



The Shahname of Firdowsi

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Introduction

The conflict between the present-day Uzbeks and their Tajik neighbors that is at times inflamed has a long and multi-faceted history. On the one hand, it is related to the ancient history of the two peoples, when the Turks, arriving in Central Asia from the confines of Mongolia, overthrew Iranian rule, including Tajik rule. And, on the other hand, it is related to the resilience of the Tajik culture and the ability of the Tajiks to retain their authority in spite of the might of the Turkish sultans and *amirs*.

In recent decades, especially after the fall of the Soviet Union, the Turks revived Pan-Turkism, once again denying the Tajiks their identity. In this regard, they often cite [Afrasiyab](#) from the epic of Firdowsi, as the eponymous ancestor of the Turks. This claim presents several difficulties. First, both in the ancient Iranian texts and in Firdowsi's *Shahname*, Afrasiyab is a mythical character. He is not the real-world king that, for instance, al-Tabari would like us to believe.^[1]

Secondly, within the myth, he is a Turanian who has lost his *farr* (kingly glory) and seeks to restore it. This means that the Turanians of the *Shahname* are of Iranian stock. Thirdly, a review of the Orkhon inscriptions and life on the steppe indicates that neither the Turanians nor the Iranians of the *Shahname* share the *öz* (real) Turk cultural heritage of which the Turks are proud.

Briefly explained, ancient Iranians distinguished the world in which cosmic beings existed from a legendary world in which figures larger than life, figures like [Hushang](#), [Tahmuras](#), [Jamshid](#), and others, lived. This latter, intermediary, world was further distinguished from the world of historical personages like [Zoroaster](#) and Cyrus the Great.

The *Shahname* is a medieval retelling of the events in those cosmic and mythological worlds in light of the ancient Iranians' record of their own cosmology, mythology, and history. The reference to "medieval" is important, because the ancient tale is recontextualized to reflect 11th century AD realities, i.e., Firdowsi's time. At this time, Iran had just shaken the Arab yoke, but was accommodating Turkish warriors and Turkish tribes within its territories. Unlike the Arabs, the Turks promoted Persian language and literature as long as it reflected their culture as well. At this juncture, it seems, Firdowsi adopted what is routine in the narration of Turkish epics like *Manas*. He intentionally blurred Turanian identity so that it could accommodate the identity of some Turkish warlords and heroes. Iranians who followed Firdowsi, however, meticulously safeguarded the epic against the intrusion of foreign elements.

The pivotal concept in the grand scheme of *Ahura Mazda* (the wise Lord) for the progress and well being of His creation is the *farr*, a weapon that is forged by Mazda and bestowed on select individuals.^[2] The *farr* cannot be seized by force. The powers of the *farr* are many. For instance, it serves the *kavis* (heroes) as a "window" to the cosmic world and the events that had transpired therein; it also serves them as a means of accessing the will of the Creator to bring about similar events on other planes. It even enables them to foretell events and change the course of future events before they result in a calamity.

According to the *Zamyad Yasht*, itself regarded as a synopsis of the *Shahname*; the kingly glory was made in the cosmic realm.^[3] Later on, it was bestowed on the first man, Gayomart, who passed it on to Tahmuras. From Tahmuras, the *farr* was passed to Hushang and Jamshid. This process made the descendants of Gayomart impervious to the ruses of *Ahriman* (evil), alternately appearing as [Zahhak](#) and Afrasiyab the Turanian.

Of these glorious figures, Jamshid failed to satisfy the requirements of the *farr*. Thus, the *farr* abandoned him and Iran and Iranians were subjected to the repression of Zahhak. Finally, [Fereydun](#) captured the kingly glory and used its power to defeat Zahhak and put an end to the long reign of the dragon-king.

Again, according to the *Zamyad Yasht*, Fereydun divided his kingdom among his three sons: [Salm](#), [Tur](#), and [Iraj](#). Tur, the eldest, after he became the Lord of Turan, conspired with his greedy brother Salm, and together they slew Iraj. This reprehensible act cost the brothers their *farr*; their kingdoms were relegated to *Ahriman*. How can mythical conflicts in the *Shahname*, conflicts that are strictly related to the possession of the *farr* among the descendants of Fereydun, include the Turks? They did not arrive in Central Asia until the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

The death of Tur at the hand of [Manuchehr](#), a descendant of Iraj, opened the way to hostilities between Iran and Turan. Afrasiyab, the Evil Turanian, invaded Iran with the intention of dispossessing the weak Kaika'us of his *farr*. His strategy, however, was not effective. Rather than being captured, Kaika'us' *farr* infiltrated Turan in the person of [Siyavosh](#), son of Kaika'us who, forced by circumstances, defected to Turan. The story of Prince Siyavosh that follows, along with subsequent stories, describes the development of divine rule in Iran from the time that god-kings held sway until human beings, endowed with wisdom, took over.

As is evident, and will become even more clear as the story progresses, ascription of Turk and Turkan to the characters of the *Shahname* is an eleventh century addition, added by Firdowsi for the reasons outlined above. As this reading of the *Shahname* that concentrates primarily on the movement of the *farr* across time and dynasties shows, Firdowsi dexterously keeps the Turks out of the main family dispute between the two contenting Iranian factions.

The Shahname of Firdowsi

The central figure in the myths that Firdowsi collected and versified is Yazdan, the Lord of the life force and of discernment:^[4]

In the name of the Lord of both wisdom and mind,
To nothing sublimer can thought be applied [.] ^[5]

Firdowsi praises Yazdan as the most sublime ruler, waging an eternal, cosmic war against evil. As the embodiment of the good and of discernment, the omniscient Yazdan created a world. Ahriman, the embodiment of evil, following a long-standing stratagem, lurked in the shadows waiting for an opportunity to destroy that world.

Yazdan, Firdowski says, created the world out of nothingness:

The first thing needful for thee is to know
The sum of primal elements which He,
Who maketh all things, made from naught to show
The greatness of His own supremacy.^[6]

At the center of Yazdan's creation is truth, symbolized as a ball of fire from which everything else emanates. The existence of the earth, Firdowski says, is a consequence of the cooling of that ball of fire, the existence of water is a result of the further cooling of the earth, and the growth of plants is a consequence of the intermingling of elements on earth. Animals and humanity complete Yazdan's creation.

Firdowski distinguishes humanity as the crown of Yazdan's creation. It is to human beings, Firdowski declares, that Yazdan has passed His abilities and discernment. To help humanity in its pursuit of truth, Yazdan has created the sun to light the world and, more importantly, to serve as a visible symbol of an unswerving quest for truth. Yazdan created the moon so that its waxing and waning would indicate that both kingdoms--light as well as darkness--might prevail. Humanity's aim, however, must be to identify itself with the full moon.

To pass His wisdom down to mankind, Firdowski insists, Yazdan created a "chain" of command, a hierarchy beginning at His own level, leading into the domain of the Yazatas (lesser deities responsible for the spiritual and the physical well-being of creation) and the Farahvashis (souls of the believers). Through this chain, Yazdan assured His personal supervision of the spiritual affairs of the individual believer, as well as control of all activities within His kingdom. This control was vital for Yazdan's scheme because, in the final analysis, the prevalence of good over evil depends entirely on the degree of good and evil exercised by human beings on earth.

The members of the assembly of Yazadan contributed to the enhancement of Yazdan's creation by meeting the needs of the physical world. This assembly assessed the abilities of all the individuals on earth, and recognized one to be supreme. This recognition, translated into *farr* (i.e., recognition of a mortal endowed with the principles of just rulership) allowed Yazdan to confer upon that unique individual the divine right to rule.

The *farr*, upon its creation, was tested in the intermediary world, a universe inhabited by cosmic beings, where each individual is the equivalent of a later physical world. In that universe, the *farr* fell on Kayumars^[7] who, soon after, gathered all other beings around him on top of a mountain and apprised them of his kingly status:

This order, Grace, and lustre came to earth
When Sol was dominant in Aries
And shone so brightly that the world grew young.
Its lord was Gaiumart,^[8] who dwelt at first
Upon a mountain; thence his throne and fortune
Rose. He and all his troop wore leopard-skins,
And under him the arts of life began,
For food and dress were in their infancy.
He reigned o'er all the earth for thirty years,
In goodness like a sun upon the throne,
And as a full moon o'er a lofty cypress

So shone he from the seat of king of kings.
The cattle and the divers [sic] beasts of prey
Grew tame before him; men stood not erect
Before his throne but bent, as though in prayer,
Awed by the splendour of his high estate,
And thence received their Faith.^[9]

The assembly led by Yazdan's first deputy on earth, [Kayumars](#), worried Ahriman. He decided to frustrate Kayumars' efforts and destroy his will to serve, but even the murder of Kayumars' son, [Siyamak](#), did not effectively seal Yazdan's plans for the propagation of truth. Kayumars had already taught the secret of just rulership to [Hushang](#), another son of Siyamak.^[10] Kayumars, who ruled for thirty years, provided his people with their first code of laws.

Defeated, Ahriman retreated, while Yazdan continued to perfect His cosmic kingdom by allowing the new king to discover fire. This discovery led to the discovery of metals and of weapons with which to combat evil. Hushang also harnessed the rivers and produced lush fields and meadows. He domesticated animals and used their products as a source of untold prosperity for Yazdan's kingdom.

[Tahmuras](#), who succeeded Hushang, as the third king of the [Pishdadiyan](#) dynasty, chose wisdom as his weapon against Ahriman:

[With Wisdom, I shall create Order
Following that with a palace and a court,
I will restrain the Div, will reign supreme,
And use the useful for the common gold." ^[11]

Under Tahmuras, the domestication of animals was perfected, weaving was introduced, and plans were devised to eradicate the race of the [divs](#). These plans called for an extraordinary king. Could Tahmuras be that king?

Tahmuras,
Purged of his faults and glorious with the Grace,
Bound Ahriman with spells and rode him horsewise
At whiles around the world.^[12]

Ahriman did not give up easily. Once it became apparent that he could not withstand the full impact of Tahmuras' assault, he took refuge in a ruse. He offered to teach Tahmuras the thirty common languages of man and beasts, including Latin (rumi), Arabic (tazi), Old Persian (parsi), Soghdian (soqdi), Chinese (chini), and Middle Persian (Pahlavi). Using the knowledge thus gained, Tahmuras elevated the level of prosperity of his kingdom. Under [Jamshid](#), the next king who ruled for seven hundred years, the *farr* encompassed both the secular and the spiritual domains:

"Mine is the Grace," he said, "I am both king
And archimage, I will restrain ill-doers
And make for souls a path toward the light." [\[13\]](#)

In administration, Jamshid followed tradition. He introduced the finer approaches to weaving and the production of elegant and luxurious objects. He also launched a number of innovations, among them the division of people into four distinct castes and guilds.[\[14\]](#) Under Jamshid, artisans, merchants, priests, warriors, and tillers of the land knew their place in society:

Then to the joy of all he founded castes
For every craft; it took him fifty years.
Distinguishing one caste as sacerdotal
To be employed in sacred offices,
He separated it from other folk
And made its place of service on the mountains
That God might be adored in quietude.
Arrayed for battle on the other hand
Were those who formed the military caste;
They were the lion-men inured to war--
The Lights of armies and of provinces--
Whose office was to guard the royal throne
And vindicate the nation's name for valour.
The third caste was the agricultural,
All independent tillers of the soil,
The sowers and the reapers--men whom none
Upbraideth when they eat. Though clothed in rags,
The wearers are not slaves, and sounds of chiding
Reach not their ears. They are free men and labour
Upon the soil safe from dispute and contest.

.....

The fourth caste was the artizans [sic]. They live
By doing handiwork--a turbulent crew,
Who being always busied with their craft
Are given much to thought. Jamshid thus spent
Another fifty years and did much good,
For each man learnt his place and others' too.[\[15\]](#)

Jamshid brought the full import of the *farr* within his control and used it to improve both his own status as king and the living conditions of his subjects. Using knowledge placed at his disposal by the *divs*, he built magnificent palaces and embellished them with precious gems. To immortalize his efforts at good government, which had resulted in the eradication of death from the face of the earth, and to welcome the arrival of a new epoch, he inaugurated a magnificent celebration. Called the Now Ruz (new year), the celebration of the event continues to the present day. Jamshid's actions seemed to have sealed the fate of Ahriman, but not for long:

The people scattered jewels, and bestowed
Upon the day the name of New Year's Day,
The first of Farwardin and of the year,
When limbs repose from labour, hearts from strife.
The noble chieftains held a festival,
Called for the goblet, wine, and minstrelsy,
And ever since that time that glorious day
Remaineth the memorial of that Shah.
Thus things continued for three centuries,
And all the while men never looked on death [[.\]](#)[\[16\]](#)

While preoccupied with the rearrangement of the visible aspects of his kingdom, Jamshid allowed his domain to fall victim to Ahriman, whose agents, by introducing writing and geometry, had led the king away from his mission. Jamshid was now obsessed with the idea that he should reach the stars:

These works achieved, Jamshid ambitioned
Rank loftier still, and by his royal Grace
Made him a throne, with what a wealth of gems
Inlaid! which when he willed the *divs* took up
And bare from earth to heaven.[\[17\]](#)

The excessively opulent world of Jamshid now became the source of his arrogance. The deputy of Yazdan on earth summoned his chiefs and *mu'bad*s to aggrandize himself. "Who among the kings of the past," he asked, "eradicated death from the face of the earth?" But he did not stop there. Feeling that he was in full control of the

physical aspect of the world, Jamshid reached to supplant Yazdan. "You owe me your life and your repose," he proclaimed to his chiefs and *mu'bads*," and that makes me your God," Jamshid concluded.

