyclical time under the motif of sin/suffering is vividly crystallized. The concept, which was also widespread in the ancient world, acts at a lower level, and indicates the power of god over man in order to prohibit him from acting outside of prescribed archetypes, which is the greatest sin in ancient society. This concept can be found in the works such as *Great Bondahesh, Bondahesh* in Pahlavi and *Al-Tafhim* and *Nowroznāmeh* in Persian. Biruni in his remarkable works, *Al-Tafhim, Māl-I-Hend*, and *Āthār al-Bāqieh*, articulates the system from two perspectives. In both respects, as is clear, Iranian traditions are almost similar. The common factors among all go back to the theory of the four great ages, of the seven millennia, and of the destiny of

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\(^1\) Aqdam (آباد) here could be read either the oldest or greater. If we read it according to the first meaning, the concept resembles to the Indian notion of ages.

\(^2\) See Biruni, ibid. *Al-Tafhim*, p. 55. Also see: *Nowroznāmeh*, by Khayām. It is noticeable that Khayām’s system is different than Beruni’s. He calculates the age of the world with different measures.
mankind which is in god’s hand. The differences, however, go back to the length of the durations, and whether there are three, four ages, or seven ages. Four and seven are more common and can be found in both Islamic and Zoroastrian sources.

Cause/effect, in this doctrine, does not imply a natural or social causality system, although it is defined under these systems. It seems that for Aristotle cause, in a broad sense, had a divine origin, which, of course, was far from the modern concept of cause and effect in either natural sciences or artistic genres. The kingdom of Oedipus is ruined because he sins, although unknowingly. Here in this story natural laws cease to function because of the divine laws that prohibit incestuous marriage or the murder of a father in the first place. Oedipus does these sins and consequently his kingdom is swallowed up by catastrophic events, and he and his people are powerless to save themselves. What does this story mean to an archaic or medieval man? For a man who belongs to a traditional culture and always has to imitate an “extra-human” model, it means his king has failed to follow in the model’s steps and as a consequence, the divine forces have become angry with him or his king; or a certain magical or demonic force has annexed the king’s soul.

Cause and effect in this belief follow the will of the gods, either good or evil and the laws and orders they have forcefully placed for man. Even physics and natural laws, accordingly, are part of gods’ powers and occur if the gods want them to. Thus these laws can be bent or proceed differently, if the divine beings wish. Man is framed within these laws and orders. But there are some ways for man to escape from history: “whether he abolishes it periodically,” says Eliade, “whether he devaluates it by perpetually finding

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transhistorical models and archetypes for it, whether, finally, he gives it a metahistorical meaning (cyclical theory, eschatological significations, and so on)." With his negative attitude towards history, the man of ancient India put the cause and effect relations into the karma theory in order to turn meaningless events and aimless figures into archetypes and models. The same concept is found in Persian, whether in narrative, philosophy, or as a religious notion, though karma in Indian speculation has deeper roots than it has in Iranian thought. The traces of this concept, however, are not hard to perceive in Persian narratives in general and in the Shāhnāmeh in particular.

The recurring events of the Shāhnāmeh that were outlined in the tables show that there are both theories of "successive age" and "Great Time" utilized in order to make the work mythically meaningful, especially in the historical section in which the other effective archetypes and topoi are also used with the aim of making it meaningful. In other words, the key-motif of devil/messiah, under the theory of Great Time, has shaped the whole work as one unit with the discursive theme of messianic expectation, where the key-motif of sin/suffering, in the lower level, has formed the repetitive events under the theory of successive ages.

With sin/suffering, as an archetype, the fifteen successive ages that we outlined in the tables can be seen as distinct from each other; however it is hard to divide the cosmic year under the theory of Great Times because there are several sets of criteria that can play a role in this. In other words, there is a chance to have different Great Times under

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1 Eliade, ibid. p. 141.
different criteria. Thus we will try to characterize them according to different measurements.

In respect to the criteria below, four ages can be found in the *Shāhnāmeh* that are almost similar to those of Zoroastrian speculation as well as Indian. Under this notion there are two distinctive criteria that distinguish the ages from each other. 1) the most distinguishing aspect of the major demon of the age is his long length of ascendancy; 2) The messiah of that age that is distinguished from other great kings by several criteria: his anomalous birth and upbringing; his just and wise manner; his bravery in war; his extraordinary weapon; unordinary battles; and last but foremost the help he gets from his hero. According to these measures the first Great Time starts with the reign of Giyomarth and ends with the reign of Feraydon, the length of this age, according to the *Shāhnāmeh*, is 1670 years, which, in comparison to the first Indian age, is the longest one, even if it occupies just a small portion of Ferdowsi’s work. Furthermore, it has only three shorter epochs, despite being the longest age. The very first one, which is also the first successive age in the book, is indicated by two elements, the death of Siyāmak, the son of Giyomarth and rise of the dev Khazarvān. Hushang, son of Siyāmak, is the just king who kills the dev and recreates the age of gold in this part; the second one is not completed. Tahmoreth kills the demons and then dies; the third period is denoted by the sin of Jamshid, the reign of demon Dzahhâk, and finally the uprising of Feraydon as the messiah of the Great Time. Kāveh is the hero of Feraydon, even though he does not have a significant role in the story and the messiah himself conducts the war against Dzahhâk without any significant help from him.

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The second Great Time starts when Feraydon is crowned and continues to the end of Kay-Khosrow's reign. Here we find three successive ages: in the first one, Feraydon is a just king who seemingly makes a faulty decision when he gives the best part of the world to his youngest son, Iraj. It is noticeable that his act is not considered a sin or fault in the *Shāhnāmeh* or any other accounts; however, it functions as one here in the story. Consequently, his first two sons become enemies of Iraj, and kill him for the sake of land. Manuchehr is the just king who comes to take revenge for his grandfather, Iraj. Next is the age of Manuchehr down to Qoبد. Nowzar is an unjust king who is killed by the demon Afrasiyab, and then Kay-Qoبد is brought from Alborz Mountain by Rostam and, as a just king, recreates the age of gold for 100 years. Here we have some characteristic motifs of the messianic king and his hero, but the archetype is not completed. In other words, it is just a projection of an imminent age.

The next stage, which is intentionally lengthened by Ferdowsi, can be called the age of Kay-Khosrow; here we see the full duration with the combination of cosmic and historical motifs and devices. Kay-Kāvus, son of Qoبد, is the first king of this era and commits several sins from Ferdowsi's point of view. There are the invasions of Māzandarān and Hāmāvarān, despite the peace treaties that Feraydon had with the areas; then there is an attempt to fly to the skies; moreover there are his mistakes towards two sons, Sohrāb and Siyāvash. He is, in Ferdowsi's narrative, indirectly responsible for the

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1 In the *Avesta* and Indian ancient sources the Division of the world refers to Yama (Jamshid). In the *Shāhnāmeh* the Division of social classes refers to Jamshid and of the lands to Feraydon. See: Chapter II on this matter.
death of Sohrab and Siyavash. He does not give the remedy to Rostam to save the life of Sohrab at the end of their battle; and pushes his son, Siyavash, to do immoral acts in tearing apart the peace treaty, killing the hostages (Afrasiyab’s relatives), and attacking Turan when they had already made peace. Not agreeing with these, Siyavash has no choice but to exile himself to Turan where he will be killed by Afrasiyab. In the causality system of the narrative, Kavus’s acts are considered as the indirect causes for the deaths of Sohrab and Siyavash. Afrasiyab is still the demonic king of Turan who murders Nowzar, his brother Aqrirath, and Siyavash, and destroys Iranshahr several times. Kay-Khosrow is the king/messiah of the millennium who executes Afrasiyab and his brother at the end and recreates the age of gold; furthermore, Rostam who was the hero of Kay-Qobad is his hero too. The length of this Great Time without Feraydon’s reign would be around 346 years, which is shorter than the first one, but longer than the next age, as in the Indian system. If we ignore the age of Iraj/Tur, which was not mentioned in the Shahnâme, and instead add the age of Zoroaster/Goshtasp to this Great Time, the duration would be 586 years.

Although it is the most important millennium in Zoroastrianism, the fourth age, however, has a concise version in the Shahnâme. The first king of this age is Lohrâsp, then Goshtasp rules and Zoroaster, the messiah, appears at this time. Arjâsp is the demon of the era, and Isfandiyâr is the hero. The story, however, here is very different from the others, although the causality systems, motifs, and archetypes are the same. Goshtasp is the king who sins in respect of the historical theory. He forces his father to give up the

\(^1\) Avestâ sees Kâvus as unequivically good.
crown to him before the death of Lohrāsp; later he does not give it to his son, once he wants the crown; then he conspires to send him to get killed by Rostam. The parallel story goes under the messianic motif: Demon Arjāsp attacks Iran and kills the holy people including Lohrāsp; then Isfandiyār who is in his father’s prison is summoned by him to go after the demon. The overall setting of the story is different from the others. If the sequence of the units in the Kay-Khosrow story, for instance, is a norm, then we have to say that the setting of Goshtāsp story is a complete deviation from the norm, because after the victory of Isfandiyār over Arjāsp instead of seeing the recreation of the golden age, we see the battle of Isfandiyār against Rostam. The reign of Bahman is the last part of this age, and here the narrative is concerned with only two events: his war against Rostam’s family, and his marriage to his daughter, Homāī. These actions could be considered as the sins for the next successive age, from Ferdowsi’s view, or could be seen as the topos of end of male line.

And finally the fifth age, which is even blurrier than the fourth one. Furthermore the cycle of time in this millennium is not ended. Another problem here in respect of discursive narrative that we have in others is the story of Alexander almost at the beginning of the age. We see attempts to mythicize the historical events and the successive age pattern that indicates this attempt; however, at the same time it is clear that the discourse is broken or rather has been merged with another discursive narrative that is not originally Iranian or even Indo-European. The story of Alexander highlights the problem vividly. Unlike other stories, there is no evil persona in this story. Besides that, and in consequence of it, the story does not have any significant conflict. The same
problem can be found in the story of Ardeshr, because the demon of this story, Alexander, is already dead and thus there cannot be a final conflict between them. One could suggest that the story of Haftvād and even Mehrak Jahrowmi are deliberately inserted to fill the gap, because in this case the story can be dragged back into the traditional Iranian discourse in order to make the historical events meaningful. Apparently the stories are made up by the Sāsānian writers, because the same units have occurred in the epic of Kārnāmak Artaxshir Pāpakān.

There are six more successive ages, which are likely to have been mythicized by the historians or storytellers of the late Sāsānian era. The reasons for this, on one hand, are the same ancient discursive narrative that has been added to the events, and on the other hand the function of the kings and heroes that are categorized into two types of good and unjust king. There, also, we find two hero-like characters, Sofrā and Bahrām Choubineh; nonetheless the Great Time does not end with the last conflict of messiah and demons. Instead, the epic ends at a crucial time, which is the first historical battle at Qādesiyeh, between Iranians and Muslems. At this point a letter by the Iranian commander, Rostam Farokhzād, projects the reign of the Arabs and the demonic events that will occur in the next four hundred years. Thus the battle is categorized as the first conflict of Iranians and demons and indicates that after four hundred years the Iranians will take back the sovereignty from Arabs.

There, also, could be another set of Great Times if we bring some other factors into the discussion. First let us see what these measures are and what categorical criteria they make: a demon king is the most important indication, but in addition there are just
two foreign kings who invade and reign over Iran: Dzahhāk and Afrāsiyāb/Alexander. There is no question about the first tyrant, because all sources, Avestan, Pahlavi, Persian, and others, picture him as the most demonized king on the earth. However there is an unclear picture about the second one, Afrāsiyāb. He could be the second one, particularly when we see that all elements of the messianic narrative are there. But there is one crucial element missing in his story, he never reigns over Iran, as Dzahhāk and Alexander did; albeit, he overthrows and kills the Iranian king and prince and destroys the cities, castles, and farms in Iran. On the other hand there is Alexander who overthrows the king and governs Iran for a period of time. But, Alexander is shown from different perspectives in the *Shāhnāmeh* as well as some other sources. He is a great king to Greeks and ancient Egyptians, prophet to Arabs, but an illegitimate invader in Iranian sources prior to Islam. *Shāhnāmeh*, unlike most historical sources in Islamic world that saw Alexander as a prophet or messiah, swings between the prophetic perspective and the demonic invader. In *Shāhnāmeh*’s version, we see a shadow of both aspects here and there, but later in the story of Ardesthār Pāpakān he is presented as the demon of the era. Before and after these two, only Iranian kings govern over at least Iran. Alexander is not found in the *Avestā*, whereas Afrāsiyāb is a demonic king in this book, similar to Dzahhāk. It seems Ferdowsi has used or adopted a moderate version instead of the versions which could be told or written by Iranians/Zoroastrians before or after Islam, in which they saw Alexander as being as demonic as Afrāsiyāb. Traces of this narrative can be found in the historical section of the *Shāhnāmeh*, and in Persian novels such as the *Dārābnāmeh* Tarsusi.
If we take these two as the dividers of the ages then we find three Great Times in the whole book: 1) from Giyomarth to Feraydon; then from Manuchehr to Kay-Khosrow/Ardeshir Pāpakān; and from Lohrāsp/Shāpoor to invasion of Iran by Muslems, which could be the third foreign demonic sovereignty after Afrāsiyāb/Alexander. There is no doubt that Zoroastrian texts such as the Zand Vahuman Yasn and the Jāmāspnāmeh, and a number of Persian works as well, see the invasion of Arabs in this context, and the Shāhnāmeh is a good example of the same tendency. By foretelling the future from the tongue of Rostam Farokhzād, Ferdowsi contextualizes the demonic sovereignty in an artistic technique in order to avoid the Muslem oppression. Similar elements, archetypes, and devices in the narrative of the demonic kings lead us to reckon that the untold story of the Arab invasion is the second part of the third Great Time, which is equal to the destruction era according to Eliade’s terminology. Some other elements associated with the topoi of un-Iranian kings are useful to develop this hypothesis. As was mentioned before, the archetype of waiting for the next king/messiah is the most crucial element associated with this topos. Next to this are some archetypes and topoi such as ending the male line before or around the reign of demonic king and the birth of messiahs and their heroes under the reign of demons. This topos appears several times, but it has a crucial role in three places, before and around the reigns of Dzahhāk and Afrāsiyāb, and the story of the Arabs at the end.

Besides these two concepts there is another doctrine that should be considered here, because we clearly see its effect on the Shāhnāmeh. This concept is, also, a derivation from the Great Time theory; nonetheless it is shaped under the great influence
of Mesopotamian cosmogonic notions. The Iranian syncretism of the idea of seven ages can be found in a wide range of works from the Sāsānian era to post-Islamic Iran, and from religious literature to astronomy. The cyclical structure of time in its astronomic formulas basically goes to the governing of seven millennia by the seven planets.¹ According to this doctrine, the age of the world is seven millennia, and in each millennium humanity is periodically destroyed and reconstituted.² This is akin to the cyclical conception of the creation-destruction-recreation that is preserved in the historical cultures and has also been adopted by Ferdowsi — and most likely the other Shāhnāmehs’ compilers — to construct the fifteen loops of plot in the Shāhnāmeh.

But Ferdowsi does not obtain it from the Semitic/Arabic sources. There are two indications of this. First, there is the same idea in the late Zoroastrian texts such as the Zand Vahuman Yasn, Great Bondaresh, and Bondaresh; second the scheme and even the age divisions that Ferdowsi has adopted are similar to those of the Zand Vahuman Yasn, Jāmāspnāmeh, or Zarātushtnāmeh. In the Zand Vahuman Yasn, for instance, we read:

¹ The notion that each of the seven countries belongs to one of these stars was a dominant notion in the astrological myths of the middle ages. According to this notion when the millennium of a given star arrives its country will be dominant over all other countries. Accordingly, the star of Iran is Bahrām, Mars, and the star of Arabs is Zowreh, Venus. This notion is clearly seen in the bad conjunction that Rostam Farokhzād draws:

```farsi
دگرگشت کر گردش آسمان //پژوهنده مردم شوید بگمان
...
که این خانه از پادشاهی تهیه ماست //نه هنگام پروردگار فرحست
ز جاری همی بنگردند افتخار //کریم جانگ ما را بد اید شتاب
ز بهرام و زهرست ما را گرد //نشاب گشت چنین ز جک بلند
همان نیز کویا برای شست //عطفرد به برج دویچک شست (14) 313-40
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(Moscow edition, 111.35-40, pp. 313-314)

This conjunction and its interpretation were overwhelmingly popular in the post-Islamic Iran and can be found in the works of some astronomers, writers, and poets. For this see the introduction of Homāi on Biruni’s Al-Tafhīm. Homāi here gives several examples from writers such as Biruni, Abu al-Mohāmed Gazzānī, Mas’udd Sa’d Salmān, Abu ’Abdelāh Muhammad ibn Jāber, and so forth. The basic theory and the interpretation that are given by these writers are similar to those of Ferdowsi. See: Biruni, Al-Tafhīm, pp. 73-92.

² For more information on this see: Eliade, The Myth of the Eternal Return, pp. 73-92.

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14) Ormazd said to sepitmān Zoroaster: “What did you see in the dream that I brought to you?”
15) Zoroaster said: “O Ormazdi!…. 19) “I saw a tree with seven branches: a golden, a silver, a
zincous, a brazen, a leaden, a steel, and a mixed iron.” 20) Ormazd said: “O sepitmān Zoroaster! I
foretell this to you. 21) the one stem tree that you saw is the material world that I Ormazd created.
22) those seven branches that you saw are seven times that would come. 23) the golden one is the
reign of Goshtāsp…. 24) the silver (age) is the reign of Ardeshir of Bahman…. 25) the zincous is
the reign of Ardeshir…. 26) the brazen is the reign of Velāsh1…. 27) the leaden age is the reign of
Bahrām Goor…. 28) the age of steel is the reign of Khosrow of Kovād (Anoosheh Ravān)…. 29)
the age of mixed iron that will be the reign of tyrant Deevs….2

It is noticeable that the text carries both cosmologic concepts. The seven-age
cosmology evidently contradicts the four-age one; however, by separating the function of
kings from that of saviors the author attempts to make them synchronized. In other
words, by the seven-age idea the author defines the duty of kings and by the four-age
concept explains the messiahs’ calling. Thus, good kings come to respond to the duty
that history has put on their shoulders, which is saving society from catastrophes by being
just, goodhearted, god’s follower, and so forth; whereas the saviors are to overthrow the
demonic reigns and recreate the age of gold. These concepts overlap in both the Zand
Vahuman Yasn and the Shāhnāmeh. Nonetheless Ferdowsi goes one step farther than the
Zoroastrian texts to take the ancient myths (either from the Avestā or other written or
verbal sources) into account. This could be the reason for having fifteen ages instead of
seven, ten (according to Zoroastrians), or twelve here in the Shāhnāmeh. Ferdowsi
apparently compiled all older and newer interpretations that were available to him; but
the authors of the Zoroastrian apocalyptic texts, who were also biased against pre-

1 Velāsh was one of the Arsacids kings that gathered the Avestā. This had to come before the age of
zincous, as is in the text of Pāzand.
2 Zand Vahoman Yasn, edited by S. Hedayat, pp. 35-36.
Zoroastrian eras, must have tried to ignore these parts of the Avestā, and as a substitute reduced the Sāsānian historical events and kings into the mythical ages and extra-model figures.

The seven ages have sequentially come in the Shāhnāmeh except the age of brass, which is replaced by the age of Kay-Khosrow, the most glorified millennium in the book that appears one period before the age of Goshtāsp/Zoroaster. Hence it could mean that it was the age of Kay-Khosrow which was golden, not the one that Zoroaster appeared in.

Another exception is the kingdom of Goshtāsp. In Zoroastrian texts he is the best king that ever reigned, because he supported Zoroaster and promoted his religion. In the Shāhnāmeh, on the contrary, he is presented as a greedy lying king who sacrifices his son to keep the throne for himself. Besides these two exceptions, Ferdowsi deals with the other ages similarly. First of all they are splendidly recounted; especially the historical ones that, in contrast with the analogous historical accounts of that epoch, are unquestionably mythicized and promoted to the level of legends. Secondly they are used with the same purpose in terms of both cosmology and history.

To sum up, the Shāhnāmeh, in respect of Great Time, does not exhibit a single coherent structure; and above all, its author does not intend to form it under one notion. But when it comes to the temporal organization, which is organized according to the “successive ages,” the poet pursues one structural plot and causality system over the whole work. It is obvious that a particular cosmic system was a dominant concept in ancient Iran. There is sufficient evidence for this in Zoroastrian texts as well as in post-Islamic literature: the concepts of apocalypse and resurrection that have been preserved
in the religious texts on one hand, and the concept of the millenary ages in astrology, which were anecdotal parallel to the cosmic year in mythology, on the other. The Shāhnāmehs that had been compiled by several authors prior to Ferdowsi, and preserved most likely in Arabic and Persian historical traditions, as well as the Persian epics, and astro-religious literature indicate that both overwhelmingly popular concepts were simultaneously used by the writers. Thus Ferdowsi should have been comfortable with both of them. As Dick Davis suggests, Ferdowsi has hardly created any stories;¹ in addition, it is hard to attest that he has used any motif or archetype different from those that others had used before him. Zoroastrian texts, such as the Zand Vahuman Yasn and epics such as Abu-Moslimnāmeh confirm this claim by using the same concepts, motifs, archetypes, and story lines. Besides, these concepts, in all Zoroastrian and Irano-Islamic literature, have had a major role in constructing the plots of apocalyptic stories.

Now that we have obtained an overall picture of the work in respect of time and temporal organization, it is time to dig into just one schema/age in order to study the archetypes, topoi, and rituals that ultimately put the text into the messianic context. The next chapters are to study the archetypes, topoi, and rituals that have been utilized in the particular age, the age of Kay-Khosrow for instance, in order to illustrate the narrative discourse that we have been talking about since the beginning.

¹ It is needless to say that the creativity of Ferdowsi is rather in the realm of poetic ability than narrative.

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CHAPTER 5

THE SYNTAX OF THE SCHEMA

In the first part in order to pin down the Shāhnāmeh's narrative we had to apply an inductive approach in order to see the Iranian mythological principles through the poem; in this part, however, we are going to deal with just one schema or "Great Time," if you will, which includes the three successive ages of Manuchehr, Kay-Qobād, and Kay-Khosrow,\(^1\) in a deductive approach with the aim of breaking down the crucial units that make up the narrative syntax of the schema works. In this schema which is the longest and most detailed part of the text we are going to study three kinds of morphologies that the schema has been apparently shaped by.\(^2\) Here, thus, we will examine the order of archetypes and topoi, which appear on the syntagmatic axis of the schema, to make the schema meaningfully functional. The order of these topoi and archetypes has indeed a divine model, called a cosmological year, which conceives the morphology of messianic

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\(^1\) It also can be from Giyomarth to Kay-Khosrow. See: next chapter on this.

\(^2\) We shall explain the three morphological syntaxes in a minute.
expectation in the Shāhnāmah, as well as the Zand Vahuman Yasn, Zaratushtnāmah, and Jāmāspnāmah. The morphology of history and seasonal changes are also conceived from within the morphology of messianic expectation.

In order to draw the outline of the schema we need a kind of grammatical model with a common structure. With respect to a syntagmatic axis, the natural language, as a symbolic activity, is the closest system to narration, because both use one basic system, although with different purposes. Besides the natural language there is another language which could help us here with its reactualizing and conceptual apparatus units. This language is the system of rites. But let us consider the necessity of the natural language first. Insofar as narrative and language are seen as symbolic activities we will find a two-way relation between them, in which similar categories and tools can be found. Hence, as a structural approach, we can borrow categories from the rich conceptual apparatus of linguistic studies in order to establish a set of tools for analyzing the discursive activity of a narration in general and the syntactical order of the Shāhnāmah’s schema in particular.¹

There is a common structure in both language and narration, which is called grammar; this notion implies a kind of universal grammar that apparently transcends the obvious differences among them. According to Todorov, there are some grammatical basis such as agent (subject and object), mood (adjective and adverb), and verb (action) that are common among all languages, either language as such or narrational language

such as myths and rituals.\(^1\) The grammatical terms, as Todorov and Barthes’s analysis show, have, or should have, their equivalents in narration as well.\(^2\) Agent, accordingly, is equal to character, adjective is equal to functional units that directly or indirectly work on the readers’ emotions,\(^3\) and verb is equal to action. Every unit of a story, like each sentence, has, or could have, these three bases. They could also occur separately. In this case, they can be termed narrational, functional and actional units. According to Barthes, fairytales and legends are more functional than actional or narrational. Modern novels are the opposite, more narrational and less functional. Realistic stories such as the nineteenth century novels are somewhere between there two ends of functional and narrational, thus they are considered more actional. Of course it does not mean that a fairytale has no actional or functional units or moods, but it means the functional mood is dominant in these kinds of stories; whereas, narrational devices are most likely dominant in the modern stories. In other words, fairytales and legends have a simple plot with one or two actions and a simple temporal organization. Nineteenth century novels have dominantly a complicated plot but not a very complicated temporal organization. While modern novels and stories have a complicated temporal organization and a loose plot with fewer functional units. For instance, in Rostam’s Haft-Khawn, which is a legend


\(^{2}\) Barthes, ibid. Todorov, instead, uses the grammatical terms: agent or subject for character; verb for action; and adjective or mood for functional unit or proposition.

\(^{3}\) Instead of function Todorov has used the term mood.
containing supernatural elements, the functional mode is stronger than the actional and narrational modes.¹

Without these elements the narrative is, in fact, uncompleted, on both the syntagmatic and paradigmatic axis². Nonetheless, narrative is larger than a sentence yet similar to one. “As everyone knows,” writes Barthes, “linguistics stops at the sentence; it is the last unit that falls within its scope; for if the sentence – being an order and not a sequence – is not reducible to the sum its words, and constitutes therefore an original unit, an enunciation, on the other hand, is nothing but the succession of the sentences it contains.”³ But the problem is that a sentence cannot be perfectly and systematically representative of discourse, because “beyond the sentence, all there can be is more sentences;”⁴ whereas discourse is an arrangement of the sentences, or organization as Barthes suggests, that conveys another “language functioning at a higher level than the language of linguistics: discourse has its units, its rules, its “grammar”.”⁵ Nevertheless, as Benveniste points out, “the linguistics of discourse has not yet developed, but it has

¹ The action, here in this story, is summarized in one sequence: Kay-Kāvus and his commanders are in the hands of Māzandarān Deevs and Rostam goes to save them. The Khawn(s)’ units, however, are functional, because they have come to promote, and at the same time, verify Rostam’s transition from a low level hero to a worldwide savior and Crown Bestower. The Hammāvand war, which is a very important unit, has also a functional role in the middle of Feraydon-Kay-Khosrow’s millennium. The plot has simply one sequence of defeating the enemy’s coalitions. It is, however, narrated in a long symbolic fashion. First the Iranians who set out against Turān’s coalition are in trouble and later when Rostam comes to their aid everything rapidly changes into good for Iranians. This happens with just one shot when Rostam kills Ashkebus with one arrow, following this act the Iranians take the mountain and win the first crucial war against the Turks.
² Distributional and integrative in Barthes’s terminology.
³ Barthes, ibid. p. 239.
⁴ Ibid. p. 240.
⁵ Ibid.
been postulated by linguists themselves.”¹ There is no other choice then but postulating a homologous relation between sentence and discourse, because as Jacobson and Levi-Strauss have pointed out “the human status could be defined as the ability to create secondary, “self-multiplying” systems (tools to make tools, double articulation of language…).” It is therefore, Barthes concludes, “Legitimate to postulate a secondary relation between sentence and discourse,” (here the narrative discourse) “– a homologous relation – to reflect the purely formal character of correspondences.”² In other words, discourse would then be a large “sentence” (whose units do not have to be sentences) in the same way that a sentence is a small “discourse.” Discourse, whether a sentence or multiple sentences, should be an organization in which units are ordered according to a concept. The orders, in the narrative discourse, could be categorized conceptually, rather than the literary genres. The difference between Greek and Persian epics could be studied in their terms. As literary genres both describe heroic actions but as conceptual genres, Iranian epics do not end with the ultimate heroic act. Here the deaths of the savior, his heroes and army chieftains, as well as the decline of the state, are chief parts of their structures, which is radically different from the Greek versions. The diversion goes back to the mythical syntax behind the epics. The mythical syntax, indeed, is the existing historical context that coherently leads every debate in the discourse through all speech genres. The historical context would be seen as the regime of truth that is a paradigm in

² Barthes, Ibid. p. 240.
every aspect and hermeneutically articulates the "self-multiplying system" in the religious, mythical and historical genres as well as literary ones.

To solve the problem, at least for himself and prior to Barthes, Todorov uses the proposition as the smallest unit of the narrative discourse, which is similar to the sentence in language and at the same time larger than that in narrative discourse. A proposition, then, could be a unit at the macro level, or a sentence at the micro level, and has three major factors at the grammatical level — or distributional in Barthes's term: subject/object, verb, and adjective, which "consists of a logic of actions and a syntax of characters, and discourse, comprising tenses, aspects, and modes pertaining to narrative."¹ And on the semantic level, or integrative in Barthes's term, as Levi-Strauss has already specified the "constitutive units of mythical discourse (mythème) become significant only because they appear in clusters which in turn combine among themselves."² Hence topoi can be seen as grammatical propositions or mythemes which are used in an ordered fashion in a discursive context to deliver a particular meaning or image.

Having established these terms, we can go one step further and say that a syntactical order of propositions can be taken as a norm, if it is frequently used by other works — like the Zand Vahuman Yasnl/Shāhnāmeh syntax that is chosen here as a paradigm, in comparison to other syntaxes in Persian epics and romances. Rearranging their position on the syntagmatic axis, or deviating from the norm could thus rephrase the

meaning of a story as well as its genre. In other words, by changing the historical context we may have a new version of the discourse, and we see this in the Shāhnāmeh in comparison to the Mazdean cosmologic and apocalyptic texts.

Here we will try to reconstruct such a pattern, syntax or schema first, and later we will deal with the seven crucial units used in it, in comparison with other sources. But as was mentioned earlier, we also need another kind of semiotic system and this is rituals, in order to put the schema in perspective. Rituals are, in fact, mirror-like images of the cosmogonic myths. They reactitalize the Creation stages in their chronological pattern and actional meaning. They bond the cosmogonic notions and the myths and the stories that are made of those notions. By rituals cosmogony becomes a touching reality, and at the same time it materializes its narratives. The relationship between myths and rituals is a matter of great debate among scholars. But in general, the old hegemony of the "ritual dominant" school is broken. As Beane, following on from Eliade, points out "we no longer think that we have to demonstrate a ritual performance underlying every myth, or show relationship to a hypothetical "New Year's festival" for each ancient Near Eastern myth. But some intimate relationship between many myths and many rituals would be affirmed today by just about every scholar."¹ As a result one could say every ritual, like mythical narratives, has also a divine model, an archetype, which could be read in the cosmogonic system; even though it is not an exact model of the archetype. This in fact, says Eliade, is "well enough known for us to confine ourselves to recalling a few examples." "We must do what the gods did in the beginning" (Satapatha Brahmana, VII,

¹ Myths, Rites, Symbols, p. 132.
2, 2, 4). "Thus the gods did, thus men do" (Taittiriya Brahmana, I, 5 9, 4). We find similar passages in the Avestā too. For instance in "Yašt 5" (Ābān Yašt) Ahourā Mazdā prays to Ardovisour Anāhitā in order to put a divine model before Zoroaster, divine beings and heroes. And they do the same thing in order to show to ordinary people the model that they should imitate. The Indian adage summarizes all the theory underlying rituals in the Avestā as well as the other mythical sources.

Rituals are, or were, a linguistic system, in which actions deliver the meanings. But rituals are not any more part of a complete language as they used to be, especially in Iran where the relationship between myths and rituals has already been broken and thus the rituals do not reflect an exact picture of the ancient divine models anymore. They, in respect to Persian traditions, are just a bunch of scattered symbolic units of a broader language (namely religious myths) that have almost lost or ceded their functions and meanings to another group of myths. Myths, as Levi-Strauss points out, were a combination of three artistic genres: narration, poetry/music, and rituals/dance.¹ Ancient Iranian Rituals, separated from their sources for centuries, are hard to trace in order to find their exact functions and meanings; nonetheless they still function within the culture and in narrative discourse. Having said that, it is also necessary to mention that there is another goal to pursue here in this part that is the reconstruction of myth-related rituals in order to reveal the crucial roles of cosmogonic concepts in the syntax of the Shāhnāmeh. And, in respect to a linguistic approach, if we admit the existence of a kind of universal

grammar for narrative discourse, we should no longer limit it to just one kind of language. Hence, we could use both the natural and ritualistic languages as models in order to outline the syntax of the schemata of the Shāhnāmeh.

But by the same token we have to be careful, because seeing rituals as the reality of the myths could mislead us totally. First and foremost they do not have the firm patterns, as in “patternism” or the “myth and ritual school” has stated.¹ Second it was suggested that “myth emerges out of the cultic life of a people.” Myth is “the spoken correlative of the acted rite.”² “A myth is never basically an etiological explanation of something in nature.” It appears, rather, as “an effort to render intelligible the complex action and drama of ritual.” Larson continues, “[a] myth functions as an important expression of a total cultural reality which has its foundation in cultic action.”³ Here, use of the ritualistic pattern is merely limited to the reconstruction of the basic principles of rituals which are welded with some important elements of myths in ancient Iranian mythology, especially the Norouz traditions, in order to show a symbolic account of the structured ideological system of tripartition characteristic of Proto-Indo-Iranian culture that we have already discussed in the second and third chapters.

First, we need to articulate the discursive structure of the schema, or better yet the seasonal myth, which will be called a morphology of cosmic year from now on, in comparison to the structure of a given language as the grammar of symbolic activities.

³ Ibid.
Second in respect to the theory of history, which makes another syntactic parallel to the first one, we need to articulate the sub-context that composes the successive ages in the first place and accomplishes the Great Time in second; this could be called a morphology of history, even though it is syntactically, but not causally, similar to the first category. And third we need to examine the ritualistic behaviors of Iranian tradition, in particular, as another symbolic activity in order to study the meaningful units (namely topoi) in the whole pattern, which are similar to the apparatus units of a given language on one hand, and in the historical context to cultural signals on the other. The cultural signals would be read under the theory of the myth of the hero, which will be called a morphology of culture from now on. In either case showing the similarities between the Shāhnāmeh and the divine models of ancient Iranian cosmogony will be the main goal of this part.

The theory of the schema as a discourse in a given language will contribute, then, to the knowledge of the grammar; and in return, the study of schema may give us a mirror to see the image of narrative discourse in the language, because, according to Bakhtin, narrative (an utterance genre in his term), is a “dialogic act that is held by at least two people,”¹ there should be an addressee and addressee to send and receive a message. These two are not necessarily seen together all the time, but they are there and the narrative characteristically indicates them in every sentence. A schema, a model created by the divine beings and imitated by the people in every level, helps us to see both creator and imitator, and understand the dialectical relationship between them, especially when

¹ "Story is made out of relationships within people." Bakhtin, M. M. Speech Genres & Other Late Essays, translated by V. McGee, edited by C. Emerson and M. Holquist, University of Texas Press, Austin 1986, pp. 63-64.
there are divine models that should be imitated by both narrator and reader – addressee and addressee in a literary work.

Narrative, in a sense, is a language “with two large levels,” Todorov suggests. At one level is “the story (the argument), which consists of a logic of actions and a “syntax” of characters, and discourse, comprising tenses, aspects, and modes pertaining to narrative.” And at the second level, which is a hierarchy of levels or strata, narrative “project the horizontal concatenations of the narrative onto an implicitly vertical axis; to read a narrative (or listen to it) is not only to pass from one word to the next, but also from one level to the next.” Again, in order to read between the lines of a discursive narration we have no choice but to follow the grammar of narrative, even when we deviate from the norm in order to create another story; and at the same time in the second level see the functions of the schema’s units in comparison to the higher levels of the narrative, namely the historical context. In fact “every work of art” Bakhtin says “is conventional, for it always presupposes some norm as the background against which it is perceived”. In the discursive narration, thus, it is necessary to compose the sentences in an appropriate way in order to send the meaningful messages to the addressee who imitates the higher level of narrative. Having said that, every myth, at least in respect to any symbolic activity, is a combination of sentences, and fundamentally has to imitate models at the levels of both grammar and ritualistic behavior.