Jamshid's conceit cost him his *farr*:

[A]nd God's Grace departed from him,
The world was filled with din, the Court deserted,
.....
[T]he crime that equalled him with God,
Brought on disaster and o'eturned the state.^[18]

Victorious at last, Ahriman assumed the rulership of the world. But everywhere he turned, vestiges of Yazdan confronted him. The land was prosperous, and death no longer existed. Drawing on Ahriman's knowledge of geometry and writing, Jamshid had perfected the physical aspect of Yazdan's creation.



The evil dragon king ruled for almost 1000 years.

Puzzled, Ahriman cast a demonic scheme. Assuming the form of a human-consuming dragon, he ascended the throne and demanded daily sacrifice to appease his voracious appetite. In droves, people were killed and fed to the beast to keep him happy. Could Ahriman depopulate Yazdan's world?

The purpose of the foul Div shrewdly scan:
Had he conceived perchance a secret plan
To rid the world of all the race of man? ^[19]

But lengthy as [Zakhak's](#) rule was, it came to an end before he could devour the last human being, that is, before he could eradicate the seed of Kayumars, [Fereydun](#).^[20] Fereydun confronted the evil Zakhak and imprisoned him in a cave in Mount Damavand.

Kayumars was the first human being and the first monarch of the cosmic age. Fereydun, son of [Abtin](#), is the first king of the mythic age.^[21] He ruled for five hundred years; his long rule affords us a better look at his administration and time. We learn, for instance, that he inspired unity and might in the early stages of his rule but that, in the end, his kingdom was fraught with discord and division.

Fereydun divided his world into three kingdoms. He assigned Rum and the west to his eldest son, [Salm](#). He then assigned him an army and charged him with the defense of the western borders.^[22] He assigned Turan and China to [Tur](#), his second born. Similarly, he assigned an army to Tur and dispatched him to the eastern marches of the empire.^[23] To [Iraj](#), his youngest and favorite son, he bestowed the rest of his domain, which included Iran. This division appeared equitable to Fereydun but not to his elder son, Salm, or to his second born, Tur.

When Iraj ascended the throne in the heartland, Fereydun stayed in residence with him. Salm and Tur conspired and, before mounting an assault on the heartland with their combined forces, informed Fereydun of their intentions. Knowing his sons well, Fereydun ignored their threat; he did not ask Iraj to step down. But Iraj, good at heart, decided to visit his brothers and bring them joy even at the expense of giving up his crown.

When Iraj arrived in Turan, Tur assaulted him and, fearing that the combined forces of Turan and Iran might proclaim Iraj their sole king, with the help of Salm, slew him. The brothers then sent Iraj's head to Fereydun as proof of the seriousness of their threat. They were certain that the old man's only alternative would be to choose one of them as his successor. Like Kayumars before him, however, the aged Fereydun had taught [Manuchehr](#), Iraj's grandson (from Iraj's daughter through his wife, the slave girl, [Mahafarid](#)) the secret of divine rulership.

For the first time in Iranian history, Fereydun marshalled the priests, the nobles, and the other classes of society to aid the throne in achieving its goal. When the preparations for mobilizing the army were complete, Fereydun asked Manuchehr to take the center. He assigned the left wing to [Garshasp](#) and the right to [Saam](#) and Qubad.

Even though Manuchehr's army displayed the Kaviyan flag, the banner forged from the blacksmith [Kaveh's](#) leather apron, Salm and Tur refused to recognize the legitimacy of his claim to kingship:

What though there was a daughter to Iraj,
Hast thou a right to signet, crown, and throne?^[24]

Fereydun, also referred to as the Dragon king, ruled for 500 years. When he stepped down, he was succeeded by Manuchehr.

Manuchehr ascribed his legitimacy to King Fereydun rather than to Iraj. He then attacked the combined forces of Turan and Rum and routed them. Tur and Salm retreated and pondered their plight. They decided to ambush Manuchehr and kill him. Their plot, however, was discovered and both were eventually eliminated. Their heads were sent to Fereydun to bury at the side of Iraj's head.

A major event of the time of Manuchehr is his elevation of Saam and the House of Nariman to rulership. To show his gratitude, Manuchehr bestowed Sistan and Zabulistan to the great hero and supported him in making major decisions. As for Saam, he had lived a long life but was still childless. Furthermore, when one was granted, he was an albino child, one about whom Saam's courtiers were afraid to talk, let alone show him. Once he did see his son, Saam was devastated. He took the child to the mountains and left him there to die. The child's lot, however, was set elsewhere. He was picked up by the fabulous bird, the [Simurgh](#), who raised him alongside her own brood.

Years later, when Saam realized his mistake and returned to the mountain for his son, Simurgh returned his son, [Zal](#), to him. When leaving them, Simurgh left one of her scarlet feathers with Zal and instructed him to set it on fire whenever he felt he might need her help. Shortly after they returned home, Saam put Zal in charge of his kingdom and went to Mazandaran.

At the time, the kingdom of Kabul paid tribute to Zabulistan. The ruler of Kabul was called [Mihrab](#). He was a descendant of Zahhak and, therefore, distrusted by the Iranian Shah. In the course of becoming acquainted with his neighbors, Zal visited Kabul. While there, he fell in love with [Rudabeh](#), the daughter of Mihrab and [Sindukht](#). Zal then wrote Saam, his father, about his situation. Saam took the matter to king Manuchehr. The king became furious and ordered Saam to storm Kabul, destroy Mihrab's palace and kill him and his family. Sindukht, Mihrab's wife and Rudabeh's mother, however, paid a personal visit to Saam and convinced the warrior that he should support the wedding. Zal, too, talked to his father and reminded him of the cruel life to which he had subjected him as a child.

Convinced that the couple should get married, Saam traveled to the palace of the king of Iran and talked to him in person, thus receiving the king's approval. Zal and Rudabeh got married. The wedding took place in Kabul. Afterward, Saam, Mihrab, Sindukht, and the bride and groom went to Zabul. At the end of the festivities, Mihrab returned to Kabul, Sindukht remained with her daughter, and Saam returned to Mazandaran.

Hardly a year passed before Rudabeh became pregnant. The unusual size of the baby forced Zal to ask the wise Simurgh for assistance during the birth. Simurgh directed the physician to cut a section in Rudabeh's side and take the child out. They called the child [Rustam](#).

After a long reign of 120 years, Manuchehr entrusted his throne to his son, Nawzar, and died. During Nawzar's rule Saam, too, died of old age in Zabulistan. Saam's death signalled an opportunity to Pashang, the king of Turan, to attack Iran which he did. In this war, Pashang's son, [Afrasiyab](#), came to the fore and was given the command of the armies of [Arjasp](#), [Garsivaz](#), Barman, Kulbad, and Huzhabr against Iran's new and oppressive king, Nawzar. In the end, the Turanian king captured [Nowzar](#), imprisoned him for a while and, eventually, killed him. Iran became a land without a sovereign.

To restore Iran's territorial integrity, Zal and Mihrab combined their forces and defeated Afrasiyab. The throne of Iran was then offered to Zal; but, since he was not of royal blood, he refused. Instead, he supported the kingship of [Zav-Tahmasp](#), an aged prince who ruled for five years.

The last Pishdadian king, Garshasp, ruled for nine years. He died at exactly the time when Afrasiyab was preparing his army to invade Iran. Many Iranian champions and others blamed Zal for the situation they found themselves in. If Zal had accepted the throne or, at least, if he had killed Afrasiyab when he had the opportunity, the situation in Iran would have been different. But all that was now water under the bridge. A solution had to be found to revitalize the Iranian kingship.

The only known survivor with royal blood was a man who lived somewhere to the north of the great salt desert. His name was Qubad. If he were to be found and placed on the Iranian throne as [Kayqubad](#), Zal thought, tranquility would return to Iran. He thus equipped young Rustam with the mace of Saam and a special steed, [Rakhsh](#). Rustam and Rakhsh were then commissioned to cross the great salt desert, find Qubad, and bring him back to the capital.

In the wars that followed the ascension of Kayqubad, Pashang did not do well. His son, Afrasiyab, was defeated by Kayqubad and his assembly of knights. Forced to evacuate all the lands south of the Oxus, Pashang sued for peace, asking that the border originally demarcated by Fereydun be accepted as the boundary between Iran and Turan:

Tur brought calamity on blest Iraj
 Upon a question touching crown and throne.
 On this I say that feuds should not endure
 For ever, and if vengeance for Iraj
 Was owing it was wreaked by Minuchihr.
 In that first settlement by Faridun,
 Whose object was a just apportionment,
 It will be well for us to acquiesce
 And not transgress the precedents of kings.
 From Turkestan to Ma wara 'u'n-Nahr,
 Whose boundary is Jihun, that is our share.
 When Faridun was Shah Iraj ne'er saw it,
 But had from him his blessing and Iran.
 If we transgress these boundaries and fight
 We make earth strait to us, the scimitars
 Will clash, God will be wroth, and we shall lose
 Our portion in both worlds. What Faridun
 Divided unto Salm;, Tur , and Iraj,
 Let us retain and then be friends henceforth,

For earth itself is worth not so much bale.^[25]

After a hundred years, the glorious rule of Kayqubad, too, came to an end. His son, [Kayka'us](#) ascended the throne. Under young Kayka'us, Iran continued to be tranquil. Rustam had dealt such a major blow to Afrasiyab that, as long as Rustam and Zal served the court, he did not have the slightest desire to attack Iran any more.

It was amid this prosperity that Kayka'us decided to invade Mazandaran and annex the abode of the demons to Iran. Zal opposed the king's decision vehemently, but to no avail. Kayka'us and his knights marched into Mazandaran only to be captured by the demon king's warriors. Kayka'us and his champions were blinded and imprisoned in a cave guarded by the [White Demon](#).

Before long, Kayka'us managed to send a messenger to Zal and apprise him of his situation. Zal dispatched Rustam to rescue the king. After passing what has come to be known as his [Haft Khan](#) (seven labors), Rustam reached the cave guarded by the White Demon. There, he killed the White Demon, used three drops of his blood to restore the prisoners' eyesight, and brought all of them back, safe and sound, to Iran.

After he was rescued from Mazandaran, Kayka'us went to Sistan and spent a month in that region as a guest of Zal. Then he invaded Hamavaran (Yemen) and defeated its king. Kayka'us then married [Sudabeh](#), the king's daughter, and brought her to Iran. A while later, the king of Hamavaran invited Kayka'us and Sudabeh to visit Hamavaran. This, the king explained, would give us an opportunity to know each other better and enjoy each other's company. Sensing that a ruse was at work, Zal opposed the king's trip to Hamavaran. But, as usual, Kayka'us did not agree. Zal, however, was right, and upon entering Hamavaran, Kayka'us was captured and imprisoned. Seeing her husband's situation, Sudabeh asked to be imprisoned with him so that she can take care of him in captivity. Again Kayka'us asked Zal to rescue them.

The situation was not simple, however. At the same time Afrasiyab, hearing about Kayka'us's plight, prepared his army to invade Iran. Rustam had to choose between rescuing his king and facing Afrasiyab. He decided to rescue his king first. After returning victorious from Hamavaran, he thought, he would route the army of Afrasiyab once and for all.

Even though the king of Hamavaran had allied himself with the rulers of Berberistan, and Egypt, Rustam defeated him and set Kayka'us and Sudabeh free. Then, he confronted Afrasiyab and restored the kingship that had been usurped due to the king's absence. When the paladin returned from the war, Kayka'us, in a magnificent ceremony, conferred the coveted title of Jahan Pahlavan (world champion) upon him.

One spring day, tired of war and of Zabulistan, Rustam rode out of the court and retired to the countryside to enjoy nature and refresh himself. He did not return to the palace that night or the night after that. Rather, he spent his time hunting, cooking, resting and traveling. Unknowingly, he was getting closer and closer to the kingdom of Turan.

One morning, upon waking up, Rustam found that his horse, Rakhsh, was not where he had left him. He searched all around his camp site, there was no sign of Rakhsh. He continued his search until he came to the kingdom of Samangan, a vassal state of Turan. It turned out that some Samangani warriors, while rounding up their king's horses, had brought Rakhsh to Samangan as well.

The king of Samangan received Rustam, apologized for what his warriors had done, and returned Rakhsh to him. Then, since it was late in the day, he invited Rustam to spend the night in Samangan and leave early the next morning. That night, the king entertained Rustam until late into the night. He praised the young champion, and wished him a prosperous life. Rustam then retired to his bedchamber to rest.

Sometime during the night, a noise awakened the paladin. It was [Tahmineh](#), the daughter of the king of Samangan. She had heard much about Rustam and had paid him a visit to see him for herself. The two talked for a while and fell in love. Within a few days, before Rustam had to return to his duties at the court, they got married.

Before he left Tahmineh, Rustam gave her an amulet for the child to be born. The child, after he was of age, was to wear this amulet, come to the court of Persia, and seek his father. Before that time, however, he was to be kept hidden from Afrasiyab, and his father's identity was not to be divulged to anyone. When the child was born, Tahmineh called him [Suhrab](#). She followed Rustam's instructions and, until he was fifteen, kept Rustam's identity a secret from him.