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1 Todorov, ibid. p. 125-51.
3 Bakhtin, ibid. P. 4.
4 For more information see T. Todorov, *Poetics of Prose*, pp. 108-119.
As a result each schema in the narrative genres is made up of a set of apparatus units that function like a large sentence in a given discourse. The structure of a schema’s plot, depending on the discourse, is represented by the order of the units. By changing the combinations we may send or receive different messages. The best example of this dialectical effort, as will be discussed in detail later, is the differences between the ages of Kay-Khosrow and Goshtāsp. The crucial units, in these two schemata, are almost the same, but the messages on the higher level are different from one another, or quite opposite to one another.

Following this notion, we find one kind of a schema with in fact two different sets of motifs and functions in the Shāhnāmeh. Under each motif, the syntax may go through some changes; nonetheless, their grammatical orders are almost the same. As indicated earlier, there are, consequently, three kinds of syntagmatic axis in the succeeding discussion. The morphology of the cosmic year, which is simplistically similar to the climatic changes in respect to the seasonal activities on one hand, and the cosmological interpretations behind their festivals on the other hand. The problem is which imitates which; the cosmic year imitates the earthly year or vice versa; but as was mentioned earlier myths and rituals are reflections of culture rather than nature. Hence the earthly year has simply been employed to define the cosmic year chronologically, which in its turn is the articulation of Iranian thoughts and religions. Although the cosmic year can not be real, from the point of view that man cannot directly experience it, it is obvious that these two years are determined to be mirror-images of each other. The measures that are used in each case are also similar. Thus they, under the astronomical and
environmental conditions, make both aspects similar and realistic to the believers. And because the cosmogonic theory is also involved here, the astronomical/environmental elements are in effect to shape the duration of the years, the seasons, and so on. It is, nevertheless, necessary to notice that the smallest unit of the cosmic year is a month, with its astrological conjunction; twelve thousand years are like twelve months of a year. Hence, each millennium, like its counterpart in the year, displays similar climatic and seasonal conditions. Millennia, in their turn, are considered as the twelve months with the similar natural weathers and astrological anecdotal phenomena. They also go through the same situations in respect to the duration of the year; to be specific each millennium is divided into two major times with four seasonal-like times and twelve periods. The durations of the stories fit these same criteria. By the same token, the smallest unit of the cosmic year would be the stages of the Creation, which are repeated every natural year in order to regenerate paradisal time successively. The rites, in this respect, would be the reactualized units of these stages.

Hence the myth of Creation would bring the rituals into the picture, first, to give us a tool for measuring the durations of both the millennia and schema of the Shāhnāmeh; and second, to break down the schema into its ordered units, which are harmonized by the natural and astrological elements. From the first perspective, the feasts and the ceremonies are held in order to modify the climate in favor of man/God’s will or to appraise the change due to the cosmic destiny; from the second respect, seasonal rites will be broken down to draw the outline of the schema. In the last part we will deal with the archetypal units of the schema, especially in the age of Kay-Khosrow.

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CHAPTER 6

MORPHOLOGY OF COSMIC YEAR: THE MESSIANIC PLOT

When Zâl goes to Manuchehr’s court to get permission for his marriage to Rudâbeh, the king summons him to answer a series of questions that mobeds put before him. In the fifth question a mobed asks him:

Two lofty cypresses (there are) growing like reeds in a billowy sea: a bird has its dwelling-place upon them; at eventide its seat is on the one and at dawn on the other. When it flies from the one, its foliage withers; it alights on the other and it gives out a scent of musk. Of these two one is ever fresh, but the foliage and fruit of the other are withered.³

Zâl answers: “[t]he two lofty cypresses in which a bird has its dwelling [from the month of the Lamb (Aries) to the Scale (Libra) the world conceals the darkness in itself. From the Kadzdown (Scorpio) to the Ship (Pisces) it is full of darkness and dullness.]² These ‘are two arms of the lofty firmament through which we rejoice and (through which) we

¹ Zaechner, ibid, p. 243. This was the translation of the following lines:

( Moscow edition, vol. 1, p.219-20, ll. 1262-65 )

² The sentences between brackets are the translation of two lines of 1286 and 1287 that Zaechner has not mentioned.
are grieved.’ The bird is the Sun from which is fear and hope for the world.”

Here, obviously, Zāl divides the year into two seasons: one, which is from Aries to Gemini, is summer and light dominantly governs the world; the second one is winter, from Libra to Pisces, in which the world is floated into darkness.

This is a general representation of the yearly evolution, which covers two chronological durations in ancient Iranian concept of creation and the problem of the sovereignty of the world. The first one is a short version of the year that is most probably shaped by experiences and observation of the climatic elements. The second one is the cosmic year, which has been fashioned by the two phenomena of astronomy (and especially astrology), and of climatic phenomena. A combination of both aspects has formed ancient Iranian cosmology, in which some answers for the fundamental issues such as the creation, apocalypse, time, and sovereignty have been contemplated. In other words, Iranian cosmology, like its counterparts in other cultures, gives us a pretty graspable picture of micro life as well as cosmic life. Therefore, as we saw earlier, in its major outlines, it shapes three crucial elements of every narrative: space, time, and cause, while together form the central part of every story: i.e. the plot.

From this perspective the cosmic prototype is a discourse that channels all the questions as well as the answers that we are seeking. From outside, however, we do not see this dialectic attempt that happens in every living cosmology. The ancient Iranian

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1 Ibid, p. 244. This was the translation of the following lines:

کلون از نیام این سخن برکشیم // دو بینسر کان مرغ دارد نشیم
ز برج بر چه تراز جهان // همه تیرگی دارد اند نهان
جنین تاز گردن به ماهی شود // پر از تیرگی و سیاهی شود
دو سروان دو باروی جغر بلند // کور نیمه شاداب و نیمه نژند
برو مرغ پریان چو خورشید دان // جهان را ازویم و امید دان (89-85)

cosmology, of course, has been frozen for centuries or reshaped under different religious ideas and duties. It, by now, shows a series of frozen pictures from the past, fragmented in a way, and separated from ritualistic sources as well as from ancient narratives. The study of a frozen cosmic mythology is much easier than the study of one that is somehow alive. To study it we need to reconstruct the whole system, but this will not happen unless we gather its fragments first. Before that however, we have to deconstruct the texts, and then by putting them in the discursive narrative reconstruct it in three dimensions. In this way, we will integrate the dimensions of the narrative within their historical context; in this way, it is freed from its flat two dimensioned picture and becomes a three-D subject with historical depth. A three-D narrative gives us more tools to study the black holes of the living mythical narrative. The *Shāhnāmeh*, which has been functioning as a living myth for centuries, is in this narrative discourse. Its cosmology is still alive and challenges its physical body from time to time.¹

The best term for this framework is schema, in which, on one hand, the climaxes of the cosmic year are ritualistically and structurally being put on show in order to edify man on his way to the judgment day. Human life is being exposed in two aspects: man's duty towards Good, and Evil's attempts to destroy Good's creations, especially human beings. The former could be considered as part of a causality system, in which man has to manage his sense of duty in order to outwit or abolish Evil's forceful efforts.

¹ Dick Davis has an article on this matter. In his argument, he distinguishes methods of study appropriate to the *Shāhnāmeh* and the Greek epics. Because, as he points out, Greek epics were created out of their environment and language; on the contrary the *Shāhnāmeh* has been created in a living language and myths.
The struggle between man and demons is a simple sketch of cause and effect, thesis and antithesis that shapes most Iranian epics and mythology, in which the synthesis is nothing but thesis itself, but transferred to another level. This struggle, like the system of ideas that sustains it and can be established in the social hierarchy and tripartition powers, is linear in appearance only. But, in reality it is a sequence, in which, as Dumézil articulates, "a thesis summons an antithesis then combines with it in a synthesis that becomes in turn a further thesis, thus providing fresh material enabling the process to continue."¹ Tripartite powers with three spaces are embodiments of this process. They are not to be numbered "one, two, three." Good is defined at the outset in opposition to evil and friend to void; then good and void that are reconciled and collaborate in a new notion, that of "power" to confront evil. When evil is gone good becomes an opposition to void. The combination of these three, on the other hand, is a synthesis. Love stories of the Shāhnāmeh are the good examples of this process.

Coupling, according to Dumezil, is an extremely ancient one. There is a fairly frequent Avestic formula, Mithra-Ahura, which is generally accepted to be an inheritance from the Indo-Iranian past.² Man-devil is the duplication of this formula that seems to occupy the same domain (sovereignty on the earth). They are, to some extent, synonymous, and at the same time contrary to each other.

¹ Dumézil, G. Mitra-Varuna, p. 65.
² This associates Mithrā with an Ahurā who is not yet the Ahurā Mazdā of historical times, but who is linked to the Asura-type figure of the Vedic hymns, Varuna. Varuna later becomes Vāy in Persian mythology. See: ibid, p. 66-7.

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Man, mythically, is good by nature and at the same time passive or rather non-aggressive towards evil and bad nature. Therefore, he does not naturally begin any preemptive attack against demons, under any circumstances, in order to destroy or abolish them; as a good creation he simply fights with the demons. In other words, whoever he fights with mythically should be evil. A preemptive attack is in the nature of Evil and his creatures; thus if Man does attack, it means he is in control of Evil or under attack. In the first case he is a devil, like Afrāsiyāb; and in the second case he is a savior like Kay-Khosrow. The causality order in Iranian cosmology that winds up creating the material world, is based on Evil’s first attack. Ormazd with his foreknowledge of his act, creates the material world in order to stop him attacking the spiritual world. Thus, Ormazd incarcerates him in the material world. But later when Ahreman kills the plant, the cow, and Giyomarth, Ormazd uses the material world as the battleground. In order to do that, then, he creates human beings from the seed of Giyomarth in order to help him in his fight against Evil and his creatures in the material world. He also creates animals and plants from the seed of the cow to help man in his fight. This is the narrative in general that has not been changed in its plot, causality system (duty of man/hero), and temporal organization (seasonal myth); however, it has gone through lots of detailed changes in order to be embraced by the "regime of truth" under the Islamic faiths.

As an underlying pattern, the ancient Iranian cosmological concept in its basis form was actually palpable to historians or religionists, prior to Ferdowsi’s time. Two accounts, one from Zoroastrian tradition, and the other from Islamic historians, represent almost the same schemes. The Bondahesh, which is a vital Zoroastrian text, because the
author has used lost parts of the *Avestā* — such as Dām Dād Nask, Sepand Nask, and Čehr Dād Nask\(^1\) — was written in Pahlavi by Faranbaghdādegi in 8\(^{th}\) century. The second work is the *Tārikh Seni Al-Muluk val-Ardz val-Anbiā* (SMA), which is a historical account written in Arabic by Hamzat ibn Hassan Isfahani in 9\(^{th}\) century. This book is a useful account for at least two reasons. The author had access to several versions of Arabic *Xodāināmag*(s) (Saiyar al-Muluk) and also to the lost book of Abu-Ma’shar on astrology and millennialism.

These works present us the cosmological aspects of the schema that we want to outline in the *Shāhnāmeh* on one hand, and the roots of messianic discourse on the other hand. *Bondahesh* illustrates the Zoroastrian cosmology and cosmogony as well as the rituals and the characteristic functions of the heroes and antagonists, whereas the SMA offers us a different interpretation of the schema and the function of characters and heroes. Let us start with the Pahlavi text first.

*The Bondahesh* (i.e. the fundamental laws) is, in a sense, the story of material Creation from the end of the sixth millennium to the last day of the material world in the twelfth millennium: That is from the day that Ahurā Mazda thought Ahreman would attack, and created the spiritual and material worlds in order to contain and kill him and his creatures in the ensuing battles, to the day that the final battle would happen and man goes back to paradise. In addition, because the whole story is based on one divine model, which is the battle between Good and Evil, therefore the way that the cosmogonic narrative is fashioned involves war in every stage. In the first chapter, Ormazd has pre-

\(^1\) See: *Bondahesh*, M. Bahār (Tehran, p. 12).
knowledge about Ahreman’s attack and sets the predestined rules of the battles, and then creates the battle ground – the material world – and a replica of each creature who would help him in this battle. In other words,Ormazd preemptively prepared himself for Evil’s attacks. This model, the spiritual world (jahān-e minū’i), had no motion, thought, or visibility and lasted for three thousands years (one schema or Great Time in our terms).¹ In return, Ahreman, when in his first attack he found out about the Good Creation, went back to darkness to create his creatures in order to destroy the world and good Creations with his weapons, disease and death. When Ormazd saw that Evil’s creations were powerful and could destroy his creations – and because of his foreknowledge about his victory at the end – he set a time for the last battle and made a truce with Ahreman. Ormazd told Ahreman: the battle will be in nine thousand years, if you agree. And he knew that there would be three thousand years in his favor, three thousand years of mixed sovereignty.² In this chapter, the author does not mention the first three millennia of the twelve thousand years of the world’s age in which Ahreman unconsciously lies on the ocean’s bed.

This is the divine model that would and should be imitated by any divine beings, as well as by kings, heroes, and ordinary people hierarchically. It is necessary to mention that in Zoroastrianism all beings have a divine copy. Sky, water, earth, Plants, Cow, Giyomarth, and fire are the divine models. The rest of creation consists of a replication

¹ Bondahesh, p. 34.
² Ibid. p. 35. Here it does not mention the three thousand years in favor of Ahreman. There is confusion about the nine thousand years or twelve thousand years in the text. The age of the world here is nine thousand years; however in the next chapter that is about the material creation in details twelve thousand is mentioned. The reason for this is that 12 thousand years is the Zurvanite narrative, whereas Zoroastrians believe that the age of the world is nine thousand years. And the author of the Iranian Bondahesh, apparently, had a tendency towards Zurvanism.

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of these models. Ahreman’s creations also follow the same path, although they represent negative images of the good Creations. Nonetheless, the stories of Evil’s creations are hardly mentioned in this or any other texts. The same thing is true of the stars and planets, which have also their demonic replicas. They are black and cannot be seen, yet they could harm the Good creations. According to this pattern, everything or everybody has both heavenly and demonic models that together with material creation indicate a proto-Indo-European characteristic tripartition.¹

The Zoroastrian Creation, like the Judeo-Islamic version, occurs in six stages but unlike that the latter it happens in one year. The purpose of material creation is one thing only: reinforcing Ahurah’s forces for the last battle. The second Chapter of the Bondahesh is devoted to the story of Creation. This is the summary of the story:

When Ahreman became comatose, Ormazd created the material world from the boundless light, consecutively fire from boundless light, wind from fire, water from wind, earth and all material beings from water. A drip of water was the first material that Ormazd created, because the seed of everything but animals and people is from water...the seed of Creatures and human beings is from fire.

The sky was the first creation of Ormazd for preventing Ahreman’s attack, after that water was created to destroy the demon of thirst. Earth is the third creation, then plant created to help Cow, and Cow created to help the virtuous man. In the sixth stage, man was created in order to halt and demolish demons; and finally in the seventh and last stage, fire was created.²

¹ The idea of a tripartite structure is almost everywhere, although it is under the surface of dualism. It also applies almost everywhere; as Dzâleh Āmozgâr points out, this system even applies to the Zoroastrian ethical philosophy. Accordingly, everything has three kinds of character: honar (good), āhou (bad, opposite of good), and good/bad, which is called barādarvoud (bogus-brother, something between good and bad). For instance generosity is a good character, its opposite is parsimoniousness, and lavishness is its barādarvoud. See Dzâleh Āmozgâr, “Doughânegi nikihâ va badihâ va barâdârân-e droughin-e nikihâ,” Yeki Qatreh Bârân, (Tehran 1366), pp. 659-669. This is also very close to the ethical notions that Aristotle described in the “Nicomachean Ethics.” See: Aristotle on Man in the Universe, edited by L. R. Loomis (Gramercy Books, New York, 1943) pp. 85-245.

² Bondahesh, p. 39. In the fourth chapter the story is slightly different than it was told here. Apparently this narrative has a Zorvanite root.

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As we can see, fire is the first and last thing that is created, the mythical reason for this is the meaningful role it has in the cosmic system: fire is the bridge between the spiritual and the material worlds. It is that part of the spiritual world in this world that can easily be purified again in order to go to heaven. In other words, fire is the key element in the Zoroastrian cosmology; the next thing to it is water. Fire is also the integral hinge between these two worlds bringing two ends of eternity together. In this respect it indicates the cyclical pattern between two worlds and two kinds of time: spiritual world/boundless time; and material world/bounded time. But as was mentioned in the second chapter, limited time does not indicate just one cycle which started from eternity and ends in eternity; inside this cycle also the linear millennia persist one after the other in order to complete the mission of Creation, in which Evil’s attempts and forces are eliminated entirely.

The procedure of eliminating Evil’s assistants is completely opposite to the seven stages of good creations. The hierarchical pattern of procedure explains this vividly. Ahurā Mazdā is the ultimate being and Ahreman is his counterpart at the summit of hierarchy. One level below, Emshāspandān, who characteristically embody Ahurā’s good will, hold fundamental positions against the opposite embodied forces of Ahreman, namely Kamāleh Deevān. The very same hierarchical pattern can also be seen among these angels and anti-angels.¹ This is the pairing that was mentioned earlier.

¹ چنان (گوید) که اهربن بر هرمزد، اکمن بر بهمن، اندر بر اردیبهشت، ساوال بر شهریور، تاغیپس که ترومد، نیز خواننده بر سبندارند، توریز بر خرداد و زریز بر امرداد، خشم بر سروش، دروغ میهوخت بر راسنی، سخن جاموش بر ماسبیانک، فراود و دیوید بر میاناروی که دین به است، اندیشه‌های، فکتار و اندیشه‌های نیک، فکتار و نیک و کردار نیک، استوهداد که خوای بدر نیک، شود بر رام که وای به است. (Bondahesh, pp. 55-6)
The same pattern applies to the creation of the material world; and, at the literary level, it is the plot that shapes the schema that we are talking about – the tripartite pattern always transfers to pairing in every possible aspect. In other words, there is a divine schema to be imitated in each millennium. Overall the morphology of cosmogony could be compared to a U-like shape, indicating the seven levels of the defeat and victory of Ahurā’s creatures. At one end of this U is the first battle of Ahurā Mazdā and Ahreman. Then, battles rank down one step at the time. The battles of angels and Deevs are in the next level below. At the lowest stage the killing of Giyomarth, the Cow, plant, polluting and freezing the waters and earth are caused by Ahreman. To defeat Ahreman, then, Ahurā Mazdā recreated the angels to clean the earth, run the waters, and reproduce the plants to help animals that in their turn are created to help mankind. This is the divine creation that this time occurs one level below in the material world. Here in this world, in each millennium, again we see the same U-like pattern happens. The seven destroying and killing events happen first, each one worse than the former; and then seven recreations occur one better than the next. By the end of the twelfth millennium the cycle of destroying/recreation leads to the last battles of angels against the Deevs and the last battle of the angel of life against death leads to the ultimate battle of good and evil, in which darkness would sink into the boundless light. This morphology is very important and we will get back to it at several points as we proceed.
The creation of stars (akhtarān) and “un-stars” (nā-akhtarān) is described in the third chapter. The rationale of recounting stars in this respect is important to us, because, as the author says, their positions in the sky are mirror-like to the positions that armies and warriors would take in their fight with Ahreman and his creatures on the battlegrounds. Again, stars’ conjunctions and the astrological events imitate the divine model. Thus they should be taken seriously for our purposes, because, as we will consider later, the positions of the stars explain at least one major battle of Kay-Khosrow, the Twelve Roux(s). For now, however, I will simply indicate the roles that stars have in Iranian mythology. First and foremost, they are the milestone of the time machine that keeps recording the ageing of the material world day by day. Second, their positions in the sky denote the fortune of human beings. And finally they foretell destined events and their time of happening. Except the first, which has a basis in reality, the schema is part of the mythological system, which again models the cosmology. Stars, from this respect, are blue prints of the world’s age, its ages and fated events, the timeing for the ritual festivals, and the positions of the armies in the battlefields. The twelve zodiac conjunctions as well as the four vital stars (sepāhbad) that keep the earth in its position are important here, because first of all they are the symbols of the cosmic years that are important for our schemata, second the four stars show the seasonal time of the schema. The seventh chapter of the Bondahesh is about the zodiac, the major stars and their constellations; here the stars are described militarily and in the spirit of the last battle between Ormazd and Ahreman, which we will deal with later.

1 Black or the demonic stars that are counterparts of the Ahurā’i creations.
Chapter eighteen is about the history of mankind (Iranian from the narrative point of view) in the last six millennia of the material world, which is, in its key elements and outline, very similar to the Shāhnāmeh's schema. This is nearly the best and closest picture that we can get of the Zoroastrian cosmic years from a Pahlavi text in comparison to the Shāhnāmeh as an Irano-Islamic account that has used the same structure. At the beginning of the twelfth chapter, Faranbaqdādeghi says “the horrible (bad) things that Ahreman did to Ormazd's creations could be narrated in one winter.”¹ We could read this sentence in various ways: in a direct way it means the story could be recited in six months of the winter when people have nothing to do but listen to stories. however, it could metaphorically indicate the time that the world under the Ahreman’s power, which is literally equal to the winter, because man, animals and plants get killed or destroyed in the second half of the cosmic year, which is equal to winter. Here, as we see, the myth in all respects is harmonized with the natural elements of the year in the winter time. In chapters 18 and 22, too, the cosmic year and its twelve millennia are described, but more as a year with twelve months equal to the natural year and its months. In other words, the times of Ormazd and Ahreman, here, are distinctively characterized according to seasonal elements of weather and environment. Thus, not only the story could be told in a period of one winter, but also it could happen in a period of one winter, because the bitter elements of the winter are totally in Ahreman's possession. He uses them as weapons and forces. The symbolic elements of the winter, such as coldness, drought and harsh lands, starvation, and so forth, could be found in all accounts describing the time of Ahreman;

¹ Faranbaghdādeghi, p. 119.
they are effectively used in the *Shāhnāmeh*, especially in the millennium of Kay-Khosrow picturing the sovereignty of the demonic kings.

It is, however, necessary to add that despite these elements Ahreman is, indeed, in his descending position during the second half of the cosmic year, because, according to this account and the others, his first attack occurred on the first day of the year at noon—spring equinox; in other words it occurred at the real Norouz.¹ In this and other later attacks he polluted the earth and waters and killed the Plant, the Cow, and Giyomarth successively. The direction of his attacks is actually the opposite of Ormazd’s Creations, which Zoroastrian rituals indicate clearly. A general picture of the cosmic year, in respect of time, place, and events would be helpful for us. There is no need to mention that “time” according to the Bondahesh “is stronger than other two creations;”² and by the two creations it means place (earth), and religion (din, which could be considered as the mythical narrative).

The cosmic year is calendared by the Iranian zodiac months. The first three thousands of the world age divided into three sections equal to the three months of spring: the Lamb (Aries), Cow (Taurus), and Du-peykar (Gemini³). The next three thousand years, in which Giyomarth and the Cow are immortal, is divided into three

¹ Real Norouz is the very first spring equinox that is equal to the motionless world of Minooi. The next real spring equinox would happen in the twelve years in the apocalypse. In that day again the sun stops right at the middle of the sky and all stars disappear into the boundless light. The rest of the spring equinoxes between these two, in a U-like pattern, first gradually differ from the original conjunction, then in the second half they gradually approximate to it.
² Bondahesh, p. 33.
³ Du-peykar means two bodies. Gemini also symbolizes dualism.
sections equal to the months of summer: Kharchang (Cancer\textsuperscript{1}), Shir (Leo), and Khowsheh (Virgo). The seventh millennium, which is the beginning of the material world, is equal to the autumn equinox and is the kingdom of Mizān (Libra). Thirty years after its beginning, Ahreman kills the Cow and Giyomarth. This millennium is ended by the death of Jamshid.

The next millennium, which belongs completely to the devilish king, Dzahhāk, is equal to Kadzdown (Scorpio) that is ruled by Pluto. There is also a period like this in each millennium; for instance, the period when Afrāsiyāb is powerful and kills three men, Nowzar, Aghriras and Siyāvash. According to the ZVY, and Zarātushtnāmeh, the hero of the king would be born on the 22\textsuperscript{nd} of this month. The story of Rostam o Sohrāb is probably related to this concept. The story is syntactically placed before the death of Siyāvash. A few lines in the beginning of the story could be interpreted in this context. Furthermore the motif and the devastating event indicate the archetypal pattern here.\textsuperscript{2}

There is no characteristic horoscope in the house of Scorpio, and only Venus and Mars can be seen clearly. In addition at this time they are in the closest proximity to each other. According to the philosophy of astrology the eighth house represents three factors. First, it represents a point in time or space where some significant transition or mutation

\textsuperscript{1} The two horizontal lines in the sign of Cancer represent the same dualism as in the vertical lines (sign) of Gemini, but in the passive form. Passive dualism can give birth to something new. It could be a messiah whose birth happens about thirty years before the birth of his hero that occurs in Scorpio.

\textsuperscript{2} اگر مرگ دادست بیداد چیست // ز داد این همه بانگ و فریاد نیست
ازین راز جان تو آگاه نیست // بدن یورده اندر ترا راه نیست
همه تا در آر وفاز // به کس بر نش این در راز باز
به رفتین مرگ بهتر ایند جای // جو آرام یابد به دیگر سرای
دم مرگ چون ان هولناک // ندارد ز برنا و فریوت باک
درین جای رفتن به جای دیدگ // بر اسب نا گر کهگ مرگ نتگ
(\textit{vol ii}, pp. 169-70, ll. 2-9)
takes place. Second, it represents some crisis or catastrophic event, where one form of something stops or dies and another takes over. Third, it represents sexual expression for its own sake. Together these factors can indicate a form of rebirth or a devastating revelation. The house of Scorpio is known as the house of death, sexual expression, and rebirth, elements and motifs that play major roles in the story of Rostam o Sohrāb.

The ninth millennium, which, according to the Bondahesh, begins with the reign of Feraydon and ends with the reign of Goshtāsp, comes during the period of Nimasb (Sagittarius¹). These three millennia are equal to the season of autumn in the yearly calendar. Bondahesh, however, is not clear on the next three millennia, which are equal to the winter. The author skips the tenth millennium. He mentions the name of the planets that rule over this millennium – Bowz (Capricorn) – then turns to the reign of Goshtāsp and the advent of Zoroaster, and the kings and the dynasties that came after them; following on from that he briefly mentions the reign of the Arabs over Iran without being clear as to the end of millennium, or as to the messiah who would allegedly come.² The "fareh" in this millennium goes to Ardeshr Bābakān under the appearance of goat, which is the sign of the tenth house in the Bondahesh. If we see Ardeshr Bābakān as the initiator of the tenth millennium, governed by Capricorn, then we may fit the historical events in this syntax so that Alexander, as Hamza believed, was the first king of the millennium, the Arsacids were like Dzahhāk, Sāsānids were like the Kiyānids, and the

¹ Sagittarius is a symbol signifying the projection of the self toward new horizons. Haftkhān could be the narrative of this.
Arabs like the last demon of the millennium. The *Shāhnāmeh*, like other texts, is not clear as to this part of the narrative.

Somewhere else in the eighteenth chapter Faranbaghdaegi explains the last three messiahs and the millennia that are supposed to come and the battles that would occur at the end, but he just mentions the mythical accounts without touching history upon this matter. The last three millennia, as we could guess, are equal to the season of winter. In the seventh chapter those times that Ahreman attacks, and the positions of stars at those times have come. In the eighth chapter the conflicts and wars between good creation and evil creation give us another aspect of the same duration, spaces, plot and structure.

Overall *Bondaresh* offers us a simple but comprehensive picture of the Iranian cosmology according to three chief aspects: of the Creation and apocalypse; of the sovereignty of Good and Evil sequentially or simultaneously according to the conditions of the weather/time, and rituals/events; and of the role and the duty of man toward the divine force. The text, under the influence of Zurvanism, mentions the rule of Dzahhāk and Afrāsiyāb over Iran,¹ but it does not go so far as to accept the sovereignty of Ahreman for a certain period of time, which is theoretically equal to the dominance of winter. As Bahār points out, Pahlavi texts, except the *Gozideh Zādsparm*, do not believe

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¹ According to this text Afrāsiyāb reigned over Iran twice. The first time is after the death of Manoucher. In this time he kills Nozar. In the second time, actually Iranians asked him to come and overthrow the king of Hāmāvarān who captured Kay-Kāvus and took Iran. He came and ruled for twelve years. During this time he killed people and reined the whole country. At the end Rostam freed Kay-Kāvus and brought him from Hāmāvarān; then defeated and sent Afrāsiyāb out of Iran. In the *Shāhnāmeh* Afrāsiyāb killed Nowzar, but never governed over Iran. For the second account, *Shāhnāmeh* offers a completely different story.
in the dominance of Ahreman, thus the account of the Bondahesh should probably be considered as under the influence of Zurvanite notions.\(^1\)

Furthermore the author of the book believes that the six thousand years of the material world are divided into two periods (Great Times in our term) of three thousand years, one pure and the second one mixed. There are of course some differences between the texts on this matter too. According to the Bondahesh, as in Hamza’s account, the first Great Time finishes with the prophet Zoroaster, whereas Shāhnāmeh, despite its structure, represents Kay-Khosrow’s era as the last part of the millennium. On the other hand Ferdowsi hardly pictures Zoroaster as a messiah, although there are lines in which he is mentioned as the prophet of the Zoroastrian religion. Another difference concerns Zoroaster’s millennium; Bondahesh reckons it from Goshtāsp to Yazdegerd, although it leaves the end of the millennium totally unclear and instead gives a long passage on the messiahs to come. As a result it seems that Ardesthir Bābakān is a king within Zoroaster’s millennium; whereas ZVY, the other Zoroastrian text, sees him as a king who begins a new millennium. There is a huge confusion over this matter. In the Shāhnāmeh’s version, we see that Ardesthir once claims that he is the savior who brought back the just religion, Zoroastrianism. In this section Alexander is introduced as a demon.\(^2\) There is a different narrative concerning the Sāsānian kings too. The author here tries to ignore the bad kings, like Yazdegerd the unjust, or those who came after

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\(^1\) Bahār, Justārhāi, p. 84.

\(^2\) که نقش امیر میرزایان // از فرمان و مردم راچند (vol. vii, p. 130, ll. 333-334)

که میادین کانسکنر // چه کرد از فرمان ایگی در جهان (vol. vii, p. 148, ll. 661-662)
Khosrow Parviz and before the last king. Another difference concerns on the age of the world, the text on this point swings between twelve (Zurvanite perception) and nine (Zoroastrian view) thousand years. But, nine thousand in detail and structure is more utilized than twelve thousand. Zurvanism appears to be a syncretistic theology, elaborated by the Madian Magi, rather than an independent religion, but it must also be made clear that the doctrine of millennia always, in one way or another, involved Zurvan – whether as the cosmic god of time or simply as a symbol or personification of time.\(^1\) In the case of Bondahesh Zurvanite notions are scattered all over the text alongside of the paradigmatic ideas of Zoroastrianism.

Nonetheless and in general, the picture of the cosmos and the people that it represents is noticeably comparable in the Bondahesh to the Shāhnāmeh and helpful in solving the problem that we are dealing with here. For instance, on the cosmic plane, each of these three temporal moments (youth, maturity, and old age) can be connected with a period of 3,000 years. This “formula of the three times” can be found in the Upanishads, in Homer, Ferdowsi as well as the Bondahesh – Three Great Times with three millennia. The expression of youth, maturity, and old age here in the Bondahesh is represented by the three ages: the innocent (childhood), intermediate (youth) and evil (maturity); and this schema is beautifully represented by the successive ages of Giyomarth, Jamshid and Dzahhāk. Feraydon ends Dzahhāk’s era and begins the new

\(^1\) Eliade, History, p. 314.
millennium; Mehregān is the representation of this transformation. ¹ According to this pattern, spring and summer were considered one season, which was called “na garm o na sard” in Pahlavi, an expression that Ferdowsi has also used quite a few times.

But the formula of three times or ages is not just in the Pahlavi texts, Hamza’s work also represents it vividly. The work shows that he had access to Zoroastrian texts as well as to the translations of the Khodāināmak(s). He points out that, according to one of the Zoroastrian texts – he does not mention its title – “a cow and a man were the first god’s creations... they were immortal for three thousands years in the millennia of Hamal, Thawra, and Jawzā (three months of spring in Arabic), then they came down to the earth and live there for three millennia of Saratān, Asad, and Sonboleh (the months of summer). When the millennium of Mizān (Libra) began contradiction appeared and Giyomarth reigned over the earth, water, the cow, and plants for just thirty years.” He continues “stars and planets started to move on the day of Hurmazd in the month of Farvardin, Norouz, and nights and days were clearly divided.” ² On pages of 10-15, he then describes the dynasties and the kings that reigned in these three millennia. Accordingly, the two dynasties of Pishdādiān and Kiyāniān, including Dzahhāk, reigned for 3,208 years. It is noticeable that, to him, Alexander was the last Kiyāniid king. On page 15, where he wants to give the number of years that Sāsānids were in power, Hamza points out that their years have been calculated by the horoscope of Alexander, and the numbers he gives for the two dynasties of Arsacids and Sāsānids are 344 (p. 10) and 429

¹ As M. Bahār points out, Mehregān was considered as the beginning of the New Year in the ancient Iran. That is why winter is seen as the second season of the year. See: Bahār, M. Az’Ostoreh tā Tārikh, pp. 439-60.
years and three months and eighteen days (p. 15), which together will be 773 years plus.

But there is a problem with these numbers. If we consider Mohammad as the messiah of the new millennium then these numbers should add up to a thousand years or so. But as we see they do not match quite well, unless we see it from Hamza’s point of view. Seemingly there was an ideological reason for Hamza to calculate the millennium the way he did. For instance, later in chapter four he quotes Abu-Ma’shar’s *AlUlُ* (Thousand) in order to say that the sovereignty of Arabs, according to Mohammad’s horoscope would decline after 220 years in the west. He may mention the rise of Fāṭemids in Egypt or Buyids in the middle part of the Islamic Empire, which both were in the west to him, situated as he was in Isfahān. As a result, the millennium, to him, begins with Alexander’s kingdom and ends with the reign of Buïds, the first Iranian-Shi’ite dynasty, in 320, in the south west part of Iran.

Besides the arguments and justifications over the millennium the concept of two Great Times of three thousand years each, among the Sunnis, Zoroastrians and Irano-Islamic religions, is the formula that has shaped Hamza’s cosmology. And without any doubt the main source for that had been the ancient Iranian cosmology. This is also the case in the *Shāhnāmeh*. Nonetheless, Ferdowsi has altered the years in order to put Zoroaster’s millennium in the shadow of Kay-Khosrow’s. Furthermore, he apparently sees the Sāmānids, after four hundred years of Arabs’ reign, as the savior that ends their sovereignty. As we saw the most similar materials among these three accounts are the

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1 According to Homāí, Abu-Ma’shar in his *Alluf* says that the conjunction of Mercury and Jupiter in Scorpio means the fortune of Ajams (Iranians), by the advent of Islam, will decline and Arabs instead will gain from it. Cited: ibid, Persian translation, p. 163, footnote, 2.

2 Ibid. p. 163.
ancient stories from Giyomarth to Kay-Khosrow. From this point on, however, each account gives us a different version of the story or rather history, although the narrative discourse as well as the expectation for the new savior remains the same. So the morphology of history and cosmic year are similar in all accounts. Even more the archetypal units that are used for this purpose are the same; but the differences, as mentioned earlier, are emphatically those points that are related to the ideological beliefs. And under that, we see that the syntax of the units, in order to show the authors’ views, is also different.

A comparative examination of these accounts is illuminating. All three accounts are agreed on the division of the world’s age into 12 millennia, and also that the last six millennia, considered as the material world, contain the history of world – and by this they mean the history of Iran (good) from the Iranian point of view against other ethnic groups in conflict with Iran. They also agree on the concept that the six millennia are divided into two Great Times. However, their narratives diverge, when they get to the end of the first Great Time – 9th millennium, and the millennium after that, which is, accordingly, Hoshidar’s millennium. The author of Bondahesh believes Zoroaster was the messiah that ended the 9th millennium. Hamza mentions Alexander as the last king of the 9th millennium. Whereas Ferdowsi, by glorifying Kay-Khosrow’s age, and blurring Zoroaster’s age and at the same time portraying Goshtāsp as the antagonist, tries to show that the messiah who ended the 9th millennium was Kay-Khosrow. This is significant in terms of the authors’ beliefs. It would also be useful in the study of Iranian mythology in a broad sense; but for us in regard of the structure and syntax of each millennium,
especially in the Shāhnāmeh, it is more useful to consider it as a tool rather than as a subject.

It is clear that in Iranian culture in post-Islam, a remythicized mythology formed, and nourished the epics such as the Shāhnāmeh. This process, which was parallel to the process of deriving the new religions, freed the forms from their religious roots. In other words, the ancient myths were desacralized first, and then their units, syntax and logic were used in a form of the religious and belief syncretism. As a result, each text, whether religious or epic, could be considered as an attempt to promote its author’s forthcoming savior in order to raise cultic expectations in his readers. That is the reason that all accounts show a harmonious tone toward the beginning, the functionality of the topoi and motifs, but at the same time move towards a different end and a different savior.

Rituals and Morphology of the Cosmic Year

Each millennium, overall, is considered as a religious year with seven main units that are equal to the six Zoroastrian rituals (gāhanbār(s)\(^1\)) plus Norouz. The U-shaped pattern, at the cosmic level, is the model that shapes the syntax overall. The Zoroastrian rituals, on one hand, indicate the seven stages of the cosmic creation; and on the other, they signify environmental factors and elements. According to the cosmic model, there, then, should be found seven units in each millennium’s syntax reactualizing the death and rebirth of each creation. One way or another, it is plausible to find these units in the narrative, especially in the 9\(^{th}\) millennium, which belongs to Zoroaster, according to the

\(^1\) See below.
Pahlavi texts, or Kay-Khosrow, according to the *Shāhnāmeh*. As mentioned earlier,Ormazd created the sky in the first stage, then water, earth, plant, cow, and Giyomarth consecutively; fire was the seventh and last creation. Fire, at this stage, is simply a part of the spiritual fire that created the sky in the first step. Thus, it could be considered the cosmic fire, whose function is harmonizing and synchronizing the whole world. It is called "ashah," which is opposite to the time of chaos in the last five days of each year (پنجه مستره، اندارگاه). There are ambiguities around the rituals of the first three creations. The reason for this could be the nature of the creations themselves. The first one the sky, is imagined as a helmet (خود، کلام), or rather a shield, whose function is keeping Ahreman inside the material world in order to keep him away from the spiritual world. Water, that is a drop of the heavenly fire, is the seed of all creations, except the sky that is metal and made of fire. Earth is the womb of all creatures and also the battle ground for most of the encounters that occur between good and evil creatures. Because the cosmology fashions itself as warfare, these rituals, then, can hardly reactalize themselves in the form of warfare, unless in their contribution to the creation or protection of warriors or good creatures. For instance, the role of Ardovisour Ānāhitā, goddess of water, is nothing but keeping and purifying the seeds of mankind, especially heroes, in the moon, in order to protect them from Ahreman’s attacks. She also gives blessing to heroes in their last battle with the demonic kings or Deevs. Her third function is facilitating women to give birth to heroes. The last function is, obviously, close to the first one.¹

¹ See: Ābān Yašt or fifth Yašt of Avestā.
Ānāhitā’s functions in the *Shāhnāmeh* are highly speculative, since her name is nowhere mentioned in the work. Nonetheless, her functions can be found symbolically, for instance, the embodiment of her function in the character and the role of Rudābeh as the mother of the greatest hero; or the signification of the armor of Rostam, babr-e bayān, made of beaver (samoor) or tiger skin, which is similar to the garment of Ānāhitā herself.\(^1\) This armor protects Rostam from the worst attacks. The armor of Pashoutan, the hero of the forthcoming messiah Hoshidar, in the *ZVY* or *Zarātushnāmeh* is also made of beaver skin. The word for beaver in Pahlavi is "babar," which is the name of Ānāhitā’s garment. The word, however, is pronounced "babr" in the *Shāhnāmeh*. Although the etymology of "babr" is not clear, its function is like the function that the goddess and the heroes such as Pashoutan have. In the Ābān Yašt we see that Ānāhitā is praised for her help and gifts to heroes and saviors.\(^2\)

Fire and wind are represented by divine beings. Their roles are also fashioned by the supernatural indirect acts. For instance the battle of Apush and Tishtar (Sirius), or bad Vāi and good Vāi is about the function of the wind for running the waters and reawakening the plants.\(^3\) We may find their battles mirrored in the story of Akvān-e Deev and Rostam in the *Shāhnāmeh*. We shall consider this a few pages below.

One level lower, on the earth, the functions of plant, and animal (the Cow), which are also created in order to help man (Giyomarth) in his battle with demons, are

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\(^2\) Ibid. It is noticeable that Ānāhitā has four horses of wind, rain, hail, and dew.

represented in the rituals as well as the topoi in the narratives. There are six units for this. The first three units narrate the death of the plants, animals and mankind. The second set reveres their deaths and is about their rebirths. Thus the stories of these creations would be the basis of the cosmic syntax that we will consider later. For now, however, we will focus on the sequence of the creations and their roles in the Zoroastrian rites. At this level the function of mankind on the earth (space) and each millennium (time) is the center part of the common plot (namely seasonal myths), which is characteristically represented as warfare. This is, indeed, a dominant literary form, whose units, scattered or together, can be abundantly found in all kinds of narrative. It is, from this point of view, similar to the cosmic and historical morphology that an epic such as Shāhnāmeh has made explicable to everybody.

The rituals of these creations are successively calendared in the second half of the year, fall/winter, in which Ahreman is the dominant power, but in a reverse sequence. The astrological symbol for this is the ascendancy of Keyvān (Saturn, the symbol of death) over Hurmazd\(^1\) or Jānān (Jupiter, the symbol of life). The creation of plants, the cow, and Giyomarth makes Hurmazd stronger than Ahreman. The next creation after man, then, is fire (Asha), which makes Hurmazd a dominant power over evil for the first half of the year, millennium, or cosmic age. This happens at Norouz, a few days after the creation of man.

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\(^1\) Jānān is the most common name for this planet in Persian literature. For instance in Hāfez:

کسی ن در جانان به سلطنت مفروش / / کسی ز سایه‌ای این در به آتشب رود?
Each of these creations has its reactualized story. The story of plants is mostly associated with the moveable and awake able elements of wind and water; hymns of Rām Yašt, and Ābān Yašt indicate this association clearly. As was mentioned earlier, there are two kinds of winds, good and evil, which are two characters of the dual character god, Vāi Darang Khodai. The fight between these two characters can be found in several anecdotes. The story of the Akvān-e Deev in the Shāhnāmeh could be one of those. As Bahār mentions, Akvān is the demonic wind that brings dryness and starvation to the plants and earth.¹ Rostam, the challenger of Akvān, has also a dual character; in addition, Rostam gets killed by his brother, who could be considered as his demonic side. Besides these, Rostam, in his fight with Akvān Deev found Afrāsiyāb’s horses in a far unknown land and brought them to Iran. He kills the Deev right after this action.²

The order of ritualistic anecdotes in each schema in the Shāhnāmeh as well as the abovementioned works leads us to this conclusion, that there are a number of syntactical patterns that are being used equally by Zoroastrians, Irano-Muslem authors, or epic writers. The phase of one year is one of the most crucial patterns for the syntax of seasonal myths. The division of the year into seasons, months, and days is the next step. These together give a model to the temporal organization of the narratives. Climatic elements that are chiefly divided into two categories of fresh and lively, and of pollution and death, are the devices that help to shape the syntax in different environments of good

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¹ Bahār, Az Ostoreh tā Tārikh, p. 247 and 475.
Duchesne-Guillemin, J. The Western response to Zoroaster.

پس پشتیبان رستم گزدارار // دو فرستگ برسان ابر بهار
چو برگشت برداشت پیل و رمه // بنه هرچ آمد به چنگل مهه

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and evil. Nonetheless they are not being dealt with according to natural laws, or rather they are not fashioned by the naturalistic elements of environment; on the contrary, these patterns and elements are employed to reactualize the cosmic myth of creation.

Thus, each schema, in respect to the temporal organization of the *Shāhnāmeh*, is like a year – equal to a cosmic year – with the beginning and end, four seasons, twelve months with thirty days each, plus five chaotic days at the end of the year. The basis of this year is similar to the Zoroastrian calendar and zodiac, which, says Boyce, "created probably in the fourth century B.C., was distinctive simply through the pious dedication of each day and month to a divine being."¹ The beginning and the end have their rituals; the spring and autumn equinoxes are the specific times for these two feasts. Norouz, the feast that is held at the spring equinox, is a chief syntactical unit in the schema. It is by Norouz that the death of the old year and the birth of the New Year are reactualized; and with its rituals we can interpret the most important part of the schema.

The age of Kay-Khosrow, in the *Shāhnāmeh*, is the chief, best recounted narrative compared to other ages. It is, in fact, the best example for studying all units and devices that semantically and syntactically make a schema, especially if we see it in the larger scope of the Great Time, lasting from Giyomarth to Kay-Khosrow. But there are divergences from the Great Time in the *Shāhnāmeh*, in comparison to the abovementioned accounts. It seems that Ferdowsi has followed, or creates, a version that is stylistically different than those. The Great Time, in the former accounts, began with the reign of Giyomarth and ends with the advent of Zoroaster (Zoroastrian accounts), or

¹ Boyce, Mary. *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism*, p. 19.
Alexander (Hamza and Biruni). Giyomarth, also to them, is the first man who was killed by Ahreman. To Ferdowsi, however, Siyāmak, son of Giyomarth, is the one who is killed by a demon. Even though, Giyomarth is still considered the first by Ferdowsi. The second differentiation is the ending of the 9th millennium, which ends with the killing of Afrāsiyāb by Kay-Khosrow. Furthermore Ferdowsi, by repeating the pattern, narrates the story in a way that one could think there are several millennia between Feraydon and Dārā, which is, in this fashion, very close to the ZVY, or Jāmāspnāmeh, but not to the Bondahesh or Hamza’s work. At the same time, we could see traces of the other versions of the millennium as well. This is important and its study could help us to understand the religious background of the writers, but for now we just need to establish the syntactical elements of the schema. To this end we will try to analyze the major units of the chief schema, from Feraydon to Kay-Khosrow’s era as a millennium, in the Shāhnāmeh with the common patterns used by most accounts.

The schema of Feraydon-Kay-Khosrow chronologically starts on the eve of Mehregān, when Feraydon is enthroned, and ends when Kay-Khosrow kills the demon of the millennium, Afrāsiyāb. Within this frame we find three successive ages, which are the age of Feraydon, Iraj/Tur-Salm, Manuchehr; of Manuchehr, Nowzar/Afrāsiyāb, Kay-Qobād; and finally of Kay-Kāvus, Siyāvash/Afrāsiyāb, Kay-Khosrow respectively. These ages fall completely into the seasonal category, a morphology of history rather than a morphology of the cosmic year; because the cause is sin/catastrophe. The first good king, who is Feraydon, is the savior of the preceding age. Manuchehr, the second

good king, is the first Iranian ruler who saves Iran from the rest of the world. Feraydon, before him, was considered as the king of the world, although his counterpart, Dzahhāk was from another ethnic group or country rather than from the demonic world. The pattern for the second age is not complete, yet the cause and the consequences are the same. The first king of the third age, who is Kay-Kāvus, has nothing to do with the prior age; and is also the one who sins and consequently lets Iran suffer from Afrāsiyāb's attacks.

Also we can divide the ages by the first demon sign, which is his first attack upon the reign of good. In this case, the killing of three people (counterpart to the archetype of killing the plant, the cow and Giyomarth in the cosmology) is symbolically significant: Iraj by Tur; Nowzar by Pashang/Afrāsiyāb; and Siyāvash by Afrāsiyāb. As we see here, three Iranian kings are killed by three Turkish kings, who are indeed relatives. In the first and third cases, king and prince are killed while their fathers are still alive and spiritually lead the holy war against the evil kings. The second case, however, is different, here evil attacks and kills the king who sinned fatally. There is another difference in this case, which is that the king has neither father nor son to take revenge. And because he has no father to keep the crown for his son, the throne remains empty until the hero, Zāl/Rostam, finds the future king. This topos, which can be called the end of a male line, is so important that it comes in each age at least once. We shall examine this topos later. Nonetheless in all cases, the hero is there and helps to raise or find the

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1 Zāl, in his dream first, sees the future king and his place in the Alborz Mountain, then sends Rostam to bring him to Iran. In the case of Kay-Khosrow, Gudarz sees in dream that Siyāvash has a son in Turān and sends his son, Geev, to Turān to bring him to Iran.
savior of that age. In the first case Feraydon raises the savior, and supports him for the revenge. In the second case Zāl/Rostam finds the savior king. The third case, however, is a combination of both, Gudarz/Geev finds the savior and the grandfather supports his revenge.

In each case, the story, especially the uprising of the new king, occurs in the second half of the year, which is from Mehregān until summer. There is an important archetype behind this; in the messianic myth, Mehregān, probably equal to the autumn equinox, is the time that the savior or hero is born; and also it is the time when Ahreman gets stronger than Hurmazd, although the texts do not say it explicitly. The opposite of this is the creation of demons. The demonic king is born in the summer time during the shortest night of the year. At the same time, the killing of the good king also happens around Mehregān. As we know, Mehregān is held in the middle of Mihr (the seventh month), yet it has all three characters of the house of Scorpio, which are death, sex for its own sake, and rebirth. That is why, as Biruni recounts, people used to call it Meergān (the day of the death). At the same time, in southern Iran it was considered the first day of the New Year. The whole pattern and its mythological astronomy may go back to Indian tradition, because, according to Dumézil, Indian kings used to divide into two categories of solar dynasty and lunar dynasty, Mitra and Varuna. They, says Dumézil, “stand opposed not only as law and violence, not just as “Brahman” par excellence and “leader of the Gandharva (father of Yama and Hades),” but also as day and night.”¹ The solar kings are those who create social classes, work skills, and so on; and the lunar kings are

those who have power to transform bad situations into good. The former kings, Varuna, were somehow representative of spring/summer and the later kings, Mithra, were related to the fall/winter. In the Iranian tradition the two dynasties are not entirely distinct. In another sense, the lunar dynasty's images are mixed with the demonic ones in order to put the sovereignty of evil in its shadow. Thus we have two kinds of king, those who are crowned at Norouz and those who are crowned at Mehregān. The first kings are like Jamshid. The prototype for the second group is Feraydon.

On the cosmic level, Norouz, the feast of Ahurā Mazdā, was celebrated “on the Ormazd day” (first day of month) of the first month, and commemorated creation. The feast of Mitrā (Mithrakāna, Mihragan, Mihrjan, and Meergān1), was celebrated on “the Mihr day” (16th) in “the month of Mihr,” and prefigured the end of the world. Why is this? Dumézil quotes Biruni on this “because, at Mihrjan,2 that which believes attains its perfection and has no more matter left to believe more, and because the animals cease to couple; at Norouz it is the exact opposite.”3 Biruni elsewhere adds two more points important to mention here. First he says that Norouz is the conjunction of the sun and Jupiter (Mithrā and Hurmozd); whereas Mehregān is the conjunction of Scorpion (Keyvān) and moon (death and Ānāhitā). Second he tells some related stories that show the main characters of Jamshid and Feraydon. For instance, “Norouz was the day that Jamshid flew”… “He came back to the world (which is similar to the Indian version of Yama)”… “At his time there was no old age, illness, or death.” On the contrary, “the sun

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1 Meer + gān means death, see Biruni, and Khlaftabrizi on this.
2 This is the arabized version of Mehregān.
3 Ibid. p. 93.
rises between lightness and darkness in Mehregān that is why it is called “Meergān”… “Feraydon captured Dzahhāk on this day”… “Turān was separated from Iran on this day”… “Feraydon was milked by the cow on this day.”¹ In these stories the signs of the summer/sun and the winter/moon are used for Jamshid and Feraydon respectively. It is noticeable that the fifth Gāhanbār, the feast prior to Mehregān, is the day that the holy cow was created by Hurmazd. The creation of the cow (animal) is not in the Shāhnāmeh; however, we find several elements and signs in the text that are related to this Gāhanbār. This is well enough known for us to confine ourselves to recalling a few examples. Barmāyeh² is the cow that suckles Feraydon when he is a child. Dzahhāk in his search for Feraydon finds and kills the cow. Feraydon’s individual weapon is the Gāvsar mace (cow’s head or cow-like); and finally he avenges the cow’s death as well as that of his father and other people.

Accordingly, Yama (the counterpart of the Iranian Jamshid) was the solar king, and Feraydon was the lunar king; they were in fact the prototypes of the two heavenly sovereigns, Mitrā and Varuna, the Indian counterparts of Mithrā and Ahurā-Mazdā. Although Mithrā did not become one of seven angels (Emshāspandān), in the Iranian tradition these two had almost the same characteristic persona. In the Shāhnāmeh and other texts we also see similar elements and characters. It is interesting that the traces of

² Yarmānion in Avestā and Pahlavi.
this division can be found even in folktales nowadays. In Anjavi’s *Mardom va Shāhnāmeh* we find the similarities in various places in the text.¹

The important point here is that Jamshid and Feraydon are prototypical kings associated with the two chief feasts of the natural year that like the cosmic year begins and ends with them. The second point, then in the *Shāhnāmeh*, is that the first king of each age, accordingly, has to be a solar king, and the last king has to be a lunar one. This is the model for most kings in the *Shāhnāmeh*; the only exceptions are Kay-Khosrow and Feraydon, because they show both personas at the same time. But we have to add that Mehregān has no place among the Gāhanbārs, maybe, because it is not part of the creation, or maybe it is just a festival that exists in order to expel Evil’s creations – disease, starvation, and death.²

From this point of view, the pattern of the age, which uses historical motifs rather than cosmological ones, in respect to the causality system, would be this: the age of gold, the age of demons (a king sins/a demon attacks), and then the return of the golden age (the victory of the savior over the demon). Parallel to this, and again in respect to the causality system, we have the pattern of creations: evil attacks and kills the plants, animals, and people and ends the golden age; and then Hurmazd recreates them with the help of angels and gods in order to overcome the evil power. To map the schema according to these sentences, first, we have to typify the rituals that formulate the major sentences of the schema.

Besides Norouz and its counterpart Mehregān, there are six ritualistic ceremonies in Zoroastrianism, which are called “Gāhanbār,” and used to be held at six different times of the year. Despite the fact that they were a cosmogonic reactualization of the Creation, yet it is not so clear how and when these ceremonies were held. The ritualistic acts and motifs have apparently been used in the myths and epics as the narrative units, either as post-conquest independent stories or just as propositions within a story, and in the different strata. They are frequently mentioned in Islamic works such as Biruni’s *Athār al-Bāqieh*; nonetheless, it is hard to find evidence their procedures in pre-Islamic society. Among the Gāhanbārs the sixth one, called “mardgirān, according to Biruni and Khalaf Tabrizi, was the most important ritual, because it was the representation of the creation of man. It was usually held during the last five days of the year right before Norouz.¹

Gāhambār², according to Boyce, is the Middle Persian term for six of seven obligatory Zoroastrian holy days. These appear to have been ancient seasonal festivals, refunded to honor Ahurā Mazdā and the six great Amesā Spentās, together with the seven creations. A festival lasted originally one day, but after a calendar reform in the third century A.C. they were extended to six days each, later reduced for the Gāhanbārs to five. The seventh festival is called in Middle Persian Norouz, “New Day,” and is the greatest holy day, prefiguring annually the future ‘New Day’ of eternal bliss.³

¹ There is a doubt about the correctness of the word, Homāi has doubtfully read it mardgirān or mazhīgān, whereas the author of Borhān-e Qāte’ call it margirān and says “it was a ritual that was held in the last five days of the year, which is also called stolen days (panjeh-e roboudeh). In this ceremony women have the upper hand over the men. See: Biruni, *Al-Tafhim*, p. 260. M. Khalaf Tabrizi, *Borhān-e Qāte’*, edited by M. Mo’in, vol. IV, p. 1984; also see *Khordeh Avestā*, by Pourdavood, p. 210.

² Biruni has recorded gāhnbār instead of gahmbar, however Boyce has used the second version.

Here are the seven Gāhanbār(s), according to sources such as Biruni, with their seasonal times and purposes. The table shows the dates of the festivals’ celebration according to three existing calendars, Shenshai (S), Kadmi (K) and Fasli (F).\textsuperscript{1}

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{1} Ibid. p. 18.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Festival’s name in English</th>
<th>YAY Or MP. name</th>
<th>Associated Ameshaspanda</th>
<th>Associated Creation In 1980-83</th>
<th>Celebrated Dates In 1984-87</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mid-spring</td>
<td>Maidhyoi-zaremaya</td>
<td>Khushatvra vairyya</td>
<td>Sky</td>
<td>S Oct. 5-9</td>
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<td>2. Mid-summer</td>
<td>Maidhoyi-shema</td>
<td>Hauvatat</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>S Dec 4-8</td>
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<td>K Nov. 4-8</td>
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<td>K Jan. 19-23</td>
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<td>F Sept. 12-16</td>
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<td>4. Homecoming</td>
<td>Ayathrima</td>
<td>Ameretat</td>
<td>Plants</td>
<td>S March 19-22</td>
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<td>(of the herds)</td>
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<td>K Feb. 19-22</td>
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<td>F Oct. 12-16</td>
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<td>5. Mid-winter</td>
<td>Maidhyairra</td>
<td>Vohu Manah</td>
<td>Cattle</td>
<td>S June 7-11</td>
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<td>K May 8-12</td>
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<td></td>
<td>F Dec. 31-June 4</td>
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<td>(precise meaning of the</td>
<td>(Fravardiyan,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>K July 22-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Av. Name unknown)</td>
<td>Gujarati mukted)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>F March 16-20</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. New Year</td>
<td>Norouz</td>
<td>Asha Vahishta</td>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>S Aug. 26</td>
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<td></td>
<td>K July 27</td>
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<td>F March 21</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Old” Norouz</td>
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<td>S Aug. 26</td>
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<td>(Hordad Sal,</td>
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<td>celebrated on day</td>
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Table 5 Gāhanbārs
We should notice that, according to this table, the rituals were celebrated at different times. The calendar had apparently moved quite a bit by the time this table is recorded.

Now to understand the function of these festivals and the way they are reactualized in the epic we need to see them in the context of ancient notions of time. The function of time in ancient societies, as Eliade points out in his remarkable book *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, had two major purposes: expulsion of demons, and celebration of New Year. He has grouped a whole series of periodic ceremonies under these two headings: (1) annual expulsion of demons, diseases, and sins; (2) rituals of the days preceding and following the New Year. He remarks:

In broad outline, the ceremony of expelling demons, diseases, and sins can be reduced to the following elements: fasting, ablutions, and purifications; extinguishing the fire and ritually rekindling it in a second part of the ceremonial; expulsion of demons by means of noises, cries, blows (indoors), followed by their pursuit through the village with uproar and hullabaloo; this expulsion can be practiced under the form of the ritual sending away of an animal (type "scapegoat") or of a man (type Mamurius Veturius¹), regarded as material vehicle through which the faults of the entire community are transported beyond the limits of the territory it inhabits.²

Most religious ceremonies and rituals can be found in the first group; and the seasonal feasts and ceremonies, which are closer to the natural elements, fall into the second group. Time related ceremonies will also be divided into these categories. The first type of ceremony, under the first heading, is the act of ending or killing a period of time, whereas the second type of ceremony is to regenerate the time. The contradiction, here, can be distinguished according to two characteristic ceremonies of chaos (scapegoat or mir-e norouzi, which is similar to the motif of ending male line, in myths and epics);

¹ Mir-e Norouzi (میر نوروزی) in Persian culture should have the same root.
and the New Year in terms of ending the chaos and regenerating the new age. Chaos characterizes the most important elements of Evil, and Asha (fire = energy = force) shows the opposite of this in the broadest sense. To be more specific, let us see these symbolic elements in the Zoroastrian context.

Sin, as mentioned before, has an immense role in changing the aspect of the world under the sovereignty of Jamshid. He sins and the x̄arna(s) ( Fareh) leave him. This theme, later, is embodied in two motifs: the war of three brothers; and the division of x̄arna into three parts: two x̄arnas go to two kings and one to a hero (pahlevān 1). The result of the sin is, observably, the ending of a heavenly life for him as well as for the people of the "keshvar-e X̄niras" 2 and the beginning of tyranny under a demonic man from another land. This could be read under the expulsion of chaos. Ending the devilish era and regenerating time is a predestined war that is conducted by the hero/messiah of the year, whether this year is a cosmic year, a millennium or a natural year. Feraydon and Kāveh are the king and hero that end the Dzahhāk epoch and begin the new millennium. However in all accounts as well as the Shāhnāmeh, with no exception, we see that Jamshid establishes the New Year (Norouz) and Feraydon establishes Mehregān. We know that Norouz, nowadays, is considered as a spring festival concerned with regeneration of time, and Mehregān as an autumnal festival in terms of forces for change. There is some historical and literary evidence that indicates people used to mourn for a dead hero, Siyāvash for instance, during the Norouz; and by contrast, as M. Bahār points

1 Garshāsp in the Avestā and Rostam in the Shāhnāmeh.
2 Honiras or Honireh in Hamza, Tabari, and Biruni, the ancient name for the central land, Iran.
out, they used to feast during the Mehregān. He adds that Mehregān was considered as the beginning of the year.\(^1\) Manuchehri, one of the early Persian poets, whose themes and images were originally close to pre-Islamic mythology, has several works on both rituals of Norouz and Mehregān. According to his poetry, Mehregān was the time for celebrating and drinking. Three chief themes, death, sexual activity, and recreation, are used in his Mehregāni poems, and indicate the major elements of the eighth house of Scorpio.\(^2\) Norouz and Mehregān were apparently opposite festivals with opposite meanings. The former meant and still means the festival for regenerating of time and life; whereas the later meant regenerating of another kind of life, which in philosophy of astrology means death and life beyond that. But it is understandable if we see that the mythology around the Mehregān, instead of actualizing the naked meaning of death, metaphorically represents the fountain of life beyond that and the heroes that would come to bring that life.

The other Gāhanbārs also have two kinds of rituals and narratives, one for the demonic aspects and one for the good aspects. In the Shāhnāmeh as an epic which represents the story of life and death, in any respect, the dualism of the rituals and the opposite characters of good and evil are shown in two kinds of stories in general: a story of evil, in which the whole action conforms to the verb "attack;", and a story of good, in which the whole action conforms to the verb "revenge."

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1 Bahār, M. Az 'Ostoreh tā Tāriikh, pp. 439-60.
Once more we see the U-shaped pattern, in respect of last three Gāhanbārs. There is the Gāhanbār Ayathrima around mid-autumn, whose rites indicates two acts: mourning for the death of plants and celebrating the recreation of them the by god. As narrative syntax the first part of the ritual occurs on one wing of the U and the other part occurs on the other wing at an exactly opposite ranking place. The Gāhanbār Maidhyaairra, whose ritual is held in mid-winter, is about the death and recreation of animals. There are two units for this ritual in the narrative syntax as well, which are respectively placed right after the first one. Following that is the third ritual, which is held at the end of winter right before Norouz. This Gāhanbār, called Hamspath-maedaya, is the mourning/celebration for the death and rebirth of man. As syntax again it is right after the Maidhyaairra Gāhanbār. Norouz is next and has only one unit and function: regenerating time. Keeping these notions, syntax, and rituals in mind, let us outline the age of Feraydon/Kay-Khosrow in comparison to the morphology of cosmic year.