Afrasiyab, the king of Turan, however, knew the child's identity. Thus, when young Suhrab decided to find his father and join him, so that together, father and son, could depose Kayka'us, Afrasiyab sent for the young warrior. He entertained Suhrab, placed 12,000 warriors at his command, and ordered him to invade Iran. Furthermore, Afrasiyab appointed two of his own trusted commanders, Human and Barman, to accompany Suhrab. Afrasiyab also gave Human strict orders not to identify Rustam for Suhrab. Afrasiyab explained his strategy to Human in this way. If Suhrab kills Rustam, then Human should kill Suhrab. In that way, he argued, two enemies are eliminated at one blow. If, on the other hand, Rustam kills Suhrab, Rustam should be left alone. The immensity of his own act would be sufficient to paralyze him for the rest of his life. Under these circumstances, Suhrab marched on Iran.

As a result of an altercation between Hazhir and Suhrab, Kayka'us learned about the coming of Suhrab to Iran. The altercation was first between Hazhir, the custodian of the White Fortress on the boundary between Iran and Turan. As a result of this altercation, Suhrab captured Hazhir and later used him to identify Rustam for him. Then there was an altercation between Suhrab and [Gordafarid](#) fled into the White Fortress. From there, she and her father escaped during the night and informed Kayka'us about the Turanian assault.

Upon hearing the news, Kayka'us dispatched [Giv](#) to summon Rustam to the capital. Rustam, however, being in a jolly mood, ignored the king's behest and took his time reaching the capital. Furious at Rustam's insubordination, Kayka'us ordered both Rustam and Giv to be hanged. When [Tus](#) moved to execute the order, Rustam pushed him aside and left the palace.

In an effort to soften the king's stance, [Gudarz](#) gave a full account of Rustam's contributions to the crown. His account made Kayka'us realize Rustam's worth to his kingdom and apologized to Rustam. Rustam then accepted the command of Kayka'us's army and moved east to confront Suhrab.

The night before the actual combat, the champions tried to learn more about each other. Rustam visited Suhrab's camp and saw the youthful warrior who resembled Saam, but did not recognize him as his own son. Suhrab, who hoped to become united with Rustam and help him ascend the throne of Iran also did not recognize his

father. Hazhir, the Iranian warrior whom he trusted to identify Rustam lied to him. When identifying the pavillions of the champions, Hazhir described Rustam's pavillion as the pavillion of a recent Chiese arrival on the scene.

On the day of battle, unbeknownst to each other, father and son exchange spears, swords, maces, and arrows. But neither is victorious. Unable to finish their fight, they arrange to return the next day.

That night, Suhrab describes Rustam to Human asking if Rustam could be his father. Human assures him that that is not the case. The two champions wrestle again the next day. Suhrab throws Rustam to the ground and is about to cut his throat. Rustam deceives the youth by resorting to a ruse. two out of three falls, he says, is the Iranian rule of the game. Suhrab agrees and lets him live. The next time, however, as soon as he has the opportunity, Rustam stabs Suhrab with his poisoned dagger wounding him mortally.

While dying, Suhrab assures his murderer that his father, Rustam, will avenge his death. Confused, Rustam asks for proof of what he says. Suhrab shows him the armband which only Tahmineh could have given him. Quickly, Rustam sends Gudarz to Kayka'us to procure some of the king's special antidote. Kayka'us procrastinated because he was as worried about the union of the father and the son as was his enemy, Afrasiyab. Eventually Rustam came for the antidote himself, and received some. But it was already too late. Suhrab had died moments earlier.

Siyavosh

The renovation age begins with the story of the birth and childhood of Siyavosh, followed by the story of his exile and martyrdom. This life story tells of how princes were brought up, groomed, and taught responsibility; of how seriously children felt about keeping a covenant with their father and their Creator; and of the feelings of Iran's first man to go into exile among Iran's enemies.

Son of [Kayka'us](#) and the grandson of [Kayqubad](#), Siyavosh was born to the king of Iran by the daughter of a noble Turanian whose lineage included both Fereyduun and [Garsivaz](#), son of Pashang. She was found by [Tus](#) ^[26] and [Giv](#) ^[27] while hunting. ^[28] Their quarrel over her ownership brought the girl to the court of Kayka'us where the king asked the girl about her lineage:

He questioned her: "What is thy lineage,
For thou art fairy-like in countenance?"
"I am of high birth on my mother's side,"
She said, " my father sprang from Faridun. ^[29]
My father's father is prince Garsivaz, ^[30]
Whose tents now occupy yon border land." ^[31]

The champions' quarrel was settled by the king who gave the girl to neither. Instead, he placed her in his own harem where she gave birth to Siyavosh. At the age of about seven, Siyavosh was entrusted to [Rustam](#) to be taught chivalry and the ethic of kings. Rustam took the child to Zabulistan and treated him as if he were his own son. ^[32] In Zabulistan, Siyavosh learned riding, archery, and wrestling. He was also instructed in the fine arts of conversation, drinking, and merry-making.

When Siyavosh was about twenty years of age, he returned to the court and was assigned his own quarters. For the next seven years, Kayka'us honored the youth, tested him, and in time bestowed the governorship of Quhistan upon him. Siyavosh remained in Quhistan until his mother died. He then returned to the court to mourn her death.

Learning about the return of Siyavosh, the ladies of the harem—sisters of the prince and wives of the king—asked their sire to send Siyavosh to them. The king obliged: ^[33]

Thy sisters and Sudabah, in affection
A mother to thee, are within the bower. ^[34]

Siyavosh asked Kayka'us to exempt him from the visit, but Kayka'us persisted. When Siyavosh entered the harem, he met [Sudabeh](#), his step-mother, who held him tightly in her arms for an unusually long period. Her close embrace disturbed the prince:

When Siyavush appeared within the veil
Sudabah hastened to descend the throne,
Advanced with graceful gait, saluted him,
Embraced him long, long kissed his eyes and face,
And wearied not to look at him. ^[35]

Joseph-like in mien, Siyavosh was endowed with outward as well as inner beauty. Recognizing Siyavosh's merit as a future king, Sudabeh, who had married Kayka'us for his power rather than for himself, tried to attract the prince to herself and marry him to her daughter. The prince refused:

Far better hold my pure heart's funeral rites
Than take a consort from among my foes.
I have been told by famous warriors
Of all the doings of Hamavaran [.]. ^[36]

Failing, the frustrated Sudabeh impudently offered herself to the prince. She apparently thought that by engaging the youth in an act for which he could be

blackmailed, she would reach her goal:

I stand before thee and I give to thee
Myself and my sweet life. I will fulfil
Whate'er thou asketh me—thy whole desire—
And let my head be taken in thy toils." [37]

The prince, refusing to soil his covenant with his father, re-sisted Sudabeh's temptations. Frustrated, Sud-abeh ac-cused him of having made lustful advances. She informed her hus-band that the prince had assaulted her with the inten-tion of raping her:

Then he tried to force me,
And handled me with hands as hard as stones.
I would not grant his wishes. All my hair
He tore and caused these scratches on my face [.] [38]



Siyavosh undergoes trial by fire

The prince, of course, denied the allegations, which placed Kay-ka'us in a quandary. Sudabeh who contin-ued to accuse the prince of rape finally produced a stillborn child as proof of her ac-cusations. Kayka'us took the matter to the assembly of the *mu'bads* for advice. The assembly advised the king to ask both Siyavosh and Sudabeh to undergo the trial by fire.

Sudabeh refused. Siyavosh, on the other hand, accepted. On the next day, he rode his horse through a moun-tain of burning wood and emerged, unblem-ished:

The noble hero nathless reappeared,
With rosy cheeks and smiles upon his lips.
A roar went up as men caught sight of him:
They cried: " The young Shah cometh from the fire!" [39]

Wounded, Sudabeh recoiled and worked other magic to make life at the court difficult for the prince. The un-wise Kayka'us, too, unwittingly stoked the feud, by taking the case to the *mu'bads* for a decision and by forcing Siyavosh to undergo trial by fire. This allowed Sudabeh to tor-ment the innocent youth even more.

An opportunity for escape appeared when Afrasiyab, Iran's enemy to the east, threatened to cross the Oxus with a hundred thousand warriors. As Kayka'us pre-pared to retaliate, the prince saw his chance to distance him-self from the court. He vol-unteered to lead Kayka'us' army against Turan:

Perchance All-righteous God will set me free
Both from Sudaba and my sire's distrust [.] [40]

Kayka'us accepted Siyavosh's proposal and put an army to-gether for him. Rostam was summoned to as-sist Siyavosh, and an army of 12,000 men from Pahlav, Pars, Kuch, Baluch, Gilan, and the plain of Saruch was assembled. Ac-companied by his champi-ons and five *mu'bads*, Siyavosh headed for Zabulistan.

After a month in Zabulistan, Siyavosh and Rostam con-tin-ued their march, having added armies from Zabulistan, Kabulistan, and India to the host. As the army advanced to-ward the plain of Herat (Hari), other notables joined the as-ssembled force. Siyavosh as-signed [Zange-i Shavaran](#) to com-mand the newly-formed army and himself set out for Marvrud [41] and Taliqan. [42]

At Balkh, Siyavosh stormed all the gates with mighty armies. In spite of Garsivaz' efforts to defend Balkh, the city fell after three days of fighting. Sipahram crossed the Oxus and returned to his king, Afrasiyab.

Siyavosh wrote a silken letter to Kayka'us and apprised him of his efforts to date. "In the course of a three-day bat-tle," he wrote, "I con-querred Balkh. Sipahram fled to the city of Tirmidh, and Barman, like an arrow shot, disappeared from sight." [43] He then re-ported that the lands to the south of the Oxus were now his, and he asked the King's permission to conclude the war by crossing the river to Sughdia where Afrasiyab ruled and kept his army.

Kayka'us cautioned Siyavosh against haste. He re-minded the prince of Afrasiyab's vile and cunning na-ture: "You have won a bat-tle against Afrasiyab," the king wrote in reply, "haste might well cause you to lose the war. Rather than rushing into a war, you must keep your army together and wait where you are. Let temptation work on Afrasiyab and make him cross the Oxus and meet you." Siyavosh re-mained on the southern shore of the Oxus.

On the other side of the Oxus, Afrasiyab was informed by Garsivaz that Siyavosh, Rostam, and a mighty host from Iran had stormed Balkh and captured the city. Their champions, Garsivaz explained, wielded maces with heads as large as the head of a buf-falo, and they numbered fifty for each man Garsivaz could field.

Garsivaz' glorification of the enemy host provoked Afrasiyab's anger. He had Garsivaz removed from his pres-ence, ordered a thou-sand of his lords to transform Sughd into a Chinese dreamland, and prepare a banquet for him.

After the banquet, Afrasiyab retired to his quarters where the real-ity of the day's news descended upon him as a fright-ening dream in which he found his entourage and pavilion stranded in a desert team-ing with vipers while vultures cir-cled overhead. A violent wind blew his banner away, and streams of blood washed away his pavilion. He saw thou-sands of his war-riors decapitated and strewn about the bat-tle-field. Each war-rior in the attacking Iranian army carried a spear with a severed head on it and carried a head tied to his saddle strap. A thousand war-riors wearing black robes assailed and cap-tured him, tied his hands, and took him to Kayka'us who, flanked by his very young son, mocked him. Upon seeing him, Siyavosh sprang up and sliced Afrasiyab into two. The intensity of the dream woke Afrasiyab. His screams brought his courtiers, including Garsivaz, to his side.

Following Garsivaz' advice, Afrasiyab assembled his *mu'bads*, swore them to secrecy, and paid them hand-somely. Then he discussed the contents of his dream with them. Trembling, the *mu'bads* agreed to in-terpret Afrasi-yab's dream on the condition that the result of their interpre-tation not be taken personally. Afrasiyab agreed. The *mu'bads* then disclosed that the prince in Afrasiyab's dream was Siyavosh and that he would rout Turan if Afrasiyab were to continue his war with Iran. They further disclosed that, were Afrasiyab to kill Siyavosh, matters would become even worse: his death would lead to the annihi-lation of Turan.

The interpretation affected Afrasiyab greatly. To avoid further cause for vengeance, he assembled his champions, lords, and nobles the next morning to discuss the war with them. After much praise of his own past triumphs, he suggested that Turan should opt for peace. "After all," he said, "two-thirds of the world still belongs to me. Why not make it a tranquil one?"

For our part let us give the world some respite;
 Death should not come upon men unawares.
 The more part of the world is at my feet:
 My court is in Iran and in Turan,
 For see how many of the mighty men
 Bring heavy tribute to me year by year!
 Now if it be your minds I will dispatch
 An embassy to Rustam, and forthwith
 Knock at the door of peace with Siyawush,
 And send him every kind of precious gift. [\[44\]](#)

The problem thus settled, Afrasiyab stayed in Sughd and sent a delegation, with appropriate gifts, to the Iranian prince. The delegation, headed by Garsivaz, offered to sign a peace treaty:

I do not set my face against Iran.
 All from the bank of the Jihun to Chin
 Is mine, my home is Sughd—a realm distinct.
 In truth it is through Tur and Valiant Salm
 That all the world is thus turned upside down,
 And since the innocent Iraj was slain
 Our warriors' brains have lost their wits. Iran
 Is not divided from Turan, but wars
 And feuds prevented friendship. Now I trust
 That God will give good days and joyful news.
 He raised thee from the country of Iran,
 And giveth thee the friendship of the brave.
 Let thy fair fortune dower the world with peace,
 Let war and every evil disappear.
 Now Garsivaz hath come to add his wits
 To thine, and as the valiant Faridun
 Erst shared the world among his gallant sons,
 So be it now [.]. [\[45\]](#)

A day's journey down the Oxus brought Garsivaz to Balkh where he was royally received by Siyavosh. Garsivaz presented his gifts to the prince and Rustam and disclosed the terms of the treaty.

Siyavosh presented the treaty to the war council which, after weighing the pros and cons of Afrasiyab's offer, decided to accept the terms provided that Afrasiyab offer a token of his goodwill as well.

Siyavosh's terms were stringent. They specified that the Turanian army withdraw from previously held Iranian territory in the Oxus region and that a hundred of Afrasiyab's relatives, named by Rustam, be sent as hostages to Iran.

Afrasiyab frowned at the idea of sending his close relatives as hostages but, in the end, accepted the terms:

The monarch out of those whom Rustam named
 Selected some five score of his own kin,
 And sent them unto Siyawush, bestowing
 Upon them many gifts and benefits.
 He then bade sound drums and clarions,
 He struck the royal tent, evacuated
 Bukhara, Sughd, and Samarqand, and Chach,
 The land and ivory throne of Sipsanjab,
 And led his troops upon the way to Gang
 Without excuses, pretexts, or delays. [\[46\]](#)

Elated with this easy victory, Siyavosh reciprocated Afrasiyab's kind gesture by sending the Turanian king many precious gifts. He also dispatched Rustam with a letter to Kayka'us:

I came to Balkh this jocund spring, rejoicing;
 But when Afrasiyab had news of me
 The sparkling liquor darkened in his cup:
 He saw that he was in a strait; the world
 Was black and fortune fallen. His brother came
 With gifts and many fair slaves richly dight
 To me to seek protection from the Shah.
 Afrasiyab will yield the crown and throne
 Of kings, content with his own realm; observe
 His station; never tread Iran's dark soil;
 But wash all strife and vengeance from his heart,
 And send as hostages a hundred kinsmen. [\[47\]](#)

Kayka'us rejected the peace treaty, informing Rustam that he wanted Afrasiyab dead. He further rebuked the national champion for having been duped by the guileful Afrasiyab. To the prince he wrote: "Prepare a huge bonfire and burn all the gifts sent by Afrasiyab. Send the hostages to Iran to be beheaded, ignore the treaty, and cross the Oxus immediately."

Rustam pleaded with Kayka'us to reconsider his order. He hoped that the king would not force the young prince to break his promise to the enemy. He reminded Kayka'us that Siyavosh had followed the king's orders and remained on the south shore of the Oxus. Besides, Rustam argued, breaking one's covenant was an unmanly

act, an act against all the rules of chivalry that he had taught the prince. Never-theless, Kayka'us did not heed Rustam's advice.

Kayka'us did not trust Afrasiyab. He felt that the demonic king had used magic to convince the gullible youth. "Would Afrasiyab care one bit," asked the king, "for the safety of his people in bondage?"

When God had meant that vengeance should be taken
And ills had asked a recompense of ill,
Ye sought to gain a heritage thereby,
And that it was which occupied your hearts.
Afrasiyab hath led your wits astray
By riches plundered from the innocent.
A hundred hapless, misbegotten Turkmans,
Who do not even know their fathers' names!
He will think little of such hostages:

They are to him as water in a stream. [\[48\]](#)

Kayka'us then ordered Siyavosh to relinquish his command to Tus and return from Balkh. Siyavosh re-fused:

A hundred
Brave cavaliers, the kinsmen of the king,
Such famous men, our friends and innocent!
If I shall now dispatch them to the Shah,
He will not ask or think about their case,
But hang them all alive upon the gibbet.
How shall I justify myself to God?
Ill will befall me through my father's acts;
If I so madly fight Afrasiyab
Without a cause I shall incur God's wrath,

And people will cry shame [.]. [\[49\]](#)

By openly defying his father and his king, Siyavosh placed himself in a precarious situation. His position was further aggravated by his *farr* (i.e., the wisdom, intelligence, personal fortitude and the fore-sight of a man who would be king). Was it not his *farr* that had frightened Afrasiyab and brought him to the negotiation table? What was he to do?

If I return
To court, surrendering the host to Tus,
That also will bring evil on my head.
I see ill right and left, and ill in front;
Sudaba too will do me naught but ill,

And I have not an inkling of God's will! [\[50\]](#)

The night of decision, dark as the face of Ahriman, was before him. It refused to divulge what the next day would bring. But could it conceal the future from a man who carried the *farr*? Using his divine fore-sight, Siyavosh looked into his future and saw the final outcome, an outcome that, in the final analysis, spoke well for his decision to defect.

The next morning, Siyavosh summoned Bahram and Zange-i Shavaran and discussed the matter of relinquishing his command with them. "I am not happy at court," he said to the champions, "this was the reason I accepted this command in the first place. And I am not happy with my father's grandiose schemes to elevate himself at my expense":

Now if the Shah
Is merely fighting for aggrandisement
He may have war and territory too,
But why such wanton bloodshed, such revenge
Stirred up in others' hearts?

The Shah
would rob me of both worlds, and yield me up
To Ahriman! [\[51\]](#)

"I have a covenant with the Creator," Siyavosh continued, "a covenant compared to which my father's wishes pale. [\[52\]](#) All my experiences in this world have been painful ones. What the future brings cannot be different":

Would I had died, or never had been born,
Since I am fated to endure such bale
And taste of every poison in the world;
And yet the tree hath not attained full growth
Whose fruit is venom and the leafage loss! [\[53\]](#)

"I have come to the conclusion," Siyavosh said to the Iranian champions, "that I have no alternative but to defect to the enemy. I am, therefore, relinquishing the command of this host to Bahram until the arrival of Tus. He is to put everything in order and hand the command down to Tus when the champion arrives. I also want Bahram to apprise Tus of the numbers, thrones, and treasures that are kept under the auspices of this command." The warriors were overwhelmed:

Bahram was sorely troubled when he heard,
While Zanga son of Shavaran wept blood,
And cursed the country of Hamavaran. [\[54\]](#)

"And as for you, Zange," the prince continued, "I would like you to accompany the gifts and hostages from Turan back to Afrasiyab. While there, I would like you

to represent me and ask Afrasiyab to allow me safe passage through Turan to a place where I can stay hid-den from Kayka'us":

Go tell Afrasiyab of what hath chanced.
 Say: "Through this peace my lot is one of war:
 Thine are the sweets, the pang and poison mine,
 Yet will I keep my covenant with thee
 Albeit I shall lose the throne of might.
 God is my refuge, heaven my covering,
 The ground my throne. I rashly disobeyed
 And cannot face the Shah. Give me a cistern
 Where God appointeth and I may not hear
 Aught of the evil nature of my sire,
 But find for once a respite from his ire." [\[55\]](#)

Afrasiyab listened to Siyavosh's message carefully. He then sum-moned his commander-in-chief, [Piran](#), and dis-cussed Siyavosh's pro-posal with him in private. After con-sidering Kayka'us' future plans and Siyavosh's claim to the future rulership of Iran, Piran advised the king to admit the prince into Turan:

Dost thou not see that Kai Kaus is old
 And must depart? Then Siyawush will take
 The wide world, wealth untoiled for, hall and palace;
 Thus wilt thou gain both realms, their crown and state:
 The man that geteth them is fortunate. [\[56\]](#)

Convinced of the possibility of a great future, Afrasiyab in-vided Siyavosh to Turan and assured him of his own support as well as the support of his people:

For all Turan will do thee reverence,
 And I for my part long to have thy love.
 Then thou and I will be as son and sire—
 A sire who is a slave before his son. [\[57\]](#)

Encouraged by Afrasiyab's kind words, Siyavosh ad-dressed his army, asking the commanders to heed Bahram. He then set forth to meet the envoys who had crossed the Oxus to conduct him and his private army into exile:

At sunset,
 When air grew dark and earth ungenial,
 The prince, his face obscured by tears, marched forth
 Toward Jihun with all his company.
 When he had reached Tirmidh, doors, roofs, and streets
 Were full of scent and colour like the spring
 Up to the gates of Chach: thou wouldst have said:—
 "It is a bride with crown and necklaces."
 At every stage were carpets laid and viands
 Prepared, the whole way to Kachar Bashi,
 Where he dismounted and remained a while. [\[58\]](#)

The Turanians, especially Piran and his entourage of a thousand no-blemen, welcomed the prince:

On hearing: "Siyawush hath crossed the river
 With troops to us, his envoy hath arrived,"
 Afrasiyab bade all the chief estates
 Go forth with kettledrums to welcome him.
 Piran chose out one thousand of his kin
 To meet the prince with gifts [.]. [\[59\]](#)

On the way to Afrasiyab's court, Piran talked to the prince about his own feelings toward Afrasiyab and about the prince's fu-ture with him. "Afrasiyab," Piran said, "is like a father to you; he loves you dearly and although all the world might see him differently, Afrasiyab is wise, intelligent, and God fearing. I am one of his relatives, and I alone have a host of a hundred thousand war-riors in these parts."

Siyavosh's heart, however, was elsewhere. The farther they rode into Turan, the heavier his heart be-came:

For he recalled the hocktide in Zabol
 When it was decked up to Kabulistan,
 And he had gone as guest of Rustam there
 With all the famous men for company,
 And how the folk had showered down gold and gems,
 And sifted musk and ambergris o'erhead. [\[60\]](#)

If Siyavosh had any reservations, the welcome that Afra-siyab gave the party erased them from his heart. The two hug-ged each other affectionately and kissed. They became great friends:

Afrasiyab gave heart and soul to him,
 And could not sleep for thinking. [\[61\]](#)

Afrasiyab, however, continued to regard Siyavosh as his only sure avenue to the domination of the lands of the [Kayanian](#):

[My son! be ever glad and conquering.]
 Thou art a prince, the glory of the throne,

A royal crown and backbone of the host. [\[62\]](#)

Siyavosh accepted his fate as an exile in enemy territory. He accompanied the king on his hunting expeditions and, within a year, gained the respect of the Turanian army:

Thus while a year went by
They shared all griefs and pleasures equally. [\[63\]](#)

During this time, Siyavosh married Jarirah, Piran's daughter and settled down. A son, [Farud](#), was born to them. Dictated by circumstances and encouraged by Piran, he also proposed to marry [Farangis](#), Afrasiyab's daughter. His proposal tested Afrasiyab's trust in Siyavosh:

I know not whether love will take the prince
Back to Iran, or fix all his regards
On us; but why drink poison wittingly?
One must not lightly take a serpent's breath.

Piran replied: "O king! Let not thy heart
Be grieved hereat. Those born to Siyawush
Will be possessed of wits, reserved, and shrewd.
Trust not what readers of the stars may say,
Deal with his case according to thy wisdom,
For from this noble pair a prince will spring,
Whose head will be exalted to the sun
As king both in Iran and in Turan.

Then those two kingdoms will repose from strife [.]" [\[64\]](#)

Patiently arguing, Piran convinced Afrasiyab that a union between his family and the seed of Fereydu and of Kayka'us would ultimately heal the wounds of both war-torn lands. Afrasiyab finally agreed. Piran then involved Gulshahr, his consort wife, in the matter:

Piran dispatched a message to Gulshahr
Like smoke that she should go without delay
To Farangis to take her to the prince.
Thereon Gulshahr told happy Farangis
That she should go that night to Siyawush,
And ornament his palace with a Moon. [\[65\]](#)

When the marriage between Siyavosh and Farangis was over and the festivities were at an end, Afrasiyab gave Siyavosh the rulership of the eastern provinces of Turan and invited him to settle wherever he pleased. Siyavosh chose Khutan, Piran's land and, accompanied by the old warrior, moved to the city of Gang Dezh:

"The king saith: 'O illustrious chieftain!
I have bestowed upon thee all the realm
From here to Chin: go round and view the lands.
In any city where thou findest ease,
Contentment, and no more to be desired,
Abide in gladness and prosperity;
Stint not thy soul one moment of delight.' "

They went with merriment toward Khutan
With all the famous men escorting them,
Because Piran, that general favourite,
Was of that state, and Siyawush had promised
To spend a month with him. [\[66\]](#)

In the seclusion of Khutan, Siyavosh reviewed the past and thought about the events that had catapulted him into Turan. Guided by the *farr*, he arrived at a frightening conclusion. He foresaw that a war between Iran and Turan was inevitable and that Afrasiyab would murder him. He apprised Piran of his findings and concluded his ominous look into the future by telling Piran that after his death, Afrasiyab would become extremely remorseful.

Piran did not believe Siyavosh. Within a week, however, a letter arrived. In it Afrasiyab commanded Piran, the commander of the Turanian army, to take his army and rush to the confines of the empire:

Choose from the warriors
A host and go toward the sea of Chin.
Thence cross [Makran to India
And continue your march] to the river Sind,
Demand the tribute from the provinces,
And over-run the borders of Khazar. [\[67\]](#)

Siyavosh's premonitions proved correct. Gradually Afrasiyab became concerned about Siyavosh's quick ascent to prosperity. To obtain more information about the events in Gang Dezh, he sent his brother, Garsi-vaz, there for a visit. He asked Garsi-vaz to spy on Siyavosh and report anything that struck him as unusual.