**Archetype: Killing of Plant, Cow, and Man**

The schema in general begins with the three attacks of demons which stand for the killing of plant, cow, and Giyomarth by evil; the deaths of Iraj, Nowzar, and Siyāvash consecutively are the chief units that metaphorically indicate these archetypes in the Shāhnāme. We see this pattern in the first millennium as well, although it is not quite identical. There are two differences here from the archetypal models. In the divine model, Giyomarth himself is the one who is killed. The narrative of Shāhnāme on this
matter is different from the original myth as well as from other sources. The pattern that Shāhnāmeh uses, as the first discrepancy, is one of the most frequent prototypical patterns in the poem. It is the pattern of father/son/grandson, which can be categorized under the motif of revenge. The father is the king, son is, in most cases, his commander in chief against the demon who will kill him; then the king/father has to find and raise his grandson (son of dead son). The first example of the pattern is: Giyomarth/ Siyāmak ↓/Hushang ↑. We shall return to this motif later.

The second dissimilarity is the reign of Tahmoreth, who captures the demons, although they never killed his father or any king at all. Here we see a very untypical event in respect to the causality system. Normally it is the demons who attack first for no reason whatsoever; and then good defends itself, or makes war in revenge. Here, however, Tahmoreth, the good king, is the one who captures and humiliates demons. As Bahār points out, the character of Tahmoreth is not similar to the Indo-European prototypes at all.1 Giyomarth and Hushang of the Shāhnāmeh have some the characteristic elements of Yama (Jamshid), discovery of fire and preparing the Hades; in Indo-Iranian myths creating law and social order are some of them that are part of Yam’s character and function. Jamshid is also the prototype for some kings in the epical and historical parts, for instance Feraydon and Kay-Khosrow or Bahrām-e Gour and Khosrow Anoushe Ravān.

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1 Bahār, Justārhi, pp. 85-6.
Although Tahmoreth's attack does not fall into any prototype in Iranian myths, his function does. He does what a king should do. His name, which is made out of his function, could give us a clue to a lost myth or a ritual. The Pahlavi version of the word is Tахmūrīt/Taxmūrap/Taxmūrit, from the two words taxm and mart. The first part means seed (toxm in new Persian); the second part is the old version of mard (man, mortal). Together then could imply the sixth ritual. However, this is simply speculation and has no value unless we find further evidence or another version of the story. Jamshid is the third king who is killed by the demon Dzahhāk. Thus, we have also three deaths and rebirths in this millennium, as in the third one. In the story of Dzahhāk again the pattern of killing three beings (Abteen, father of Feraydon and his cow, Barmāyeh) is repeated, though they are not as important as the others.

Each attack in the pattern is made by a different demon: Tur kills Iraj, Afrāsiyāb kills Kay-Qobād (although at this time his father, Pashang, is the king), and finally Afrāsiyāb kills Siyāvash. This is also the case in the first millennium; the first attack is considered out by Deevs who are equal to Emshāspandān, the divine beings; Khazarvān Deev is the one who kills Siyāmak. As was mentioned in the second period Tahmoreth captures Deevs, and Dzahhāk is the third demon who kills Jamshid and takes Iran. There is a rank or rather a hierarchical pattern here too, which is copied from the original rank in cosmogony. Ahreman, equal to Ahurā Mazdā, attacks the spiritual world. Then in the first millennium of the material world the Kamāleh Deevs, equal to Emshāspandān, attack, and in the third millennium of the Great Time three demons that have a kind of supernatural power attack (Tur, Pashang/Afrāsiyāb and Afrāsiyāb), counterpart to these
demons there are three kings and heroes, of whom each has some kind of a supernatural power Feraydon/Kāveh, Kay-Qobād/Rostam and Kay-Khosrow/Rostam). We should, then, logically expect a lower kind of demon and king/hero for the next millennium, and it is the case for the rest of the book, except for three characters of the first part of last millennium: Isfandiyār, Alexander and Ardestir’s counterpart, Kerm-e Haftvād. This confusion, as mentioned before, could be rooted in the different beliefs and narratives available in Ferdowsi’s sources. Nonetheless, the archetype of three deaths/creations is found in the historical section of the work as well.

For instance, by mythicizing the death of Pīrooz in the story of Pīrooz and Khoshnavāz, followed by the rescuing of Qobād by Sufzā, the hero of Iran, we see the historical events placed in a mythical context. Here, as far as the story goes, it is possible to see that Ferdowsi tries to duplicate the death of Nowzar and heroic acts of Rostam under the names of Pīrooz and Sufzā in order to raise messianic expectation in his readers. He also deals with the story of Bahrām Chobineh in the same style, but the direction of the historical events here does not let him go all the way. There is, in fact, a kind of game between this attempt and the historical events that create a contradicting meaning.

The archetype of three-deaths is the negative part of the unit. The opposite event is the archetype of rebirth or recreation. In the former part, disequilibrium happens to the schema, and in the latter one equilibrium comes back to it in favor of Good.

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Archetype: End of Male Line

Each time a king is killed, the male line ends, and the throne will remain empty for a while. We see this during the period after the death of Iraj up to Manuchehr, from the death of Nowzar to Kay-Qobād, which is filled with two weak kings, and after the death of Siyāvash until the advent of Kay-Khosrow; although Kay-Kāvus is the king during this time, Iran is so weak that Afrāsiyāb invades the northeast part of it for a while. On the other hand, Rostam invades Turān; in other words, both countries are in chaos. This motif has been used in other sections too, e.g. the periods from Giyomarth to Hushang, Bahman to Dārāb, and Khosrow Parviz to Yazdgerd, though the last only partially conforms to the pattern. Furthermore, this archetype occurs around the times that demons become powerful and could change the era. In other words, it indicates that winter has begun. Under this topos kingship goes from one royal family to another three times: From Jamshid to Feraydon, from Kay-Khosrow to Lohrāsp, and from Dārā to Ardesthir, indicating one era has ended and another one is begun.1 The stealing of women by demons and bringing them back by the saviors or heroes is part of this unit, which semantically has a great role in the whole epic. In just two places, the women are not brought back with a direct fight. The first happens when Afrāsiyāb kills Nowzar and captures his wives. In the second Roshanak, the daughter of Dārā, is captured by Alexander and this is following the death of Dārā; she becomes his wife. In Afrāsiyāb's case, Iranians steal Turkish women as well as Afrāsiyāb's daughters on several occasions.

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1 The killing the last Sāsānid king is where the poem ends, thus there is no sign for the next legitimate king. The story of Shahrbānu, daughter of Yazdgerd, who became the wife of Imam Husseinn tries to restore the broken line here, nonetheless they could also reprise the story of Jamshid's daughters and Isfandiyār sisters, taken by the demon kings.
But in Alexander's case, marrying the Roman kings' daughters is the counteraction by Iranians. It seems that the case of Khosrow Parviz/Yazdgerd, in spite of its historical basis, has been structurally overstated in order to make it conform to the mythical pattern. In any conditions this unit represents the archetype of attempting to steal the seed of Giyomarth by Ahreman and on the opposite side, the replication of spiritual creations and the function of goddess Ānāhitā in taking the seeds of man and cow to the moon for purifying and protecting them. The return of the women to Iran, thus, parallels the rebirth of man in general and the regeneration of a new era in particular.

Although the texts are not clear on the specific times for the birth of the king/messiah and his hero, it could be speculated that it happens in mid-autumn, the time that Ahreman is powerful. One date is fixed by the texts such as the Zand Vahuman Yasn and Zarātushtnāmeh, day of wind (bād) month of Scorpio (Kadzdowm), (equal to 22 Ābān or October the seventh). On this day, in which Jupiter is in the zenith of the sky (north) and Venus is in the nadir (south), in their closest position, the savior would be born. These are the omens: "In that night the stars are raining from the sky... and when the life of his father ends, he (the messiah or hero) will be nourished by the king who is woman.... Jupiter (Hurmazd) is in the top and Venus (Ānāhitā) is under at this time a strong army with the hoisted banner will come to power.... An army from the east with a banner made of tiger (babr) skin will rise up."¹ The story of Feraydon in overall is a short

¹ ZVY, 7.7 and 7.8. It is not clear what babr means in Hedāyat's translation. In the Pahlavi text it is babar, not babr which means beaver in Pahlavi. Rāshed Mouhassel in his translation has the "sag-e ābī" (i.e. beaver). See: ZVY, translated by M. T. Rāshed Mouhassel, p. 14 (7.14) and 69 (VII. 14). As we know the armor of Rostam is also called babr-e bayān. If we can make a connection between this and the word babar
form of these lines, but the most detailed example can be found in Kay-Khosrow’s millennium. Here the birth of Rostam, and later the story of "Akvān-e Deev and Rostam" fit the first part, in which Rostam kills Akvān, who represents bad Vāi in the ancient texts. This legend could be also seen as the material vehicle for reproducing plants that should supposedly be awakened by the good wind and generous rain from Tashtar. Interestingly, Ferdowsi frequently uses "bād" in this section and also some expressions that recall the image of wind. Earlier in the story of Hamāvan, bād is also used to express Rostam's actions and functions. For instance in these examples:

(vol. iv, p. 159) کی خسرو به رستم همی رو به کردار باد دمان // مجوی و مفرماه جستن زمان (77, 677) و رستم به گودرز من انگیک به کردار باد دمان // بهان نجیقيم به به بر زمان (686, 159) طوس در خواب: نگه کن که رستم چو باد دمان // بیاپد بر ما زمان تا زمان (160, 701) درباره رستم: شب تیره را تا سپیده دمان // بیاپد بر به بر نجیبد زمان (865, 986)

By the time the third king is killed Ahereeman or the demonic king is at the peak of his power. Dzahhāk, after taking Jamshid’s throne, reigns for a thousand years (almost a full period of winter, which is close to the Indian Brahma as well as to Mesopotamian versions of ruling two powers); meanwhile Jamshid is hidden away for a hundred years¹ before being killed by Dzahhāk. During this time he marries the daughter of Gandehārā; Garshāsp is the fruit of this marriage, the hero of the Avestā to whom one third of Jamshid’s Farrah is transferred by a bird (vareqnah), and who is the founder of Sistān.²

¹ In some texts it is three hundred years.
² This story with the same conclusion could be found in several accounts, among them Tāriḵ Sistān narrates the part that leads to the birth of Garshāsp, founder of Sistān. Also see Katāyoon Mazdāpour, (Ed.

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But in the millennium of Feraydon/Kay-Khosrow neither Tur nor Afrāsiyāb could rule over Iran, although they invade it several times. Although it is not narrated directly, mass slaughter is also a crucial unit that comes around this time. In Dzahhāk's time this is symbolized by the story of his cooks, Armāyl and Karmāyl, and Kāveh's sons. In the millennium of Kay-Khosrow the motif occurs twice, first after the death of Nowzar and then in the story of seventy children of Gudarz who were killed by Turānians (from the story of Forud to Hamāvan).

**Archetype: Birth of Messiah/King or Appearance of the Hero**

The next archetype in the sequence is finding the messiah and his hero. Ritual signs and the natural elements play the vital roles in this unit. Following three deaths, we should expect three appearances here again, because, according to the cosmic and earthly years, changing the season is on the horizon: one for the recreation of the plants; one for the recreation of the cow, and finally one for the recreation of man. In the age of Kay-Khosrow the following stories and units could metaphorically indicate this process as well as the seasonal changes; the rise of Manuchehr and his kingdom, which is a replica of the paradisal age; next the kingdom of Kay-Qobād; and third the kingdom of Kay-Khosrow. Beside these, we find units such as the story of Akvān Deev in Kay-Khosrow's age, which could indicate the reproduction of plants, and also the rebirth of animals. It, in this case, could be the narrative vehicle for the Gāhanbārs of Ayathrima and Maidhyairya.

In the first Gāhanbār, which concerns the creation of plants, Tashtar, the god of wind, fights with Apush, the Deev of drought, and makes the clouds to rain, and then wind divides the great water into oceans, seas, lakes, and rivers. In the second, the seeds of a male and female cow that were in the moon to be kept pure are brought to the earth to reproduce all animals. As the Bondahesh and the Haftān Yašt, to some extent, mention the battle of Tashtar and Apush is the second war after the war of the Sky.\textsuperscript{1} The story of Akvān Deev, that is syntactically and chronologically in the same place, has these elements and carries same semantic values. The function of Garshāsp in the Avestā supports our hypothesis. The elements of water and wind also have major roles in the story of Garshāsp, the Avestean counterpart of Rostam. The story is about the victory of Garshāsp in his battle against the Deev of drought. The similarities between these two legends are so considerable that we could say that Ferdowsi’s Akvān is a kind of deformed version of the Garshāsp’s story.\textsuperscript{2}

The order of the stories is also significant here. Afrāsiyāb, at the peak of his power, and after killing Siyāvash, attacks Iranians with his allies. In this episode, which ends with the defeat of Turān’s allies, Afrāsiyāb uses his magic power to bury Iranians with the cold wind and snow. The Iranians flee to the Hamāvan Mountain.\textsuperscript{3} Surrounded by the enemy, they are starving to death. Similarly Rostam goes to Hamāvan Mountain

\textsuperscript{2} See: Mazdāpour, ibid, pp. 143 (22).
\textsuperscript{3} The same story and topoi can be found in the Khowrazm desert war in Abu-Muslemnāmeh and the battle of Red (Ahmar) Mountain and White (Asfar) Mountain in the Dārābnāmeh Beqami. In both texts the whole army died from the starvation landing in alaud afflicted by droughts. In the former Abu-Muslem, whose comrades all are killed except seventy of them left saw Imām Ali, or a Devine being, who in his dream tells him to go to a certain place to get help from his hero. In the latter, Dārāb himself rescues his army.
to rescue the Iranians. In this war he first kills Ashkebus, and after that defeats the Chinese and Indian armies. The killing of Ashkebus is the turning point in this millennium, and from this event on, Iranians gradually get stronger and stronger. Defeated by the Iranians, Afrasiyāb has no other choice than to flee to the deepest part of Turān. At this time Kay-Khosrow wants Rostam to fight with the Akvān Deev. In this story, in which Afrasiyāb has a minor role too, Akvān Deev, first, appears like a wind and tosses Rostam into the sea. In the second unit Rostam comes out of the sea and in his search for Rakhsh goes to Afrasiyāb’s horse farm. There he appears like a wind and steals Afrasiyāb’s herd of horses. He, on his way back to Iran, kills the Deev and brings the Afrasiyāb horses as well as the head of Akvān to Kay-Khosrow.¹

These two stories are significant in the cosmic schema. The former an example of the topos of the appearing hero is, in fact, the turning point in all Persian epics; the presence of the topos in these accounts indicates this. Up to one episode before this unit the demonic king is powerful, but he is gradually losing his power; that is why he makes a coalition army attack Iran and tries to destroy it once and for all. In addition, he also uses his magic power to create harsh stormy weather for his enemies. At this point the Iranians, taking refuge on a mountain, are desperately seeking for a way to break the surrounding lines of the enemy in an effort to find help. Right at this time an unknown hero appears on the battlefield and starts killing enemies with a simple yet powerful

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¹ حصیرم دیباد گزاران به دشت // چوکه داد شمایی برو بر گشتنت (8-37) (vol. iv, p. 303, ll. 1-37)
چهارم دیباد گزاران به دشت // چوکه داد شمایی برو بر گشتنت (8-37)
چهارم دیباد گزاران به دشت // چوکه داد شمایی برو بر گشتنت (8-37)
چهارم دیباد گزاران به دشت // چوکه داد شمایی برو بر گشتنت (8-37)
چهارم دیباد گزاران به دشت // چوکه داد شمایی برو بر گشتنت (8-37)
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چهارم دیباد گزاران به دشت // چوکه داد شمایی برو بر گشتنت (8-37)
чо ростам : 154
technique. He defeats the demonic ally and for the first time makes him flee from the battlefield.\(^1\)

This topos, which is basically copied from the appearance of Pashoutan in the apocalyptic texts such as the ZVY, is an archetypal motif with a crucial role in all epics. The apocalyptic texts usually describe only the predictive omens of the narrative. These are the characteristic signs: Pashoutan and his fighters will come from the east (Gangdez) with black banner and black armor, which are made from the skin of beaver (babar). The hero has a unique weapon. Rostam, in the battle of Hamāvan, shows all the signs to both armies. His armor is, of course, the famous babr-e bayān, which is made of animal skin not metal. He appears suddenly and goes on to the battlefield without a horse. In his battle that day he uses only his bow and some arrows. His arrows are so effective that with each of them he kills a king or a commander. Ferdowsi expresses this moment beautifully in a single line, which is very popular among Iranians:

\[2\] (iv, p. 196, l. 1300)

برو راست خم كرد و چپ كرد راست // خروش از خم جراحی بخاست (1300)

Kāveh is another example of this topos in the Shāhnāmeh. His appearance in Dzahhāk's court has no history and happens suddenly. He is, in fact, unknown to everybody, even to the readers; and this is the case in most epic stories. The exceptions are to be found only

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1 Afraşıyāb flees from Rostam once in the Kay-Qobād section; here, however, he flees from Kay-Khosrow, the savior.
2 The first half of the line has several versions. The version that is famous is this: ستون كرد چپ را و خم كرد راست // خروش از خم جراحی بخاست. The line also is significant in terms of poetic techniques. By using the consonants of "s" and "r" and long vowel of "a" in the first half Ferdowsi expresses the time Rostam takes to concentrate; and by using the technique of alliteration in the second half he shows the speed of the arrow when it is released.

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in the *Shāhnāmeh*. Rostam, Isfandiyār and Dārāb are among those who are exceptionally known to everybody before their appearance in the topos. Bahrām Choubineh, however, is unknown even to the king. There is another exceptional difference with this hero, which is that all the other heroes wear an animal skin that is in most cases black, or have a black banner, but Bahrām's skin is dark and his body, like Garshāsp's, is boney.

The second unit, the fight with the wind, which is only in the *Shāhnāmeh* and Garshāsp story, comes right after the topos of appearance. Its function is announcing that the time of recreation has officially begun. Running the waters by wind and finding the horses in the Akvān Deev story could be the narrative vehicle for reactualizing the 4th and 5th stages of creation.

**Archetype: Finding the New Man**

The story of Beijan o Manijeh is the next unit. This could metaphorically represent the sixth Gāhanbār, which is the ritual of creating man. There are several significant elements in the story as well as the omens that can be found in the *ZVY*, *Zaratushtnāmeh*, and *Bondahesh*. Two major actions are involved in this story: the imprisonment of the man/lover, Beijan in this story, by the demonic king; and the flight from the prison by a trick. The ritualistic elements involved here are related to the giving of gifts (shopping festivals) as well as the sexual ceremonies that are held before Norouz. These activities categorically fall into the second group, which is making noises to expel the evil. As Abn Hawqel, the 9th century Arab geographer, reports the people of Isfahan
celebrated this rite for seven days and nights. Biruni, a century later, tells the same story about the Zoroastrian Gāhanbār, which was held in the last five days of the year and was called "mardgirān" (which literary means "capturing man"). He says the people of Isfahan and Hamedān still celebrate it. In the aforementioned texts the omens are descriptively related to the sixth Gāhanbār and the creation of man in its cosmic form; however it is hard to find a narrative genre of the story in these texts. Bahram Padzdu in the Zaratushtnāmeh says that after a massive attack by the demonic armies from all over the world “it would be hard to find a man. Women come out of their houses and look for the men in the streets and bazaars…. At this time Pashoutan comes out of Gangdez with his knights.” When Manijeh meets Bejan for the first time, surprised by his appearance she says something similar to him.

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3 ZVY, translated by Hedāyat, pp. 133-134.
She uses the word "kas" (anybody) instead of mard (man); however its meaning is man, because the story tells there are women around her, and she has access to Turkish men if she wants them. Hence, the word could stand for what is in the other texts.

The same story with the same motifs and topoi appears in other Persian epics and even romances. We should add that the story, in all the accounts, appears before or around the Norouz. Apart from the Shāhnāmeh, the love story of Hassan Qahtabeh and Jamileh, the daughter of Nasr Sayyār, and later the love story of Hashim and Riyāzeh in the Abu-Muslemnāmeh have the same function and phenomena. It is interesting that here in the second love story, Riyāzeh, the girl and not the man, is the one who is imprisoned in the "forgotten well."¹ In the Dārābnāmeh of Beqami the love story of Firooz shāh and ‘Ein al-Hayāt revitalizes this Gāhanbār. There are two more love stories in this romance, – Golbi and Bahman Zarin qabā, hero of Dārāb; and Mowzaffar shāh and Turāndokht – in which some characteristic elements of the creation story are found. Nonetheless, the later story carries the most vital elements as well as the function that is typical of such stories. Hence the imprisonment of Golbi, compared to Mowzaffar shāh’s is not significant, since the defeated Iranians become powerful when they can rescue him, and not the women, from prison. The difference, however, between this account and Ferdowsi’s is that he is imprisoned in a tower that is like a well; whereas Bejan is in a real well, is covered by a piece of Akvān Dee’s rock, referring to the last Gāhanbārs.²

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In the second section of the *Dārābānāmeh*, a greater hero, or rather the hero of the messiah goes to the deepest part of the demonic land to rescue the younger hero. The way he rescues the young hero is similar in each account. The hero goes to the enemy land as a merchant with his comrades, who are hidden in his baggage. He stays there undercover until he finds and saves the young hero. After the rescue, on their way back to Iran, their caravan, decorated with the colorful ribbons, makes noises (musical and unmusical) while they are passing through the lands and mountains that are blossoming, this again, signifies the ceremony of the expulsion of evil. We should not forget that the time for this event, in all accounts, is before Norouz or around it. These signs, as mentioned earlier, are similar to the expulsion of evil in the Acadian New Year ritual as well as the scapegoat ritual in Greece. It could also be linked to the ancient Iranian ceremony of sacrificing a man, instead of a mass slaughter, by the end of each year in order to regenerate the time and the nature by his blood.¹ This ritual and its myth in the Zoroastrian time have apparently been connected with the killing of a criminal or demonic king at the end of the year. The last unit of the *Ayātgār Zarirān* could be a reactualization of this ceremony. As we know, in this unit Isfandiyār, without any role in the story up to this point, suddenly appears and captures Arjāsp, then cuts off his ears and nose puts him on a donkey and sends him back to Turān.² This is how that governor of Basra, as Tabari reports, has treated an Iranian official in that city.³ There is also a trace