Garsi-vaz was jealous of Siyavosh and Farangis, and of Siyavosh's newborn son, Farud, by the daughter of Piran. Hoping that one day he would rule the beautiful Gang Dezh himself, upon his return to Afrasiyab, he gave a damaging report on Siyavosh and his activities:

Garsi-vaz
Said to his brother: "Siyawush, O king!
Hath wholly changed, the envoys of Ka'us
Come often secretly, he correspondeth

With Rum and Chin, and drinketh to his father [.]” [\[68\]](#)

Court intrigue reached new heights when Garsivaz was made the liaison between the palaces. He concocted events on either side and sowed discord far and wide. He frightened both kings, especially Afrasiyab who was already in awe of Siyavosh. About his visits to the court of Siyavosh, he responded:

Now Siyawush showed no regard for me,
Nor even came to meet me on the way,
Would hear no words, would not peruse thy letter,
But set me on my knees below his throne.
He had much correspondence with Iran,
And kept his city's portals shut on us.
What with a host from Rum and one from Chin
There is a constant bruit within the land.
Unless thou actest promptly thou wilt have
Naught left but wind. While thou art hesitating
He will attack thee, and obtain both realms,
For should he lead his army towards Iran

What man would dare come forth to challenge him? [\[69\]](#)

Infuriated, Afrasiyab mobilized his army and headed for Khutan. Upon hearing of this move, Siyavosh prepared his pregnant wife, Farangis, to face the future without him:

This is the fifth month of thy pregnancy
With our illustrious and growing babe:
This precious Tree of thine will bring forth Fruit,
A glorious monarch; name him Kai Khusrau,

And in thy sorrowing find peace in him [.] [\[70\]](#)

Siyavosh informed Farangis of his own imminent death and foretold that sometime soon an Iranian champion would come and secretly take her and the child she carried to the Oxus River and to Iran. He even foresaw that their son would become king:

And there will come a saviour from Iran,
One with his loins girt up by God's command,
Who will convey thee and thy son in haste
Toward the Jihun. Thy son will have the throne,
And rule o'er fowl and fish. A host will come
For vengeance from Iran and shake the world.

To vindicate mine honour! Battle-shouts
Will rise, and Kai Khusrau will vex the age;
Then Rustam's [Rakhsh](#) will trample earth, despising
Turanian folk, and thou wilt see no vengeance
Ta'en for me till the Resurrection-day

Save by the mace and trenchant scimitar. [\[71\]](#)

At the end, he instructed his steed, Bihzad, to allow no one but the avenging [Kaykhusrau](#) to ride him:

Long while he whispered in his charger's ear,
And said: "Be prudent, have to do with none.
When to avenge me Kai Khusrau shall come
It is on thee that he must put the bridle,
So now renounce the stable once for all,
For thou shalt carry him to his revenge.
Be thou his charger, trample on the world,

And with thy hoofs sweep foemen from the earth." [\[72\]](#)

Having completed his will and testament, Siyavosh killed all his other horses, burned his palaces with their untold riches, and rode Bih-zad to meet Afrasiyab. In the field, as his thousand Iranian warriors faced the army of Afrasiyab, Siyavosh ordered his commanders to refrain from fighting. He was captured by Afrasiyab who turned him over to [Guruy](#) to be slain on the road-side:

Take him
Beside the road and let him be beheaded
On some bare spot where grasses never grow,
And pour his blood upon the burning earth.

Let there be no delay and have no fears. [\[73\]](#)

Afrasiyab refused to comment on the sin for which Siyavosh was being executed. All he recalled were the words of Garsivaz:

The plain is full
Of vultures feeding on Iranian dead,
And if thou fearest vengeance there is cause.
Should Siyawush cry out earth would appear
All mace and scimitar from Rum to Chin.
Hath he not done thee wrong enough that thou
Shouldst listen weakly to what others say?
The snake's tail thou hast crushed and bruised its head;
Now wilt thou deck its body with brocade?

If thou shalt spare his life I will depart
To some retreat and perish. [\[74\]](#)

Guruy and Damur also added their voices to that of Garsivaz, urging Afrasiyab to kill Siyavosh and save his realm from all future threats. Afrasiyab remained hesitant. He could not justify Siyavosh's death to him-self:

I have myself beheld no fault in him;
Albeit astrologers declare that ill
will come to me through him, and if I shed
His blood revenge will raise dust in Turan
And dim the sun [.]. [\[75\]](#)

And Farangis asked for mercy:

Why hast thou wrapped thy heart up in deceit?
Dost thou not from thy height perceive the abyss?
Take not a monarch's and a guiltless head;
The Judge of sun and moon will disapprove.
When Siyawush departed from Iran
He did thee homage—thee of all the world—
Gave umbrage to the Shah, left treasures, crown,
And throne to make thee his support and shelter.
What hast thou seen in him to make thee quit
The path of right? No man beheadeth kings
And long retaineth his own sovereignty.
Wrong not my blameless self too, for the world
Is fleeting and is full of sobs and sighs. [\[76\]](#)

Despite her efforts, Farangis could not reach her father. Afrasiyab ordered Guruy to take Siyavosh to a fort high in the mountains and, away from Farangis, behead him. [\[77\]](#) Guruy followed his master's orders:

When he was past the city and the host
They bore and dragged him bound upon the plain,
And then Gurwi received from Garsivaz
A blue-steel dagger for the bloody deed.
He dragged the prince on by the hair afoot
And when he came to where the mark had stood.
.
Flung to the ground the mighty Elephant,
And showed no shame or reverence for rank,
But set a golden basin on the ground,
Turned up the prince's face as 'twere a sheep's
Cut off the silver Cypress' head and filled
The bowl with blood. Gurwi took up the bowl
And emptied it where he had been commanded.
From that blood presently there sprang a plant,
Which I will teach thee how to recognise, [\[78\]](#)
For it is called "The Blood of Siyawush."



Guruy beheads Siyavosh

Gathering a Host

Kaykhusrau

Upon his ascension to the throne of Iran, Kaykhusrau launched a program of reforms. With the assistance of the nobles and potentates, he rebuilt the cities devastated by the many assaults of the Turanian armies, destroyed the haunts of demons by expanding cultivation into the waste-lands, and ushered in good will and trust. Before long, Iran re-gained the glory it had enjoyed under Jamshid and Fereydun:

[He revived the times of Faridun and Jam
And tired not of dispensing justice,]
The world was full of happiness and peace,
The hands of Ahriman were barred from ill [.]. [\[79\]](#)

[Zal](#)—the son of Sam and grandson of Nariman [\[80\]](#)—his son, Rus-tam, and the nobles of Kabulistan ar-rived in Iran and were welcomed by Giv, [Gudarz](#), and Tus. The sight of Rustam, his father's mentor, moved Kaykhusrau and brought tears to his eyes. Rustam paid homage by kissing the ground before the king. The king praised Rustam pro-fusely and called him the wise and serene mentor of Siyavosh:

Paladin!
Live ever glad and happy, for thou art
The foster-sire of Siyawush and likewise
Art of all men most wise and reticent. [\[81\]](#)

After a few days of rest and getting acquainted with all the vis-itors who had come to pay their respects and announce their sup-port, the king set out on a hunting expedition. He re-quested that Rustam accom-pany him:

The monarch of the world went forth to hunt
With Rustam, that illustrious paladin [.]. [\[82\]](#)

The hunt, however, served as a cover for the king's real inten-tions—a full-fledged survey of the Iranian marches and of the devas-tated land. After this assessment, Kaykhusrau went on a spending spree. He or-dered cities that had fallen on bad times to be refur-bished and citizens who had lost their property to be reim-bursed. The town-by-town inspec-tion finally brought Kaykhusrau to Azerbaijan. [\[83\]](#) Here he vis-ited the Azargashasp fire temple, where he prayed to the Cre-ator:

Approached the temple of Azargashasp,
Prayed in that Fane of Fire and praised the Maker. [\[84\]](#)

On his way from Azerbaijan, Kaykhusrau visited Kay-ka'us. The two kings, each flanked by his champi-ons, met and talked about the political situation at hand:

[H]ow many paladins
Had died, and how their wives and children suffered,
Thus saying: "Thou beholdest many cities
Waste in Iran, wrecked by Afrasiyab [.]" [\[85\]](#)

Kaykhusrau swore by the Fire that he would be stead-fast in his re-solve and that nothing would distract him from aveng-ing the death of his father, not even Afrasiyab's kin-ship to him. [\[86\]](#) As a token of his truth-fulness, he made a solemn pledge to that effect and had it record-ed in the Pahlavi language and witnessed by Rustam, Zal, and the other Iranian warriors: [\[87\]](#)

This they recorded in the olden tongue
With scented ink upon a royal roll,
And Zal and Rustam signed as witnesses,
And likewise all the other mighty men.
The written oath attested in due form
Was put for safety into Rustam's hands. [\[88\]](#)

On the eve of his departure, Kaykhusrau visited the fire temple again and sought the Creator's support:

O righteous Judge, the only God,
The World-lord, the Sustainer, and the Guide!
Thus didst deliver me, a hostless boy,
Out of the Dragon's breath. Afrasiyab
Thou knowest reckless, not afraid to injure;
His curse is on the waste and peopled lands;
Revenge against him filleth guiltless hearts.
He hath poured fire upon these goodly coasts,
Hath sifted o'er the brave the dust of woe,
Unjustly shed the blood of Siyawush
Upon the earth, and rent our souls thereby.
The hearts of kings are filled with dread of him;
His throne and diadem are this world's bane.
Thou knowest that he is of evil nature,
And both a miscreant and sorcerer. [\[89\]](#)

Finally, he addressed the champions of Nimruz, Kabu-listan, and Iran who had all pledged to fight Afrasiyab at his side. "I have trav-eled," he said, "from Azergashasp to this place, and I have not seen one person who is happy or who is well off. I have not seen any culti-vated lands. This will have to change. And if you are truthful about your pledge to me, it will change!"

[T]hen the Shah
Called all the archimages of the realm,
And spake to them at large in fitting terms.
He closed the door of audience for two sennights,
And had the muster-roll compiled afresh.
He bade the commissaries to call over
The names of great and small, and had them written
In solemn form befitting paladins.
The kin of Kai Kaus five score and ten—
Chiefs of the host—came first upon the list [.]. [\[90\]](#)

The list is impressive. It reveals the structure of the military and shows how the various principalities in the kingdom contributed to the defense of Iran against Turan. Furthermore, reviewing the list, titles like king of kings, kings, and satraps find meaning in the intricate tapestry of ranks and numbers, revealing the hierarchy according to which society was organized and ruled.

The house of the king of kings, Kayka'us, con-tributed a hundred and ten commanders. [Fariburz](#), son of Kayka'us, led these champions and their warriors. The house of Nawzar, led by [Zarasp](#) (son of Tus), con-tributed eighty champions; the house of Kishwad, led by Gudarz, con-tributed seventy-eight mountaineers and horse-men of the plains; the house of Gazhdaham, led by [Gustaham](#), con-tributed sixty-three fighters. Other houses offered similar num-bers of champi-ons, horse-men, and fighters. Each house carried a distinc-tive banner. The house of Gudarz, for in-stance, carried the Kaviyan banner, represent-ing the royal house. So numerous were the contributions that the *mu'bad* lost count:

Apart from these, the lords and paladins,
The princes and the mighty men of worship,
Were more than any archimage could reckon,
So many were the chiefs with Grace and glory!
They wrote upon the monarch's muster-roll

The names of all efficients [.] [\[91\]](#)

Rather than mobilizing the army at once, the king gave a feast and bestowed wealth and titles on the prospec-tive heroes. The defeat of Palashan, Afrasiyab's comman-der-in-chief, em-bodied the top prize. [\[92\]](#) [Bizhan](#), the son of Giv, accepted the challenge. He also pledged to bring the crown of Afrasiyab to Kaykhus-rau.

As the ceremonies continued, other champions entered the bidding. Giv accepted to set fire to a huge pile of wood that had been placed strategically in a gorge on the Kasseh Rud [\[93\]](#) to impede any assault on Afrasiyab's domain. The most difficult mission, however, was [Gurgin's](#). He was to deliver Kaykhusrau's challenge to Afrasiyab and bring back the Tura-nian's reply:

"This is a present meet for one
Whose wisdom is the king of his pure mind—
A daring, prudent man and eloquent,
Who turneth not from lions in the fight—
If he will carry to Afrasiyab
A message, weeping not for dread of him,
And will convey his answer back to me.
Who of this noble company will dare?"
Gurgin son of Milad held forth his hand,

And gat him ready for that enterprise. [\[94\]](#)

After all tasks were assigned and rewards bestowed, the king and Rustam talked further about the future, especially about the Turanians and their hegemony over the lands in Zabu-listan:

Illustrious, glorious Shah!
There is a district in Zabulistan,
That formed a portion of the realm of Tur
Till Minuchih drave all the Turkmans out.
It is a goodly and a glorious land;
But when Kaus grew hoar and spiritless,
When fame, the Grace, and prowess quitted him,
Turanians seized it and Iranians ceased
Therein. The folk now carry to Turan
Both toll and tribute, heeding not the Shah.
The march is full of elephants and treasure.
The innocent are troubled by this folk
With constant pillage, massacre, and raid,
And all the insolency of Turan.
Now that the kingship of Iran is thine,
Thine from the ant's foot to the lion's claw,
'Twere well to send a valiant paladin,
And mighty host, to make this people bring
Their tribute to the Shah and look to him.

This region ours we can defeat Turan. [\[95\]](#)

Since that land had much to offer in the way of elephants and pre-cious stones, and since the people did not like the over-lordship of the Turanians, Rustam suggested to the king to liberate that realm and an-nex it to Iran. This, Rustam thought, would be a considerable blow to the Turanians.

The king, recognizing the merit of the champion's strat-e-gy, sug-gested that since the land under discussion was con-tiguous to Zabulis-tan, the seat of Rustam, an army could be sent under the lead-ership of [Faramarz](#), Rustam's son, to re-duce that domain. Rustam accepted to send his son to annex the region.

Tus Marches on Turan

Equipped and ready for battle, the great army presented it-self to the king. The king appointed Tus, a kindred of Nawzar, as the com-mander-in-chief. He advised the lower ranks to fol-low the commands of Tus, and he advised the aged warrior not to forsake his loyalty to his sovereign, to observe the law of the Cre-ator, and to aid the farmer, the craftsman, and the busi-nessman. Finally, he made it clear to the commander that the army should not go by way of Kalat, the seat of Siyavosh's other son,

Farud: [\[96\]](#)

Thou shalt on no account pass by Kalat,
For, if thou dost, things will go hard with thee.

To Siyawush (his soul be as the sun,
 His place all hopeful in the other world!)
 The daughter of Piran once bare a child
 But little shown in public by his sire.
 He is my brother and resembleth me.
 He is a youth of mine own age, high-fortuned,
 And liveth with his mother at Kalat;
 A world-lord he who hath the Grace and troops.
 He knoweth no Iranian e'en by name,
 And from that quarter thou must turn thy bridle,
 For he hath troops and famous men of war

Upon a mountain steep and hard to reach [.] [\[97\]](#)

Tus accepted the King's command, saying:

In thy counsels is success,
 By that way which thou biddest will I go,

For good alone must come of thy behest. [\[98\]](#)

Tus' army arrived at a fork in the road where one way led to the waterless desert and the other, passing Charam, provided good pastures and provision for the army at Mayam. Against Kaykhusrau's advice, Tus chose the latter road. Gudarz reminded the general of the Shah's desire that the army should follow the desert road and not approach Kalat, but Tus did not pay any attention to him. The army chiefs directed the host on the road to Charam.

Hearing about the approaching army, Farud brought his horses and livestock in his fort and shut the gate. [\[99\]](#) Then, following the advice of his mother, Jarirah, he rode with Takhar to the crest of the mountain to view the army, recognize its paladins, and introduce himself to them.

At the same time that, at the top of the mountain, Takhar was identifying the Iranian commanders for Farud, Tus spotted Farud and Takhar from the base of the mountain. He asked for a volunteer who could climb to the peak and deal with the two:

We need an enterprising cavalier
 To hasten to the mountain-top to learn
 Who these two warriors are and wherefore there.
 If they be ours let him bestow on them
 Two hundred lashes on their heads, if foes

bind them and drag them hither faces downward [.] [\[100\]](#)

Bahram, from the house of Gudarz, volunteered to perform the task and, at the peak, asked the two to identify themselves. Farud identified himself as the son of Siyavush and the brother of the king. Then, showing Bahram his royal birth mark, Farud added that he wished to meet Bahram and some of the other Iranian commanders so that he could bestow gifts upon them. "It is my wish," Farud added further, "to ride with the army of Iran and participate in the revenge of the death of my father."

Bahram, in turn, introduced himself and paid homage to the prince. In response to Farud's request to join the Iranian army to seek revenge for his father, Bahram was skeptical, given the political situation that obtained in Iran at the time:

O prince young and accomplished,
 And valiant cavalier! I will report
 Thy words to Tus, and kiss his hand while urging
 Compliance. Still our chieftain is not wise,
 His head and brains brook not good counselling.
 He is accomplished, rich, and nobly born,
 But nameth not the Shah. When Giv brought home
 That glorious one, Tus was provoked with him,
 Gudarz and Giv, supported Fariburz,
 And said: "I am descended from Naudar:
 The kingship of the world is rightly mine."
 He very well may disregard my words,

And in his anger quarrel with myself [.] [\[101\]](#)

When, at the end of their meeting, Bahram was ready to leave the peak to take Farud's message to Tus, he gave the prince some advice. "My prince," he said, "if Tus sends anyone other than myself to this peak, it means that he intends to wage war against you. Retire to your stronghold and fortify it as best as you can."

Back in the Iranian camp, Bahram apprised Tus of the identity of the warriors and of the youth's royal lineage. Tus became angry and denounced Bahram:

My words to thee were: "Bring the man to me,
 Ask him no questions." If he be a king
 Who then am I, and wherefore am I here
 With this array? A man of Turkman race,
 Like some black raven on the mountain there,
 Is hindering the progress of the troops!
 Among the forward offsprings of Gudarz

I can see naught but mischief to the host [.] [\[102\]](#)

Thus discrediting Bahram by attributing his loyalty to the *farr* to egoism, Tus asked for another volunteer who would climb the mountain and decapitate the bold "Turk." [Rivniz](#), Tus' son-in-law, accepted the challenge. On the mountain, Farud tried to discourage the Iranian warrior by shooting at his horse, but Rivniz continued to climb on foot, Farud then shot him dead with one arrow. Tus sent Zarsp, his own son, and Rivniz's brother-in-law. Farud killed him as well.

Seeing how his warriors fell before Farud, Tus took to the saddle himself and headed for the peak. Takhar advised Farud not to stay and fight. "My prince," he said, "you are not a match for the mighty Tus. We must return to the fortification and find a way to defend ourselves." Farud, however, remained on the peak to battle Tus. "If you do not wish to return to the fort," Takhar pleaded, "then kill Tus' horse. Princes are not likely to fight when they lose their steed." Farud followed Takhar's direction and killed Tus' horse. As predicted, the loss of his horse stopped Tus' advance up the mountain. Tus returned to the army disheveled and confused. Giv then

accepted the chal-lenge. Takhar identified him as Iran's strongest and most as-tute warrior in the field:

"It is the raging Dragon,
Whose sneezing make birds topple from the air,
Who put Piran thy grandsire's hands in bonds,
And brake two Turkman hosts! He hath unfathered
Full many a little child. His foot hath been
On many a river, mount, and wilderness.
Full many a father too hath he unsonned,
And treadeth underfoot the lion's neck.
'Twas he that bare thy brother to Iran,
And crossed Jihun although he saw no boat.
They call him Giv—a very Elephant

Or river Nile upon the day of battle [.] [\[103\]](#)

Farud treated Giv in the same way that he had others. He forced the warrior to return to the Iranian camp, as Tus had, to be ridiculed. In the case of Giv, the return was painful. He had to confront not only the other warriors, but also his own son, Bizhan. The latter was now determined to take on the "Turk" at all costs. He would not listen to anyone, not even to Gustaham:

For I have sworn a great oath by the moon,
The world's Judge, and the Shah's own diadem,
That if I am not slain I will not ride

Back from the mountain but avenge Zarasp." [\[104\]](#)

Recognizing the invincibility of Bizhan, Farud decided to re-turn and shut himself up in the fort. Bizhan pursued him. Before Farud reached the fort, Bizhan killed Farud's horse, injured Farud's back and incapacitated his arm. Farud ordered his warriors to stay in the fort and keep the gate securely shut.

Bizhan's feat had opened the pass to the Iranian army. Tus then swore to kill the "Turk" and avenge the death of his son, the valiant Zarasp:

I will send up this hold's dust to the sun.
To avenge beloved Zarasp the cavalier
I will attack without delay, will make
This Turkman wretch a corpse, and with his gore

Engrain the stones like coral to the core. [\[105\]](#)

That night Jarirah, Farud's mother, had a terrifying dream. In her dream she saw a blaze engulf the entire Sepid Kuh (white mountain), consuming the fort and its inhabitants. When she awoke from this nightmare, she went to the window of her apartment to view the mountain and the surrounding countryside. The whole place was filled with Iranian troops. This further discouraged her. She knew that the end had come and that the wounded Farud and his warriors were no match for the Iranian army. Taking matters into her own hands, she made sure that none of the fort's wealth passed into the hands of the Iranian looters.

To carry out this plan, she mutilated and killed all the Arabian horses in the stables and set the fort ablaze. This done, she went to her mortally wounded son's apartment and killed him in his sleep. She then killed herself.

Three days after the capture of Farud's fort on Sepid Kuh, the Iranian army resumed its march on Turan. On their way they slew all the Turanians they met and left their bodies on the road as examples. Finally they reached the Oxus (Kasseh Rud).

On the Turanian side, Afrasiyab re-appointed Piran his commander-in-chief and asked him to immediately gather troops from all over Turan to fight the Iranians who were, at the time, impeded by a snow storm.

The Iranians were baffled by the intensity of the cold and the amount of the snow. Bahram attributed the storm to the wrath of the Creator for the death of Farud:

A tempest rose and none took thought of fight;
A dense cloud came like flying dust, their lips
Congealed with cold, the tents and camp-enclosures
Were turned to ice, snow carpeted the mountains,
And for a sennight's space earth disappeared.
There was but little food or rest or sleep:
Thou wouldst have said: "Earth's face is turned to stone."
They slew and ate their horses. Multitudes
Of men and cattle perished. None at last
Possessed a charger. When the eighth day came
The sun prevailed, the earth was like a sea,

The troops were mustered, and Tus spoke of fight [.] [\[106\]](#)

On the eighth day, Tus assembled his warriors. He asked Giv to make good on his promise, for which he had received a generous reward from the king, and set fire to the pile of wood placed strategically in a gorge by the Turanians to obstruct the movement of the Iranian army into Turan. In spite of Bizhan's offer to carry out the task for him, the aged Giv rode past Kasseh Rud and set the obstacle ablaze. The wall of wood burned for three weeks. On the fourth week, the Iranian army continued its march to Garugard, sending contingents out to scout the countryside.

Garugard was the seat of the Iranian Tazhav, who had defected to Turan. He held the territory to the north of the Oxus, the grazing ground for Afrasiyab's livestock.

Tazhav dispatched Afrasiyab's shepherd, Kabudah, to assess the strength of the Iranian army and bring him news of the Iranian host. When Kabudah failed to return, Tazhav decided to approach the Iranian camp personally and secure the necessary information. His small detachment was ridiculed by the Iranians:

If thou art marchlord and king's son-in-law

How is it that thou hast not mightier powers? [\[107\]](#)

Giv tried to persuade the traitor to go to Tus and beg for forgiveness, but Tazhav refused to denounce Afrasiyab and pay allegiance to the king of Iran. Instead he fled from Giv taking his beautiful slave girl, Spanvi with him. When the girl proved to be too heavy for his horse, he abandoned her on the road and continued his trek to Afrasiyab:

Then Ispanwi alighted from the steed:
Tazhav's face was all tears at losing her,
Yet sped he on to reach Afrasiyab,
And all the while Bizhan was in pursuit,
Who when he spied the moon-faced Spanwi,
Her musky hair descending to her feet,
Came to her, took her with all gentleness,
Made room for her behind him, and returned

[108]

Toward the army of the paladin.

After Afrasiyab received Tazhav and heard him out, he re-buked Piran for having ignored his orders to mobilize an army. He com-manded the aged warrior to stop procrastinat-ing and assemble the border guards and meet Tus with a mighty army. Piran obeyed his king's behest and mobilized a mighty force. He planned to reach the Iranians by taking a shortcut through uncharted territories:

Piran commanded: "Quit the accustomed route,
Take the short road; the foeman must not hear
Of these my noble and illustrious troops,
So may I bring this great host like a mountain

[109]

Down unawares upon yon army's head."

Piran's decision was based on intelligence from Tazhav to the effect that the Iranian army spent most of its time drink-ing and that it did not expect to be attacked any time soon. This correct assessment gave Pi-ran the edge. And in the battle that followed many Iranian warriors fell:

The more part of the Iranian troops were slain,

[110]

The rest had come back wounded [.]

Having inflicted yet another misfortune on Iran, Tus' ability to command the army came into question. The Iranian generals at once asked for his ouster and dispatched a mes-senger to Kaykhusrau to ap-prise him of the state of things be-tween Iran and Turan.

Tus' treatment of Farud and the news of the army's de-feat at the hand of Afrasiyab infuriated the king. Summoning the scribe, Kaykhusrau dictated a letter to be delivered to Fariburz. In the letter, he removed Tus from command and appointed Fariburz in his place.

Upon his return to the court, Tus was further humiliated by Kaykhusrau in front of his peers. Pro-nounced unfit for royal service and for royal company, Tus was banished to his estate, where he was to spend the rest of his days.

Upon assuming command of the army, Prince Fariburz dispatched [Ruhham](#) to Piran with a message and a com-plaint:

Now night-attacks are not the wont of heroes
And mighty men that brandish massive maces.
If thou wilt cease from arms we too will cease;

[111]

If thou preferrest war then we will fight [.]

Ruhham was well received by the Turanians. After lis-tening care-fully to Fariburz' views on the war, Pi-ran said that it was the Iranians who had started the aggression against the Turanians and not the other way around. And he made it clear that he understood the dilemma that Tus' unwise decisions had created for the Iranians. To the new com-mander of the Iranian army, therefore, Piran offered one month's respite to decide whether he wished to continue the hostilities or sign a peace treaty with Turan:

If ye will use the month that we accord
In marching from the frontiers of Turan,
And in a swift retreat to your own borders,
Ye will behold your reputation saved;
But if not we will close with you in fight;

[112]

Ask not for any armistice henceforth.