² Ayātgār Zarirān, edited by Safā.

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of this ceremony in the Persian poetry, "mir-e norouzi" in Hāfez’s poetry or "mir-e sepanji" in Sa'di could be an indication of such a myth. The story of Yousef Shāh, written by Akhondzādeh who was inspired by a Safavid story, is also a full recounting of this ritual.

The story of Beijan o Manijeh, as Dick Davis rightly points out, is the only love story in the Shāhnāmeh that produces no offspring. The fruits of other stories are the heroes, but the love of Beijan o Manijeh is fruitless. It is the same with the other epics. Nonetheless, one could add that the fruit of these lovers could be the time, of the New Year.

The basic similarities among the epics are: the love affairs between a young king/messiah or one of his youngest heroes and the daughter of the demonic king or a governor. On this basis the story is exactly opposite to the unit of killing the good king and stealing his seeds (daughter(s)) in the earlier stages. The next action in these stories is the capture of the lover by the demonic king/father of the daughter and his being imprisoned in a well, or a well-like tower or castle. As long as the hero is in the well he is fed by his lover. During this time the forces of good are in bad shape. The army is scattered, and the king and his heroes have to wait for a supernatural sign. They also have to use tricks to rescue the young hero. To find Bejan's jail, Kay-Khosrow has to wait until the Norouz. That day he sees Bejan at the bottom of the well and then sends Rostam undercover to save him. The rescue by the great hero, who has to come to the

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1 سخن در پرده می‌گویم چو گل از عشق بهر و ای // که بیش از پنج روزی نیست حکومت نوروزی

Divān Hāfez, edited by Sāyeh, Inteshārāt-e Hosh o Ibtekār, Tehran 1373, p. 523. Also see: Biruni, Al-Tafhim, p. 257.
demon’s territory secretly, is the next unit of the story. The return to Iran in carnival fashion is the last part of this story; nevertheless it is not the last action of the young hero. The carnival is seen in all accounts. Defeating Afrāsiyāb in a night raid by Rostam ends this episode.

**Topos: Changing the Position of Good and Evil: Fight for the Place**

The next syntactical unit consists of three major battles, in which the positions of evil and good reverse in terms of power. Afrāsiyāb gathers a new army of his own to attack Iran, which is an image of the first attack of Ahreman on the day of Norouz at noon. This time Gudarz and his sons are sent to fight for the Iranians and he makes a coalition army from Romans, Indians, and Arabs — everybody is in this battle, even Rostam, which is opposite image of mass slaughter.\(^1\) The battleground is between two mountains, Zibad and Kenābad, and the strategy for Gudarz is to take the position of Afrāsiyāb, whose army has the Zibad Mountain behind them, with plenty of water and food.\(^2\) To take the mountain, Gudarz has to act at a crucial moment; to act before or after the requisite time could have disastrous consequences for him, his family and Iran. Instead of fighting he is reading the astrolabe to see when the crucial moment arrives. He is, indeed, waiting for the conjunction of the spring equinox, in which Hurmozd (Jupiter)

\(^1\) پرزمود کر روم وز هندوان // سواران جدگی گزیده گوان
\(^2\) دلیران گردشکن از تازیان // بسیچیدی جنگ شیر زبان

(Moscow edition, vol. v, pp. 91-2, ll. 97-95) Dehkhodā has recorded different versions of Zibad and Kenābad, which are Ribad and Gonābad. He says Ribad was a mountain three farsangs’ distance from Gonābad.
goes to his best position in the north of the sky and Keyvān (Saturn) goes to his weakest point in the deep sky. Saturn is hardly seen at this conjunction. The opposite of this conjunction, as was mentioned before, is the horoscope of the autumn equinox, in which Saturn is at his strongest position and Jupiter is trying to get back to zenith. The astrolabe foretells that the best constellation will occur in a few days, that the first attack should be by a demon who has the black banner.¹ Pirān Vaisheh who knows astrology as well, on the other side, also knows that he has to wait and should let the Iranians attack first. But Humān, the son of Afrāsiyāb, acts preemptively and comes to the field with the banner of Afrāsiyāb, which is black. Beijan is the first Iranian hero who goes to the battle, and he kills Humān.² Then the Turks attack and as a result the Iranians take the Zibad Mountain. Now let us see if there is any trace of this story in the Pahlavi texts.

As was mentioned earlier, the first battle, which is between the second rank heroes and their advisories, in most accounts, occurs between two mountains. The mountains, according to the Bondahesh as well as the ZVY, indicate the positions of Jupiter and Saturn before and around the spring equinox. The ZVY, which is very clear on this, says: “when the star of Hurmazd goes to the peak of his position in the north and brings down Venus, a large army will come with a hoisted banner, and the kingdom will

¹ (ibid. p. 119, l. 602) (μέλος του Afrāsiyāb)
² (ibid. p. 133, l. 836) (σημείωση του Afrāsiyāb και του Dārgān)
go to the Kay.«¹ The Zaratushnâmeh account echoes this, with more details, which are characteristically close to those in the Shâhnâmeh.²

In the Bondahesh the constellation is recounted even in greater detail. In chapter seven, which is about the position of stars in the cosmogony, the author gives the positions of the stars and black stars (evil stars), and their chronological roles in the story of creation/death of the world. According to this account there are five major stars in the sky that keep the world together. They are called nails of the sky:

Humazd (Jupiter) is the sepâhboz (commander) of the north, Ḍânâhi (Venus) is the sepâhboz of south, Bahrmâr (Mars) is the sepâhboz of west, Tishtar (Mercury) is the sepâhboz of east, and Keyvân (Saturn) is the nail of the center, sepâhboz-e sepâhboz.

According to Iranian cosmology there are two kind of stars in the sky: pâxtarân, the good stars that shine with their own light, and apâxtarân, the evil stars that cannot be seen unless by the light of the good stars that try to show them, because in this case they cannot harm people seriously. It goes on:

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¹ ZVY, Hedâyat, p. 58, VII.8.
² On the second line here, and its expression that Ferdowsi echoes it in this line: it should be added that in the Scorpion there is no clear constellation in the sky, that is why it is called wind in Persian astrology and in the Roman astrology it is the wasteland.

The third line of the poem indicates the death of the father (Siyâvash) and the birth day of the new messiah, Kay-Khosrow in our case.

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Alborz is the pole of the sky... Hurmazd, whose nature is fire, is the star of life; Keyvān on the other hand is the star of death. These two are opposite of each other. Aūhītā, whose nature is water, is opposite of drought (Sedovīs, which is one of the black stars); and Teer, whose nature is dry wind, is opposite of Tishtar, the rainmaker wind.... In the spring equinox, Norouz, Jupiter is in his strongest position and Saturn, downfallen, will be at his weakest point in a few days at this time Venus is in the closest position to Saturn.¹ On the contrary, in the autumn equinox, Mehregān, Saturn is in ascendant and Jupiter is in declining; at this time Aūhītā is sinful.”²

Besides that, there are twelve “kadeh(s)” (houses) in the sky, in which good and evil stars in each house hold different positions. Their positions, in each constellation, shape the life of people on the earth. In other words, the good or bad, happiness or sadness, rhythm (order) and chaos (disorder) are results of their functions.

Norouz is the archetypal position for the time that Ahreman attacks and is defeated by the army of good. The position of pākhtrān (stars) and apākhtrān (evil stars) on the day of Norouz at noon, when Ahreman attacks, is the astrological sign of this. Their positions are also the model for the strategic plan for the army. The story of Twelve Rowkh of the Shāhnāmeh could be interpreted in this context. Ferdowsi, as mentioned before, in every story frequently uses vocabulary and expressions that are related to ancient mythical contexts. This revitalizes the essence of myths as well as the religious concepts that can be found in the sources such as the Avestā, Bondahesh and ZVY. Here, in the Twelve Rowkh story most images, expressions, personifications, and so forth have kinds of relationships with astronomy as well as cosmogony. This can not be an accident, because soothe technique is harmonious with the motifs and the themes of

¹ The twelfth house is not the house of death, though it holds the secrets of past lives. Also there is an essence of ending point to it. Arme'iti, another goddess of water, is the essence of this house in the Mazdean astronomy.
² Bondahesh, Bahār, pp. 57-61.
that particular. Furthermore, the traces of these techniques are easy to find in the Pahlavi texts, for example, in the battle of Garshāsp against Tir. As a result, we can conclude that it was an important technique in the language of narrative discourse. This is, in fact, one way of making symbols in Persian poetry, which shows itself in the repetition of words under the specific themes or motifs.

To put this discussion in perspective, I would like to trace one word in different texts to see if it supports our theory here. As was mentioned above the star of Hurmazd (Jupiter) means life. The Pahlavi word for that is “jān,” (“jānnān” in the Bondahesh). It is also another word for the star Jupiter. Jānnān in new Persian, however, means lover and also beloved, which in a way describes the love affair between Jupiter and Ānāhitā that is mentioned in Pahlavi texts frequently. It is also used in the sense that a beloved can give a whole new life to his/her lover. There is an ambiguous cultic hallowedness around this word, poets like Hāfez use it metaphorically. For Sufis, the word has significantly more functions, because, first of all, they have also the same pattern of five chief stars in their ranks (namely: one central spiritual leader (qotb) and four leaders (vatad(s)) that keep open the bridge between god and the spirit of holy men. This cardinal image, which is originally an Indo-European archetype, echoes the position of stars that the Bondahesh describes. We should add that the word vatad, which is Arabic, means nail, as is also expressed by the Bondahesh. Here again we see another similarity between these two notions, because in the Bondahesh the four sepāhbods of north, south, west and east are imagined as the nails that hold the earth in the middle of the sky, and
the center one, sepāhbod-e sepāhbod is like a mountain, or rather the Alborz Mountain itself with double character of night and day. That is why we see Hāfez says:

"Do not sell the beggary of the jānnān to the kingship
Would anybody go from this shadow even to the sun light?"

Some commentators of Hāfez see this line in the theme of love/kingship: being a beggar, but in love is better than being a king without love. This is of course a part of the meaning, the paradoxical words of begging and kingship, shadow and sun light emphatically lead us to this; however, there is another meaning that is forgotten here and that is the comparison of the Jānnān as the fountain of life and regenerator of time with the sovereignty of this world.

The sun and moon, as the other stars, in the Mazdean traditions have their evil counterparts, which are conceptually called black sun and moon.¹ One line in the story of Twelve Rokh in the Shāhnāmeh could refer to this concept. A few lines after Afrāsiyāb says that Kay-Khosrow is not his grandson, then complains about fate and the turning of the Sepehr ("god" of the sky, time, and fate) happiness and sadness alternatively. At this point he refers to the tireh (black) sun and moon. Tireh has several meanings in the Shāhnāmeh: dark, aimless and meaningless are three of those. The former meaning applies as an adjective, whereas the latter is used, in most cases with به as an adverb.² Here in this line we may have both meanings, although there is no (به) before the word,

¹ See Bondaheš, ibid.
² تره گشتند.
which indicates that it is probably an adjective with the meaning of dark rather than aimless. Here are the lines:

چنين بود و اين بودني كار بود مرا ايز تو در دل چه آزار بود
و ديگر كه گفتی ز كار سباه ز گرديدن تیره خورشيد و ماه
همينه چنينست كار نبرد ز هر سو هيگيرد اين تو گرد
گهي بركشند تا به خورشيد رگ گهي اندرز خورشيد بر
به يکسان گنگردد سهیر بلند گهي شاد دارد گهي مستمدي (24-1420) (p. 166, ll. 11)

The word “tireh” in the very next line definitely means aimless. But why has Ferdowsi used this word, which is paradoxical as applied to the sun and moon? Does he refer to the black sun and moon by that or does he simply mean “aimless”? All we can say is that the world is not aimless to Ferdowsi; and it is far from his character to use such a word that contradicts his basic view.

In the story of the Twelve Rowkh the strategic plan, designed by Gudarz, is to take the Zibad Mountain, which is like the sepahbod of the north (Ohrmazd’s place) in the Bondahesh, in order to defeat the devil king once and for all. A clue that indicates this is the similarity between Gudarz’s strategic plan and the just-mentioned passage from the Bondahesh. In both cases it is said that this is the strategic plan that should be used to defeat the devil king. In other words, the pattern of stars at the spring equinox is the prototype that has shaped the story here.

Natural elements like wind also give us the same hint. In the Hamāvan battle the wind is against the Iranian army; in this battle, however, it is with the Iranians and against Turānians. Ferdowsi depicts it beautifully:
همی گفت گودارز گر پشت خوش // سهارم بیدشان نهم پای پیش
سباه اندر ایس پشت من // نماد جز از بیاد در مشت من
شب و روز بر پای پیش سهاه // همی جست نیک اختیر هور و ماه
که روزی که آن روز نیک اختیرات // کدامست و چنیش کرا بهترست
کجا بردمد باد روز نیر // که چشم سواران بیوشش گرد
بریشان بیابم مگر دستگاه // به کردار باد اندر پای سهاه (6-106) pp. 7-2, ll. 351

And when the massive attack is taking place a black cloud suddenly appears over the mountain and as the Turānian army disappears in the cloud and wind Gudarz commands his army to rain the arrows on them:

رسیدند پس یک به دیگر فراز // دو لشکر پر از کینه و رزمار
همه گر زه برکشیدند پاک // یکی ابر بست از بر نبره خاک
فرود آمد از کوه ابر سهاه // بیوشش دیدار توران سهاه
سپهراد چون گرد نبره بهد // کرو لشکر نیک许ش نابید
کمکانها بفرمود کردند به زه // برآمد خروش از مهان و ز که

... (pp. 135-188, 6-2, ll. 881)

Furthermore Twelve Rowkh also has an astrological prototype in the Avestā, which provides us another perspective of the same cosmologic notion of regenerating time. There is a series of metamorphoses, precisely ten, in the "Bahrām Yašt," which Bahrām goes through. These metamorphoses, in fact, are the twelve different constellations that stars have in every house, and Bahrām as the star that is always seen in these constellations, and the hero of Hurmazd, metamorphoses into ten figures. A close examination shows us that these figures are, indeed, the figures of the zodiac. He appears as the wind for the first time, then as an ox, a horse, a camel, a wild pig, a young man, an
eagle, a wild ram, and finally as a muscular man.¹ The first horoscope, according to the Bahram Yašt, is wind, which is equal to the Libra and the tenth one is a muscular man. But the question is why they are ten and not twelve. Coyajee has a theory on this. He as a Zoroastrian interprets what he has been taught in the faith, that Bahram is not transformed to the last houses because the eleventh one is fish, and belongs to the element of water. Bahram would be hidden in this house. Anecdotally at this time, Bahram is gulped down by the fish, which is the prototype for the story of Garshasp and Tir and his counterpart in the Shāhnāmeh, Rostam and Akvan. In both legends the demon throws the hero into the deep water. After a long struggle, Bahram kills the fish and jumps out of the water, rising like the sun. The twelfth house, which is equal to the first month of the year, belongs to the element of fire. The figure of this house is also fire and belongs to Asha, the energy of recreating the new time in the seventh stage of creation. Asha is the harmonious power of the divine fire that ends the chaos of the last five days of the year and brings back rhythm and regularity to the world. And because fire is from heaven, neither its house nor its symbol is indicated by any animal or human figure or character.² No need to mention that Avestan Bahram as the hero of Hurmazd, whose Indian counterpart is Indra, is the divine model of Garshasp, Rostam, Isfandiyar and Kaveh.

¹ Camel in the Iranian-Sogdian zodiac is equal to Leo (lion). See: Coyajee, Jehangir. Ā’inhā va Afshānehāī Iran va Chin, translated by J. Dustkhāh into Persian, Ketabhāī Jībī, Tehran 1362, pp. 61-75.
² Ibid. pp. 61-71.
The hero’s sinking into the water, explicit in the story of Akvān-e Deev, is symbolized in the Yašt, but in a different way; here the fish is Bahrām himself and not the one who is gulped down. This is because of a Mazdean tradition, of not referring to a demonic character as the dominant power; instead they used the hero to defeat him later on as its symbol. There are several examples of this in the religious as well as the literary traditions; for instance, denying Ahreman’s sovereignty during the winter time and portraying winter as under the forthcoming messiah. As a result, Bahrām is transformed into ten figures plus one. Yet, there could be another explanation for the first house. As we know the first month belongs to Hurmazd, whose position is hierarchically above all; thus Bahrām may not metamorphose to him because he is the ultimate power, and nobody can fill his position.

Bahrām transforms himself into eleven figures, which are the symbols of the houses; in the Twelve Rowkh also we see eleven fights plus one. The last match does not finish in this episode; Garui-e Zereh, the murderer of Siyāvash, is captured by his opponent but remains alive until the end of the last battle of the schema. At that point, he is killed before Afrāsiyāb and Garsivaz by Kay-Kāvus and Kay-Khosrow. The death of these people, as the demons of drought, starvation and death, is the revenge for the death of three kings in the first section of the millennium. The fight of Kay-Khosrow with Afrāsiyāb’s son, or the killing of Garui, Garsivaz, and Afrāsiyāb by him, would be considered as the twelfth fight.
As Beijan starts the very first crucial fight against the important antagonist in the Twelve Rokh, Kay-Khosrow begins the first fight of the three wars, which could be considered as the twelfth match of the Twelve Rokh. This fight, which is between Kay-Khosrow and Sheedeh son of Afrasiyāb, occurs in a desert in Khārazm, where neither water nor vegetation can be found.¹ Ferdowsi earlier mentions that it is the first month of the year.² Thus the story that chronologically started in the autumn is now finalizing the destiny of the evil king in the spring of the next year, which is also confirmed by other signs and elements of the cosmogonic story.

The chronologies of the Abu-Muslemnāmeh and the Dārābnāmeh Beqami are shaped in the same way. The war between Abu-Muslem and Nasr-e Sayār’s armies begins in the early winter in Khorāsān; however, the story loses its chronological direction to the battles in the states of Isfahan and Hamedān, which occur around the Norouz, while the second love story between Hamid-e Qahtabeh and Zobaydeh goes on in parallel.³ There are no calendars or climatic signs in the Dārābnāmeh except at one place, in which Mozafar Shāh, freed from prison, enters the invaded Constantinople in a carnival atmosphere, which is similar to the end of the Beijan o Manijeh story. The carnival in this scene goes through a wooded country and along a green sea-shore.

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¹ Βαπάνταν κα Αν Α Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ

² Βαπάνταν κα Αν Α Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ Ρ

³ Besides these two stories, there is in fact another love story in this epic, in which Abu-Muslem falls in love with a girl, however this story does not functionally do what the others do. Vol. IV, pp. 277-92, and pp. 413-90.
The Great Wars of Kay-Khosrow

The next syntactical unit is the one/three-great war, in which the evil king as well as his brothers – who are similar to angels of death, starvation and drought in the divine model – gets killed by the messiah himself. The great battle of Kay-Khosrow begins at Norouz; nonetheless the chronology of the story shows that events are stretched through the whole spring and summer. These are the following lines that indicate:

جو خورشید بر زد سر از برج گاز / ز هامون برآمد خروش چکاو (707)

جو برزد سر از چنگ خرچنگ هور / جهان شد پر از چنگ و اهتف و شور (first month, 279, 722)

(Norouz) ببایم (Kay-Khosrow) بيدين رزمگه پنج روز / ششم روز هرمزد گامتي فروز (95)

براید برایم زایدر سپاه / که او کین فزایست و ما کین خواه (p. 286, II. 851-2)

Beside three battles, which can be seen as the indications of three deaths in reverse sequence, there are two important topoi in this episode that give another perspective to the cosmogonic scenario. The first topos is the conquest of Gang-dez. This topos is stretched through the first and second battles of Kay-Khosrow. The second is the topos of the demonic king going into hiding. This topos comes one unit before the last action of the schema, which is the killing of demons.

Topos: Taking Gang-Dez

Gang-dez, as a hidden place and also a critical meaning, has an important presence in to all Irano-Islamic religions. It plays a crucial role in this part of the Shāhnāme as well. The legend behind this hidden place, as well as six other hidden
places in Zoroastrian belief, is apparently involved with the ancient myth of a sky city, as
divine model of all cities, which was built by Siyāvash and brought down to the earth
by his son Kay-Khosrow. Bondahesh calls these cities the safe havens of Xoĥiras
(Iran). The author believes that when the battle between the two opposite forces is in its
ultimate stage and Ahreman has conquered the lands of good, the immortal saviors that
live in these refuges will come to help Sowshiyānt in his last battle with the evil, Deevs
and creatures. Accordingly these safe heavens, as well as their saviors are in different
lands: Pashoutan, son of Goshtāsp, is in Gang-dez, which is in the land of Khorāsān;
other safe havens are Sukustān (in Turkestān), Dasht-e Pishānse (Kābulestān), Bar-e Zeer
or Rud Nāvtāz (Farāxkart sea), Irānviāj, Var-e Jamkard (in Pārs), and hidden Kashmir
(India). The immortal saviors are Kay-Khosrow, Garshāsp, Aghriras (brother of
Afrāsiyāb), Giv, Sām, Tus, and so on. As the Bondahesh describes Gang-dez's design, it
was like a human body with a hoisted banner in its hand, revolving over the demons'
heads. Kay-Khosrow brought the city down on the ground and made it stop spinning.

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1 See: Bahār, Jostāri, 1373, pp. 69-74.
3 Ibid. p. 138.

Imagining the cities like the human body has traditionally had a great impact on the design of the cities
even in the Islamic period. Names of some cities and villages confirm this claim. For instance, in Isfahan
there are two suburbs, which are called Dastgerd (hand of city) and Pāgerd or Pāqal'eh (foot of city). There
are two Dastgers on the two sides of Isfahan as well as one Pāqal'eh.
Furthermore, Souhrevardi in his work, Fei-Haqiqat al-Eshq, imagines the city of love to be a body, then
explains the function of each part in comparison to the body's functions and roles. See: Sohravardi,
Shihabodin Yahya. Ceuvres Philosophiques et Mystiques (Collection of Souhrevardi's Works), edited by S.
The same concept and prototype can be found in Irano-Islamic faiths and mythologies. There is also a holy hidden place in the Shi’ite and Isma’ili faiths. According to Ibn-Khaldun this is called “Bāgheh Razavi,” and the messiah hides there until the end of the time when he will appear.1 The Twelvers, he goes on, believe that Mahdi and his mother have hidden in a well and he will come out to bring justice for “Muslems,” i.e. Shi’i.2 Apparently two topoi are involved in this myth; one is the rising from the well, as it is in Beijan o Manijeh, and the unit of coming back from the Gang-dez, as it is with the return of Kay-Khosrow from Turān in the Pahlavi texts as well as the Shāhnāmeh. The former reactualizes the creation of man as well as the regeneration of time at Norouz; whereas the latter which is more widespread, indicates the same concept in an epic fashion rather than as a ritual.

The Gang-dez story, in the Shāhnāmeh, depicts the whole narrative that could be found in the Zoroastrian texts; however, there are some mixed-in narrational elements and images that show traces of both the ancient narrative one of returning from the hidden place and the apocalyptic myth. Briefly, Kay-Khosrow first takes Behesht-Gang from Afrāsiyāb3, and then goes to Gang-dez, which is a thousand farsang away from Iran.4 Then he again goes back to Turān to war with Afrāsiyāb; there, however, he is in