Fariburz decided to continue the war and the two armies fought a number of battles. In the decisive bat-tle, the Turani-ans succeeded in cornering Fariburz, the mainstay of the Ira-nian army; they even killed Rivniz, Kayka'us's son. Only the brav-ery of Bahram, who snatched the fallen prince's crown, saved Iran from even more shame:

Yet Bahram the warrior
Charged lion-like the foe and carried off
The crown upon his spear-point, while both hosts

[113]

stood wondering [.]

In the course of the day, the Iranian army was greatly re-duced in number, and by the day's end it began a retreat. The Turanians re-joiced:

The Turkman cavaliers, with joyful hearts
Released from travail and anxiety,

[114]

Returned to their own camp with haughty mien [.]

To celebrate Piran's victory, Afrasiyab summoned the old warrior to his capital and entertained him and his men for two weeks. Then he presented Piran with some of the most pre-cious pieces in his treasury and advised him to keep a look-out in the direc-tion of Iran. Although gone for now, Afrasiyab warned, the Irani-ans are not gone forever. Kaykhusrau, he said, is wealthy and can change the minds of his champions easily. He advised Piran, therefore, to appoint spies who can ap-prise Turan of activities in Iran.

Piran listened attentively, and when the king's words were finished, he and his champions left for China to seek as-sis-tance from the Chi-nese against the invader from the west.

The Alliance

Kamus the Kushan

The defeat of the Iranians in Turan brought Rustam, Iran's national champion, into the war. At the be-gin-ning of the "Story of Kamus the Kushan," Firdowsi sings the praises of Rustam:

Of Rustam's wondrous deeds there is no scant,
His legend in the hearts of all is rife;
A crocodile in water, elephant
On land, wise, shrewd of heart, a man of strife,
Consummate both in war and valiancy,
[\[115\]](#)
A man of knowledge, wit, and weight was he.

Firdowsi also describes the mood of the defeated forces return-ing to Iran. As they approached Kalat, they ruminated on the events that had taken place there not long ago. They wondered how to deal with a king whose brother they had slain and the revenge for whose father's death they had compro-mised.

Upon arrival, the king did not admit the champions; even though, in private, he attributed the entire calamity to the will of God. "If it were not Your will," he implored to Yazdan, "I would have a thou-sand of the greats of the army sent to the gallows":

I should command to set
A thousand stakes forthwith upon the open,
And Tus and all that carried arms with him
Should be impaled. I mourned my father's death,
My heart was filled with sorrow, pain, and trouble,
And now there is new vengeance for Farud,
For I must needs smite off the head of Tus.
I said: 'Avoid Kalat, avoid Charam,
Though people should shower drachms upon thy head,
Because Farud is with his mother there.
He is a hero of the Kaian race—
A warrior.' Should he know vile Tus or why
The army marched? Of course he would attack,
And from the mountain slaughter many chiefs.
Why did inhuman and insensate Tus
[\[116\]](#)
March in such haste against that hold?

But more than Tus, Kaykhusrau blamed himself: "Why did I be-stow lavish gifts upon Tus? Why did I equip Tus with a mighty army to fight my own brother? Like my fa-ther, Farud, too, was a victim of circum-stances," he lamented. . Tus merely followed the dictates of Ahriman:

None know I worse than Tus, and he is ripe
For chain and pit. Brainless and veinless too
The wretch is as a dog to me.
[\[117\]](#)

The Iranian champions were dismayed. They shared Kaykhusrau's grief, but they were unhappy that the shah should not admit them to the court. Distressed, they ap-proached Rustam and apologized to him for what had hap-pened. They explained that the events had been pre-ordained and that they had had no intention of fighting Farud, the king's brother:

God willed it so!
Who wished to fight Farud?
[\[118\]](#)

Besides, they justified Tus' act as the act of a father whose son and son-in-law had been killed in the course of the same day. Tus simply lost control, they said. Rustam agreed to mediate their case and make the army's dif-ficult situation clear to the king. That evening, Rustam vis-ited the court. He kissed the threshold then pleaded with the king to reconsid-er his deci-sion regarding the army and Tus. He enumerated the rea-sons that the champions had pro-vided and added, out of personal ex-perience, that the death of a son is hard to bear.
[\[119\]](#)

The king welcomed Rustam's interpretation of the event and praised the national champion for his wis-dom and coun-sel. He then allowed Tus to enter. Tus kissed the threshold and paid homage to Rustam. From the champion, he turned to the king and praised him profusely, expressing regret for his ac-tions. The king accepted Tus' expression of regret but did not al-low the impact of the defeat to re-main hidden:

O'er the Turanians' waste the Iranians' hands
And feet and trunks lie scattered!
[\[120\]](#)

"The amount of anger and the zeal for revenge—which rest at the heart of Iran's attack on Turan—have in no way been diminished," said the king, addressing the champi-ons. "How can we as Iranians live," he asked, "with the shame of a defeat of that magnitude?"

The champions individually paid their respects and swore to fight to the bitter end for him. The king praised his paladins:

Khusrau then summoned Giv and seated him
Upon the throne of greatness, praised him much,
Bestowing many a gift and mark of favour,
And said: "Thou seekest toil on mine account,
[\[121\]](#)
But sharest not my treasures [.]

The king said that Tus should not have made the difficult deci-sions alone. In matters such as going to Kalat, fighting Farud, and facing the Turanian army, he should

have drawn on the knowledge and expertise of capable warriors like Giv. In the end, however, Tus was appointed the task of returning the Iranian army to Turan. In this way, the shah thought, the commander could not only re-deem himself but also avenge the murder of Siyavosh, the task for which he had originally been commissioned. Soon after this meeting, Tus mobilized a huge army and met the Turanian forces at the Shahd River, somewhere in the Pamirs. [\[122\]](#)

Upon arriving at Shahd, Piran sent an express messenger to Tus, hoping to win the Iranian commander over. Tus interpreted Piran's conciliatory language as a signal that the Turanian warrior, often sympathetic to Iran's cause, intended to defect to Iran. He invited Piran to defect:

If thou speak'st sooth we have no quarrel.
Drop fealty, abandon thy surroundings,
And bar this door of fear and road of loss.
Go to the Shah alone, he will requite thee,
Give thee a royal crown and paladinship.
When he recalleth thy good deeds thy pangs
Will pain him to the heart. [\[123\]](#)

Upon hearing Tus' message, Piran sent another express messenger. This one, however, to Afrasiyab. In his message, Piran apprised his king of how he had duped the Iranian commander with illusions of his defection and asked Afrasiyab to assemble a large army:

Choose a warrior-host
Or else the war will be inglorious.
We may uproot the foe and fire their land,
Else in their vengeance for prince Siyawush
The Iranian army ne'er will rest from strife. [\[124\]](#)

The struggle for supremacy between Iran and Turan began with a single combat between Tus and [Arzhang](#). When Arzhang was killed, Human, Piran's brother, challenged Tus:

Tus too advanced; earth rang with clarion-blare.
"And so from luckless Wisa," he exclaimed,
"A miserable Tree like this up-springeth!
Hast thou indeed come forth to fight since thou
Hast come forth mounted and with spear in hand?
By the Shah's life and head I would oppose thee
Without my breastplate, mace, and Ruman casque,
Just like a pard that clutcheth at its pray
Among the mountains ["] [\[125\]](#)

Human chided Tus for having ignored his own central role in the Iranian army and for having responded to a challenge for single combat. He asked Tus to return to his army and send warriors who had been praised by the shah, young warriors who sought recognition. He asked for Bizhan and Giv of the Azadegan House. Furthermore, he told Tus that it would not be right for the Iranian army to lose its commander-in-chief. What would become of its organization?

But no amount of praise, not even placing him among such champions as Zal and Rustam, could persuade Tus to give up the fight. On the contrary, he tried to bring Piran's brothers to his side and possibly stop the war:

The Shah directed:—
"Harm not Piran. He is my foster-sire,
Experienced, and my friend. Strive not with him
Unjustly, wantonly, and see that he
Hear thine advice." [\[126\]](#)

Since the outcome of these combats almost invariably meant death for one of the combatants, they usually spent a long time, sometimes too long, trying to convince each other to call the fight off. As in this case, other paladins entered the field and encouraged the combatants to stop the talk and proceed with the fight. Interestingly enough often the mediators, too, became a party to furthering the haggling:

If Tus slay me
Men still will use the mace and kettledrum.
Piran is living and Afrasiyab,
Who will avenge me promptly, but if Tus
Shall perish by my hand none of his troops
Will reach Iran. Bewail thy brothers' pangs,
Why railst thou at Tus son of Naudar? [\[127\]](#)

Tus did not relent and the fight continued for the rest of the day. When at that time the outcome remained inconclusive, the combatants decided to return in the morning and finish their fight. That night, however, Piran talked to Bazur, a man well versed in magic and the occult.

"In the morning," Piran told Bazur, "I intend to attack the Iranian position and settle this account. I want you to ascend the nearby mountain and, as soon as the Turanian army attacks, call down a snow storm upon the Iranians."

The next day, before Tus and Human resumed their fight, the Iranian army was afflicted with unspeakable cold; the intensity of the cold was such that the troops could not hold on to their weapons. [\[128\]](#) While responding to that unprecedented calamity, Turanian contingents arrived and killed as many of their numbers as they could. Tus, finding his beleaguered troops surrounded by a mighty Turanian host, ordered his commanders to gather the Iranian army and head for the mountain where they would have a better chance of defense against the numerically superior forces of the enemy:

"I purposed when I sent the cavalier
To carry news of us before the battle,
That Kai Khusrau should send the son of Zal
To lead the reinforcements to the field."
He loaded up and, thinking of the slain

With anguish, called his men to horse again. [\[129\]](#)

When the army reached the Hamavan Mountain, Tus asked Giv to assign those of the troops who had had a respite to Bizhan and to take the rest of the army to the high-lands him-self. [\[130\]](#) On the Turanian side, Piran sent scouts to the Iranian camp to estimate the strength of the remaining forces. The scouts returned, reporting that the Iranian army had left, leaving all its baggage in the field. Piran consulted his com-manders. The Turanian army, they advised, must use Tus' defeat and annihilate the foe. Piran did not agree. It would be prudent for the Turanian army to wait, he said, until Afrasiyab's enormous army ar-rives. The combined forces of Turan, he argued, can then be brought to bear on Iran:

Piran replied: "In war the foot of haste
Is feebler than delay's. A sea-like host
Is gathering before Afrasiyab;
Let us delay till that great power with all
Its warriors and fighting-men shall come;
Then will we leave none living in Iran:
Such is the counsel of the wise. Enough [." [\[131\]](#)

Human disagreed with Piran's strategy of delay. He contended that Tus' relatively large army, were it to escape the Turanians, would eventually join up with the forces of Kaykhusrau. The leadership of Kaykhus-rau's army would undoubtedly be given to Rustam. Since a large portion of that future foe was trapped in a distressful predicament, why allow it to escape? We must find Tus' army and annihilate it, Human argued:

Be sure of this,
That they were forced to flee and once for all
Show us their backs. We will not let them reach
Khusrau and muster at his court afresh;
Then from Zabulistan will Rustam march
Upon us, this delay cause [sic] fearful loss.
Now is the time for me to fall on them, [\[132\]](#)
And put in practice ruse and artifice [.]

Piran gave in. He told Human to use his own judgment and treat the defeated Iranian army as he saw fit. In time, Human found Tus' army and led Piran's forces to it. When the combined forces of Human and Piran faced the numerically inferior troops of Tus, Piran tried to convince Tus of the futility of his resistance, especially since the house of Gudarz had lost all its warriors. "The enmity between Iran and Turan," Tus responded, "would not have existed if Siyavosh had not been brutally murdered in Turan. The end of this war is nowhere in sight." He informed Piran that he had sent word to the shah of Iran. And that an army has already been assembled, commanded by Rustam. "When it arrives," Tus bluffed, "nothing will remain of Turan but its name."

Tus' predicament, however, was unique. His troops had been forced up a mountain, while the surrounding country-side teamed with enemy troops. It was only a matter of days, according to Piran, before short-ages would force them to either surrender or die. Tus, however, mounted a two-pronged strategy to dislodge his forces. First he attacked the Turanians at night and refurbished his army's dwindling supplies. Secondly, he sent a letter to the shah and asked for reinforcements:

Assuredly my speedy camel-post
Hath reached ere now the monarch of the world.
My letter will inflame his heart anew,
The elephantine chief will come to aid us, [\[133\]](#)
And with a noble company of Lions.

When the news of Tus' second defeat reached Kaykhus-rau and he was informed that the army had been forced to move to the Hamavan mountains for protection, he dispatched a delegation of Iranian nobles to Kabulistan to summon the mighty Rustam to the court. When Rustam arrived, the shah praised him as the protector of the Iranian crown, the killer of the [White Demon](#), and the Rider of Rakhsh. He then mentioned Tus' defeat and the great loss that the demise of the Gudarz warriors meant to the Iranian army. He asked for the champion's help.

Rustam returned the shah's kind words with similar praises. He told the shah that he, Rustam, had always been a protector of Iranian lands and that he had proved his allegiance to Iran by fighting in numerous wars against the enemies of Iran in both Turan and Mazandaran:

Thou art the world's king, and a slave am I
Girt to perform thy hests. Let not the Shah
Grieve for the slain, but let thy foes look wan.
With belted waist will I draw near to Tus,
And gird me to avenge the Iranians,
For liver-wounded have I been and girt [\[134\]](#)
With mourning for the scions of Gudarz.