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2 Ibid.
3 In this part, Afrāsiyāb escapes through a hidden tunnel that is under the Gang-dez.
4 همانا که فرستگز ایران هزار // بود تا به گذگ اندر ای شهریار (1530).
Gang-dez again. In a sense we are told that these are two places far from each other, for example in these lines:

ز گلنگ گرون راه چین برگرفت // جهان را به شمشیر در بر گرفت
نبد روز بیکار و تبره شبان // طلایی به روز و به شب پاسبان
بدین گونه تا شارستان پدر // همی رفت گران و پرکنیه سر (401834-v, l. 343)

The name of Gang-dez is not present in the Avestā. Pahlavi texts, however, mention two cities or Gang-dez with the name of Siyāvash-gerd. Bahār believes that one of these cities is the one in the sky, which was built by Siyāvash with the help of Hurmazd and Emshāspandān. The second one is the same city that Kay-Khosrow brought down from the sky and made it stop spinning. The Pahlavi Revāyāt puts it in this way:

Siyāvash, first, with the help of Hurmazd and Emshāspandān built the Gang-dez over the Deevis’ heads..., and then Kay-Khosrow came and stopped it spinning. Later Kay-Khosrow said to Minooi Gang, - "you are my sister and I am your brother, because Siyāvash built you by his hands and made me from his sperm." He said "come to me," and Gang did come to the earth, in Turān, in Khorāsān land (which probably means east) the place that is (called) Siyāvash-gerd, stopped (spinning) and (Kay-Khosrow) put a thousand bands (arms) around it and nailed it by a thousand nails and then (the Gang-dez) did not (move) and kept the whole of Turān with the lambs and the horses.2

1 Kangha is a land in the Avestā, but it does not have anything to do with Siyāvash’s Gang-dez. On this, see: M. Bahār, Jowstāri Chand dar Farhang-e Iran, pp. 69-74.
The story of *Shāhnāmeh* also follows the same story line, in which one of the cities is imaginatively spinning and the other one keeps the force of the spring, prosperity, in itself.¹ Ferdowsi does not say that the castle is spinning, but the poetic images indicate the notion:

... نمون باره گفتی که برداشت یا // به کرادار کوه اندر آمد ز جای (1309)

There is no direct mention of spring in opposition to winter either, but there are some poetic images that make us see the notion indirectly. Here are some examples:

... همی گنگ خوان ده بهشت منست (افراستیاب) // برآوردیدی بوم و کشت منست
هم ایباد مراد گنچ و ابیاد سباه // هم ایباد نگین و هم ابیاد کلاته
هم اینجام کشت و هم اینجام خورد // هم اینجام مردان روز نبرد
ترا (گاه گرمی و خوشی گنشت // گل و لاله و رنگوخشی گنشت
زمستان و سرما به پیش اندست // که بر نیزه ها گردید افسردگانه دست
به دامن چو اب اندرافذگ میچین // بر و بوم ما سنگرد زمین (73-1168)
پکشید و خویی // بان کار اورید // چو دیدن سرما بهار اورید (1443)
بدن تا بهار اندرو برو // جهن شد بهشتی پر از رنگ و بومی (1477)

¹ This concept can be seen in the Siyāvash story too.

... همان بوم کرآ بهشتست نام // همه جای شادی و آرام و کام
به هر گوشهای لیسبا ایگیر // به بالا و پنیا پرتاب نر (50-1049)

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The similarities lead us to conclude that we are reading just one story, which has been compiled from two different points of view as two different accounts. In Ferdowsi’s version Kay-Khosrow is the one who takes back from Afrāsiyāb the Gang-dez that is equal to one in the Revāyāt Pahlavi. On the other hand, there are the apocalyptic texts in which the hero presumably comes out of the castle with his cavaliers in order to help the savior. Apparently this myth had less influence on Iranian narratives, because it is hard to find in other epics, except for a few traces. There are three examples in the Abu-Muslemnāmeh, for instance: the conquest of Mussel the last city by Abu-Muslem himself and the battle of Abu-Muslem with Marvan who has fled to a Christian castle in Egypt.\(^1\) The invasion of the castle by Seti takalbāz in this text is similar to the way that Isfandiyār takes Arjāsp’s dez, and also to the battle of Rostam for the Sepidez.\(^2\) Kay-Khosrow captured all the wives and daughters of Afrāsiyāb at the end of the Gang-dez story, and this puts an end to the cycle of stealing and bringing back home women by the saviors of this age: Feraydon brings back home the daughters of Jamshid at the beginning of the millennium, later Isfandiyār brings back home his sisters (Goshtāsp’s daughters), which could be a sign for the beginning of the next millennium, if we take Kay-Khosrow’s kingship as the last segment of eighth millennium, and not as a period of 9\(^{th}\) millennium, which belongs to Zoroaster.\(^3\)

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\(^1\) *Abu-Muslemnāmeh*, pp. 231-256 and 439-455.

\(^2\) Ibid. pp. 449-453.

\(^3\) Normally there are two women, but Kay-Khosrow takes more than two. Furthermore they are not his immediate relatives.
Topos: Disappearance of the Demonic King

The last syntactical narrative sequence that ends the schema is the topos of the disappearance of a demonic king. In this topos, which is very common in Persian epic narratives, the demonic king disappears in a hole or a sewer, and later on he will be found in water, either dirty or clean. The Shāhnāmeh on this gives us the closest narrative to the Pahlavi texts, in which Afrāsiyāb goes to the Chichast Lake to get the “fareh,” but a priest who had been waiting there catches him and hands him to Kay-Kāvus and Kay-Khosrow. We should notice that in some texts he tries to get the “fareh” three times and at the third attempt Kay-Khosrow catches him.

This topos, in the Feraydon story, is divided into two parts. In the first part, which occurs at the end of the last fatal battle, the demonic king flees into an underground narrow channel; and then hides for a while in a half full sewage pipe. The second part is his capture, in which the demon is apprehended by the savior himself. Ferdowsi apparently mixed this archetypal unit with the myth, in which Afrāsiyāb tries to catch the “fareh” in the Chichast Lake. Without referring to “fareh”, he simply mentions the sea in one line. One could say that the sea is used here instead of the sewage pipe, and the priest is also present. Here are the lines that indicate the first archetype, in which a priest gives a clue to Kay-Kāvus about the cave in which Afrāsiyāb is hiding prior to his disappearance in the sea:
But he escapes and disappears under the lake.

And as his brother, who is in the hands of Kay-Khosrow, is calling on god, Afrasiyab comes out of the water.

As we see, Kay-Khosrow is the one who finally captures the demon of the millennium. With this topos the age of Feraydon/Kay-Khosrow ends. Kay-Kāvus dies right after this event, and then Kay-Khosrow reigns for sixty years, which is close to the fifty seven years reign of Soshiyānt, the last messiah in Zoroastrianism.
The first part of the topos, in which the demon escapes to a place under the ground (a cave, a sewage pipe, or a hole), is very popular in Persian epics, and appears in the *Abu-Muslemnāmeh*, Beqami's *Dārābnāmeh*, Tarsusi's *Dārābnāmeh*, and so on. However, it appears at various points in the tale, and not just at the end. In Beqami's *Dārābnāmeh* for instance we see the topos three times, once for the vizier of Yemen, then for the king of Egypt, and finally for the king of Rome. In the *Abu-Muslemnāmeh* it occurs for Nasr-e Saiyār, governor of Khorāsān, and then for Marvān at the end.

To conclude this pattern I will outline the whole age once more, in a fashion that shows the syntactical motifs in the other parts of the *Shāhnāmeh*.

1- Morphology of cosmic year: motif of attack/creation, process of attack and defence.

This consists of three segments: The first sentence here is “/plant, cow or man/ is killed by /Ahreman, Deev, or antagonist/.” Second, “Hurmazd takes their seeds to protect then.” This is the period in which /man, animals, plants/ cannot be found. In the narrative this is shown by the lines that say the throne remains empty. Third, they are recreated with the help of /Emshāspandān, wind, water, and fire/. This segment has two parts: the birth of the messiah and his hero; then, his uprising. Killing the demon and his closest commanders, in revenge for their acts, closes the cycle. Patterns 1, 4, 6, 13 are built up using this syntax.¹

The syntax of attack/creation has four propositions: 1- attack; 2- end of male line; 3- birth of the avenger; 4- taking the revenge.

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¹ See chapter three, the table of the ages in the *Shāhnāmeh*, in chapter three.

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In every millennium three attacks would take place, each could stand for its archetypal model: killing the plant, the cow, Giyomarth.

Siyāmak, /capturing the Deevs/ Jamshid, in the first millennium
Iraj, Nowzar/Aghrirath, Siyāvash, in the third millennium. There are more than three murders in this millennium. The way that Ferdowsi has narrated this we see in fact three millennia from Dzahhāk to Alexander; whereas Faranbaghdādegi and Hamzat assume there is just one millennium between these foreign kings.

In Dzahhāk’s millennium also we see three murders: Jamshid/ Ābteen/ Pormāyeh (the cow).

2- Morphology of history: motif of sin/catastrophe. Its syntax is in overall terms similar to the first one. In the versions of 4, 6 (that have both motifs), 13 and 15 it closely resembles the syntax of the first motif. In the versions of 3, 7, 8, 9, and 15 the pattern works in a different manner. Among these the syntaxes 7 and 8 (Lohrāsp and Isfandiyār) work in a manner opposite to the archetypal motif. In the 7th, the father is killed, while his son is the king (Goshtāsp) but the grandson (Isfandiyār) takes revenge. In the 8th pattern the son is killed, the king/father does not help the grandson to take the revenge, and the son of the killed hero (Bahman) stays with the father’s killer (Rostam). His father’s killer is killed by his own brother and at the same time kills his murderer.¹ Bahman, after being crowned, takes his revenge against the son of Rostam. Despite the syntaxes and their logic in these cases, their functions are opposed to their divine models; therefore, the messages are reversed.

¹ This pattern is unique to all epics.
In the case of 3, 9 and the last in narrated section, sovereignty is taken back, but revenge does not happen (Dzahhāk, Alexander and Arabs).

In the case of 10 and 11, which are far from the archetypes, events are narrated as they happened historically.

In the case of 14 the devil (Mazdak), according to the Zoroastrian texts, is killed during the reign of king who was supporting him, by the son of the king. This is a historical event that is narrated in the mythical pattern, but the sentence is incomplete.

In Sāsānian history, there is one attack before the Arabs’, which is shaped by the syntax of death/creation: this is the killing of Pirooz. The pattern of Qobād/ Bahrām Chobineh/ Khosrow Parviz also shows a tendency towards the archetypal pattern of death/creation, but it is not completed. In fact, this pattern is originally shaped by the syntax of sin/catastrophe in the first place and shifts to the 3rd and 4th propositions at the end.

Syntax of sin/catastrophe has four propositions: 1- king sins. 2- He is killed (catastrophe occurs – in this unit we may see the archetypal unit of ended male line as with Iraj, Nowzar, Bahman, Khosrow Parveez; or a natural catastrophe, in the reign of Pirooz. 3- Because there is no survivor left from the dead king’s line, the throne remains empty. 4- A grandson is born (Manuchehr) or the king is chosen (Kay-Qobād), Kay-Khosrow’s case indicates both.

3- Between the millennia: Pattern of Jamshid/Dzahhāk/ Feraydon, which has also been used in the Dārā/ Iskandar/ Ardeshir and Yazdegerd/ Arabs/ syntaxes, is a similar but at the same time unique syntax. There are crucial differences between them: in the
first and third pattern the first and third king are not directly relatives, and the second
king is foreign and considered a demon.

Ferdowsi for the last syntax, which is uncompleted, does not foretell any specific
name or Iranian dynasty that would come after Arabs. Through the mouth of Rostam
Farokhzād, he prophesies that after four hundred years of Arabs’ reign Iranians again
would be sovereign. The number four hundred or 390 and plus is found in the
apocalyptic texts too; poets like Mas’ud S’ad Salmān and astrologers like
Zamakhshari have foretold the same event. In fact the horoscope that is taken by
Rostam Farokhzād in Ferdowsi was the basis for all these predictions. Hamzat and
Biruni agree on the prediction and have the Buyids in their minds. They believed this
dynasty was the legitimate Iranian dynasty that would come after the Arabs.
The most similar pattern to this is: Nowzar/Pashang-Afrāsiyāb/Qobād. Afrāsiyāb is
neither killed nor reigns over Iran at this time.

Kay-Khosrow and Lohrāsp are not close relatives, and this circumstance brings that
narrative close to this pattern; nonetheless Lohrāsp is chosen by the Iranian king
(Kay-Khosrow) and accepted by the heroes and commanders, at this time the king is
alive and there is no demon to frighten Iran.

In all three cases the demonic king takes the sister/daughter(s) of the first king, but
only in the first case are the girls taken back by the third king who is the real savior
(Feraydon).
In the cases of Afrāsiyāb and Arjāsp the topos works differently. In the first case the demonic king (Afrāsiyāb) not only can not steal any girl,¹ but also gives away his daughters to Iranians voluntarily or under pressure. In the case of Arjāsp the daughters/sisters are taken back by their brother who is not the savior king, and their father is still alive and ruling Iran. There is one more exception in these cases. Both demonic kings overcome Iran but, according to the Shāhnāmeh, cannot rule over it.

In the story of Goshtāsp/Zoroaster the syntax and the archetypes are similar to the messianic syntax of Kay-Khosrow or Feraydon, but their functions are the opposite of this. In other words they are like a two-edged sword with two opposite functions. In the Pahlavi texts their functions are exactly as in their archetypes; in the Shāhnāmeh, however, the characters act outside of their archetypes. As the result their acts are considered sins. Events also occur out of the archetypal patterns, when for instance the father (Lohrāsp), instead of his son, is killed by a demon; and the son does not take the revenge; instead the grandson goes to Turān and kills the demon. Later when the son (Isfandiyār) is killed the father again does not help his grandson take the revenge. In other words, these events happen when the throne is not empty.

Another example is the greed of sons for taking the crown before their time. In the first case the father, who is religious, gives up the throne in favor of his son (Goshtāsp); in the second case the father (Goshtāsp) does not give up the crown and sends his son to the war with Rostam in order to keep him away from the crown.

¹ Afrāsiyāb takes Nowzar’s wives, but because the narrative does not emphasize this there is no reason to see it as part of the causality system.
Jāmāsp does act sinfully, because he uses his prophetic gift not to avoid bad events but to utilize in favor of Goshtāsp.

The examples of Roshanak (the daughter of Dārā) and Shahrbānu, the daughter of Yazdegerd, are a two-edged sword too. According to the Shi’ite texts as well as the wide spread myth, she, after the conquest of Iran by the Arabs, was captured and sent to Medina. There she married Imām Hussein, the son of Ali. Iranian Shiites legitimize the sovereignty of Ali’s sons over the world of Islam and Iran by this marriage. From this point of view the narrative is like the story of Alexander and Roshanak; nonetheless if we see it from the Iranian archetypal point of view it could be used to indicate the opposite meaning, which can be found in the story of Arnavāz and Shahrnavāz (daughters of Jamshid) or sisters of Isfandiyār.

4. Zoroaster’s millennium: Lohrāsp (father)/Zareer/Isfandiyār and Dārā.

The story of Isfandiyār/Rostam has no archetypal or divine model, and is in fact. It could have been shaped under the influence of Greek epic of Iliad. Similarities between these two stories have led Bahār to conclude this. Bahār has speculated on this and comparatively explains the roles and the functions of the Iliad’s characters Achilles and Hector who could be counterparts of Isfandiyār and Rostam. He, therefore, concludes that Troy is the equal of Sistān and Greece is Iran; and Bahman is like Ulysses.¹

Finally, we should mention one more exception in the Shāhnāmeh, which is the story of Alexander. This story does not have the principles of the Iranian narrative at all;

¹ See: M. Bahār, Joustāri Chand..., pp. 129-144.
one characteristic example of this is that the story has no dualistic bases in good and evil, which is one of the basic principles of the Iranian mythology and epics. Here there is no evil at all, thus the wars between Alexander and other countries and peoples have no definition in contrast to the other stories of the book. In addition there is hardly found any Iranian motif, archetype or topos within the narrative. As a result the syntax of the story is uniquely different from the others. The story, however, is similar to the Arabic-Greek versions that can be found in most historical and non-historical accounts such as those by Tabari, Ya’qubi, Mas’udi, Shahrestâni, and even Biruni. Overall one could say that the story has been shaped under another mythological discourse, in which the prophetic mission of Alexander is the main motif. Ferdowsi in this respect tries to deemphasize the prophetic elements and atmosphere; yet traces of the notion are perceptible here and there.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

There is a famous proverb about the Shāhnāmeh which claims that “it has a happy ending.” Every Persian speaker or Iranian hears this proverb before even knowing or reading the Shāhnāmeh itself, and especially before knowing its end. Reading or hearing the end is a shock to most people, because the end is quite opposite to the proverb. The contradiction is noticeable and a scholar like Mohit Tabātabā’i has tried to address it; however the answer he has provided to this question is inadequate, or irrelevant. The main reason for his failure is that he has tried to decipher the problem without reference to either messianic discourse, or to a historical philosophy woven in the fabric of Iranian culture used by Ferdowsi under the motif of sin/catastrophe. In other words, he examines the proverb out of its context.

To surmount this problem the first step should be the reconstruction of the discourse. The next step would be contextualizing the work within this discourse. After these attempts, one believes that there would be a logical answer to Tabātabā’i’s

\[\text{\textsuperscript{1} אחר شاهنامه خوش است بای شاهنامه آخر خوش است.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{2} See: Tabātabā’i’s paper in the Shāhnāmeh-shenāsi (Tehran 1357).}\]
question. The path that we took in this thesis should already provide us with an answer to this question, because we saw the *Shāhnāmeh* within the context of messianic expectation a motif that has been one of the great energetic forces in Iranian culture and history. To be more specific we have tried, in the first part of this thesis to reconstruct the messianic expectation as a functional discourse based on three major roots, the Mazdeans, the Indo-European mythologies, the Irano-Islamic religious cosmology and apocalyptic speculations, and finally the Persian post-Islam epics. We have also singled out cosmogonic and apocalyptic archetypes, motifs and topoi in order to contextualize the *Shāhnāmeh* under the morphology of messianic expectation. The notions and the devices that we found helped us deconstruct the structural units of the narrative. These units are chiefly based on two notions: the recreation or regeneration of the world/time; and the sinful reasons/acts that lead the world/time to a catastrophic end.

In the second part we try to put these units and devices in an order that simply reduces to two syntaxes: of attack by Ahreman to destroy Ahurā Mazdā’s world and of recreation of the world in order to defeat evil. These two can be formed into two sentences as the divine models: Evil attacks good creations and kills the plant, the cow and Giyomarth; and Ahurā Mazdā recreates them so that they will help him abolish Evil’s attempts once and for all. At the same time we have a historical philosophy that fits into this syntax. The divine model creates fifteen and a half narrational ages in the *Shāhnāmeh*, in which the two syntaxes work together. The Mazdean cosmic creation is of major importance in the formation of the ages. Parallel to this, the morphology of sin/catastrophe makes the causality system work efficiently through all ages. The motifs
of attack and sin are woven so lightly together that it is hard to separate them from each other.

Using this method we were able to single out several topoi and motifs that are reactualized as the Zoroastrian rites. These units lead us step by step through the syntactical patterns, which reply, indeed, to the discourse that lies beneath the epic narrative and by its logic ultimately takes us to the answer we were looking for from the beginning. And this answer also indicates the meaning of the proverb.

We can simplify the answer in this way: the *Shāhnāmeh* has been written in the discourse of messianic expectation, and tries to foretell the future of Iran after the Arab invasion. In this respect it simply says that the messiah will appear and lead us to throw the demonic enemy out of Iran (good) again. But the author stops the narration at the first victorious battle of the Arabs, which is the end of an opening era. At this point it is hard to accept that we have read an epic, because all the heroes are killed and the enemy is going to invade the country without encountering any epical resistance. The prophecy of Rostam Farokhzād, however, is a light through which the reader can see inside the tunnel and also the other end of it. The picture, accordingly, is not pretty, yet at the end victory is with us (i.e. Iranians). They (the enemy) will overcome Iran...but after four hundred years they will be defeated – which means a savior will come and with our help will defeat the demons; then we will take back the sovereignty. This is the message that the apocalyptic texts also foretell. From this point of view the *Shāhnāmeh* has a happy ending as other narrations that follow this formula do. Again the syntax makes us predict the parts that have not been told to us. For medieval readers who lived in this regime of
truth, I believe, the happy ending was obvious and within this model horizon. The proverb, in fact, applies not just to this epic, but also to other epics as well as apocalyptic ones. The *Abu-Moselmnâmeh* ends with the death of a messiah and the hope for the appearance of his hero. A parallel logic is behind the last part of ZVY. Ormazd, in this text, foretells evil events to his prophet Zoroaster; and then says, "Be happy because I will send the next messiah to end their reigns." 

The *Shâhnâmeh* begins with the story of Giyomarth, who is killed by Ahreman’s attack on the first day of the year, Norouz, at noon; hence it should be on the last day of the year, Isfand 25th equivalent to December 25th in the Christian calendar. Metaphorically this date stands for the five chaotic days before Norouz in which there is no real king (= law and order) in the world; at the same time it stands for the sixth Gâhanbâr, that is the ritual of creation of mankind. Also it promises the New Year with new king/savior and his justice.

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1 در جهانم ۸۰ و خداوندی و پاپشانه‌ی به بندگان ایران رسید، چون خوشنود، چرک، اتآور... (۱۰ و سه دیگر، چون هزاره‌ت به سر آید، ای سبیلتان زنینست! چون آن ترکان و نژادیان و آرمان‌های مرد به یکجا رسید (گویند که در دشته نهاند باشند) هم‌های مردمان ده‌های ایران که من اورهمد افرومد، از جاگاه خوشی به پنشوارگر برند. در هفتم ۸۰ چون سارک آوردمد به اوج یکی برند و نری خداوند، گوند بیشمار زینوند، با درشت افراشه‌ی به بیلامی و پاپشانه‌ی به کس رسید (۱۴۴ سیاه بیشمار خراسبانی، درشت افراشه‌ی پشتی دهدای ایران باشند؛ (که درش از پوست بیر دارند)، درشت بادی و بندیک (پیری) اشکان سپید باشند. انجام! فرجام یافت به خوشنودی و شادی و رامش! به کام یزدان با! چنین بادی! نزی چنین بادی! (ZVY, p. 38-72)

پشتوی بیابی به نوری و // جهان را به نشید ز بدخوی مرنگی ابای و سه پنجه مرد همان // پس آنگه که پشت یزدان تمام...

2 بیاپای پس ان ایش فرخنده نام // که پهراو خوشنود ورا خاص و عام (۱۳۴ مجلسي: "عرض کردم پایین رسول الله قاتم شما کی خروج خواهید کرد؟ فرمود: در وقتی که مردان به زنان و زنان به مردان شباخت رسول و مردان به مردان و زنان به زنان اکتا تمایند. بحارالاسلام، علاءم مجلسي، ص. ۲۱۱) (vol. ix, p. 382, l. 861)
بدانست رستم شمار سپهر // ستارشمر بود و باد و مهر

بیاورد صلاب و اختیار گرفت // ز روز بلا دست بر سر گرفت

که این خانه از پادشاهی تهیه // نه هنگام پیروزی و فریست

کریزین پس شکست اید از تازیان // ستاره نگردید مگر بر زیان
بریش سالیان چار صد بگذرد // کریزین تخمه (Sāsānids) 
(گلیتی کسی نشمرد (65-30 ل. هـ))

The *Shāhnāmeh* has a happy ending, if, and only if, we read it in this context.
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