Rustam's words pleased the shah greatly. He asked the royal treasurer to open the treasury to the champion so that he could take as much money as he needed. He then asked Rustam to lead the warriors of Zabulistan and Kabulistan along with 30,000 Iranian troops and reach Tus at the Hamavan range as soon as possible. He further asked Rustam to assign the command of the army to Fariburz, Kayka'us' son, so that the prince could avenge the wrong that had been done to the house of Kayka'us by the Turanians.

On the Turanian side, Piran mobilized his army and brought them to the foot of the mountain. Rather than following Human's advice and attack the Iranian army, however, he continued his own strategy of delay. The experienced commander thought that time was on his side and that the Iranians would not last long on the mountain without provisions:

Since without your fighting
The foe will come to hand, why change delay
For haste? Why should we fight? Ten horse will serve
As scouts upon the plain. Wait we until
Our foes lack food and drink, and ask for quarter.
Unless they can subsist on thorns and flints
When provand faileth they will take to them

[\[135\]](#)

And die.

The Hamavan encounter was Iran's first confrontation with an "international" force. The Turanian army besieging the Iranian troops consisted of warriors from China (Chin), India, and the Kushan lands (Transoxania), as well as from Rum and Saqlab (Slavic lands). People from all the countries bordering on Turan had come to the aid of Afrasiyab :

Troops throng from every side—a host whose dust
 Would make a desert of the sea of Chin
 Upon the battle-day. A chief is there
 From Ma wara 'u'n-Nahr; his head is raised
 O'er circling heaven; a hundred lions' strength
 Is his; he quelleth mighty elephants!
 In height a cypress and in looks a moon,
 A potentate whose toys are crowns and thrones,
 Kamus, this chief of chiefs, will have his will
 Upon Gudarz and Tus. The troops comprise
 All those that dwell 'twixt Sipanjab and Rum.
 I reckon first the Khan of Chin, whose crown

[\[136\]](#)

Is heaven, his throne the earth [.]

Piran is one of the most interesting characters of the *Shahname*. He is a Turanian whose loyalty to Afrasiyab cannot be questioned. He has his own sphere of influence, Khutan, and his own army. Despite all he had received from Afrasiyab, however, Piran is partial towards the Iranians. He married his daughter to Siyavosh, and aided Kaykhusrau, the enemy of Turan to escape.

As the numbers of Afrasiyab's allies swelled and other commanders, mostly monarchs, came to the front, Piran's role became less and less prominent. But still the combined forces followed his behests. The experienced warrior effectively held the various participating armies at arm's length. He discussed other commanders' strategies at the assemblies but, in his heart, he was devoted to the strategy of delay. "The Iranians would either give up and surrender or die of starvation," he thought. "And, in either case, the greater army, while necessary to frighten the Iranians and confine them to the mountain heights, will not have to fight directly." The thought of winning a victory without a fight pleased him:

I will go forth
 To meet them. They have had a longsome march,
 Equipped for fight and full of care. They hold
 Their heads as high as doth Afrasiyab,
 For they have treasure, lustre, throne, and state.
 I will go forth and see what men they are,
 How many, with what chiefs and warriors,
 Will do obeisance to the Khan of Chin,
 And kiss the ground before his throne withal:
 I will behold Kamus, the exalted one,
 And find Tus an opponent in Shangul.
 Returning hither I will gird myself
 To rob the Iranians of the breath of life,
 And, if they cannot hold their own, will make

[\[137\]](#)

Day dark and strait to them [.]

Furthermore, Piran knew well that the war with Iran was not to be confused with the battle with Tus. As soon as he had settled the matter of Tus' surrender or demise, Piran intended to proceed with the greater war. Toward this end, he had planned to divide the combined forces into three divisions, each with a specific mission. The first contingent should go to Balkh and capture that region. The next should go to Kabulistan and Zabulistan, the kingdom of Rustam, and reduce that domain to submission to Afrasiyab. The third contingent, led by Piran himself, he thought, should head for the heartland of Iran. This contingent would include the best Turanian warriors.

The division of the army and the deployment of three or four major armies, each with a particular aim, were practiced by both Iran and Turan. Through their many spies, both kings were informed of each other's gains and losses. Periodically, they even informed their commanders in the field of such gains. This kind of information, they thought, encouraged the commanders to enhance their own prestige by adding to the king's domain.

Having thus resolved the problem of the lesser and greater encounters with Iran, Piran visited each of the kings who had accompanied their forces to Hamavan. He explained his strategies for resolving the war and answered their questions about the strength of the Iranian host, the number and identity of its paladins, and so forth.

In ancient times, armies did not have the entertainment facilities of the medieval and contemporary armies. They spent their free time celebrating a victory or, in the case of a defeat, licking their wounds while ruminating about the future. They were greatly concerned with their destiny, especially when they were placed between a rock and a hard place, as was Tus' army at this time. The morale of every force, therefore, depended on the strength of character of its commander-in-chief and of the paladins who served him. If the commander-in-chief was weak, the champions chided him in private.

Religion played a pivotal role in these wars and the Creator, the One on Whose behalf the war was being waged, was repeatedly asked for aid. Indeed, it was part of the duty of the *mu'bad*s to remind the troops of the Creator's good will and to dispel pessimism propagated by Ahriman.

The Iranian army was increasingly plagued by pessimism. Tus, the commander-in-chief, sank into depression. He thought that the Iranian army was doomed. Only Rustam, he admitted, could save Iran. Giv, on the other hand, was not as pessimistic. He argued that Iran worshipped Yazdan and enjoyed the full protection of the king. "Rustam will arrive," Giv said, "and with the help of God, evil will be chased away":

Giv said to Tus: "O general of the Shah
 What aileth thee to think upon mishap?
 We need not look for ill; God is thy Helper;
 We are His worshippers, and have broadcast
 Much seed of good. Such fortune hath the Shah,
 The lord of scimitar and throne and crown,
 That God will not withdraw His help from us,
 And leave our enemies to work their will.
 With Rustam's coming all our soldiers' cares
 Will end. Let no man cease to trust in God
 Though day should turn to night. Let not thy heart

Be straitened needlessly because our foes
 Forbear to fight one day: they have not shut
 Heaven's door on us. Fear not the foe's designs.
 If God most high ordaineth loss for us

Quit vain imaginings for come it will [.] [\[138\]](#)

As the forces from the surrounding kingdoms converged around the mountain, the Iranian commanders began to de-spair. It was obvi-ous that, given their strategic situation and their numbers, there was little hope of leaving the mountain stronghold alive. One night, Tus as-ssembled his warriors and gave his last speech. "We shall attack the Tu-ranian army tonight," he concluded, "and we shall fight to the death."

Their gloom, however, was soon transformed to joy; news came from the scouts that an Iranian army, headed by Fariburz, Kayka'us' son, had just come into view and would reach Hamavan early the next day. With this addition, the ranks of the Iranian army swelled. Piran remained in the Chinese camp until the Khaqan's army was ready to move in the direction of the Hamavan range. Then, accompanied by Kamus and the other kings, Piran came to the battlefield. The Iranian army faced them in full strength.

The Khaqan did not mask his displeasure upon seeing the Iranians. He rebuked Piran for having underes-timated the strength of the en-emy. "The Iranian army before us," he said to Piran, "is not the mis-erable bunch of which you spoke. It is a force to be reckoned with":

[B]ut when the Khan afar
 Looked forth and heard the Iranian horsemen's war-cry
 It pleased him and he said: "Behold a host
 Of men-o'erthrowing, warlike cavaliers!
 Piran the chieftain told us otherwise,
 But brave men's qualities should not be hidden.
 The chieftain masketh the pit's mouth with brambles,
 And thither will his horse speed at the chase.
 What better is it vainly to besmirch
 The foemen's prowess on the day of fight?
 I have not looked on cavaliers and chiefs

So stamped with chivalry and manliness." [\[139\]](#)

The command structure of the Turanian army was more complex than that of Tus. This was due to the participation of the many kings that Afrasiyab had summoned from the surrounding domains to assist Piran in battle.

Afrasiyab, the supreme ruler, occupied the highest level of the structure. He was not to be seen. The supreme com-man-der of the fighting forces in the field was the Khaqan of China, who commanded the largest army. Following the Khaqan in strength was Kamus the Kushan. He commanded the Kushani or Transoxanian army. He was a paladin him-self and sought to gain fame by fighting the strongest pal-adin Iran could field. Below Kamus was Shangol, the king of India and commander of the Indian forces. He wished to re-capture the lands that had recently been lost to his west.

Below the supreme command were the national cham-pi-ons. Piran ranked first among this group. He not only com-manded his own forces (the forces of Khutan), but also as-signed Afrasiyab's champions to positions of responsibility.

In order for the Iranians to win this war, they had to de-feat Piran and the forces of Afrasiyab. Before that, however, at least in Piran's stratagem, they had to eliminate Shangol, Kamus, and the Khaqan of China. Only the defeat of Piran would force Afrasiyab to emerge as the supreme leader of Turan and the adversary to be anni-hilated.

Piran, although overtly identified as the commander-in-chief of Turan, was actually a relatively low-ranking official. His status and lack of authority in the expanded army is revealed gradually. Indeed, were it not due to his close relationship with Afrasiyab, he would not have enjoyed the assignments he received or attend to the important, and sometimes difficult, tasks that he managed.

When the combined forces of Turan and the reinforced army of Iran faced each other, the Khaqan asked Piran to dis-close his plan of attack. "I intend," said Piran, "to give the sol-diers a three-day respite to ward off the fatigue of the long march to Hamavan. Then I intend to divide them into three divisions and field one division at a time, giving the other two rest, until the enemy falls. With this tactic, I shall have the Irani-ans surrender in a day and a half."

The Khaqan did not approve of this plan. Kamus then suggested an alternate plan. He proposed to as-semble all the armies in one place and unleash their full power upon the Iranian army. He further proposed the attack to be under-taken immediately so that the Iranians would not have a chance to integrate their rein-forcements into their ranks be-fore deploy-ment. "This strategy," Kamus claimed, "would take the Iranians by surprise and defeat them within a day." Kamus' plan was accepted and the Turanian commanders prepared for their fi-nal assault on Mount Hamavan.

Firdowski is very keen on etiquette and protocol. Of-ten he spends many *bayts*, putting a dialogue in its proper per-spective so that all the requirements of the culture are met. A good example of Firdowski's care occurs here, when Gudarz welcomes Fariburz, the king's son, and a paladin sent with the fast-moving rein-forcement contingent in ad-vance of Rustam's slower-paced army. The burning ques-tion is whether Rustam is on the way or whether the army that Fariburz has brought is the entire reinforcement army. Were Gudarz to ask the question straight out, it would be an insult to the person and the army of the prince. So Gudarz impro-vised. He enumerated the large number of divisions and the mighty men that commanded the Turanian army. The prince consoled the aged warrior by enumerating those who would fight on the side of Iran—among them, Rustam.

It became known only gradually that Rustam had been assigned the supreme command, making him the counterpart to the Khaqan of China, and that he had issued directives to the effect that all fighting must stop until he reached Hamavan:

Gudarz made answer: "What did Rustam say?
 His words should be reported." Fariburz
 Replied: "Illustrious one! the peerless Rustam
 Bade us not fight. 'Stay on the field,' he said.
 'Ye must not show yourselves before the host,
 But take your ease until my flag appeareth.'"
 Then Fariburz, Gudarz in company,

Marched toward Mount Hamawan right speedily. [\[140\]](#)

A new assessment of the Iranian forces threw more doubt on Pi-ran's capabilities. His esteem at the Khaqan's court reached a low ebb, and his strategy of delay came under heavy criticism by Kamus the Kushan. Once Piran's duties were relegated to Kamus, the latter openly rebuked Piran for having procrasti-nated and thereby jeopar-dized the lives of many kings, com-manders, and people. "For five months," said Kamus, "you had the mighty army of Afrasiyab at your command to subdue a rag-tag band of Iranians. What hap-pened? I per-sonally am not afraid of either the large army of Kabul, Zabul, May, India, or that of Rustam," Kamus continued. "Indeed, Rustam is the first on my list of champi-ons to annihilate":

Kamus said: "Keep thyself to thine own force.
 Thou hast the warriors of Afrasiyab—
 An army like the waters of the sea—
 Yet what hast thou accomplished in five months
 Against a foe so small? Now that the earth
 Is full of troops led by the Khan, Manshur,
 And me, let us display our prowess; thou
 Hast locked the door but we will bring the key.
 Although the world's face be as silk of Chin
 With soldiers from Kabul, Zabul, and Hind,
 Yet, should I fight alone, the Iranians
 Were nothing. Thou wilt say of them: 'They are not.'
 Thou wouldst scare me with illustrious Rustam;
 Him will I slaughter first; if once I catch him
 His name shall not be talked of any more. [""] [\[141\]](#)

Piran thanked Kamus for his graciousness and wished him well. Only then the Khaqan of China, who had thus far ignored Piran, addressed the aged warrior. "You should not have praised the enemy," he said to Pi-ran in protest. "Nevertheless," the Khaqan continued, "I reaffirm Kamus' pledge to defeat Iran and send all the captured Iranian nobles to Afrasiyab for punishment." Piran thanked the Khaqan as well and returned to his own camp.

Piran was obsessed with the idea that the Turanian army, irrespective of its size and of the might of the monarchs and commanders that contributed to its strength, was a match for the Iranian army only if Rustam were not a part of the latter army. Whenever he expressed happiness at Rustam's absence, however, he was ridiculed. The appearance of Fariburz instead of Rustam elated Piran, a pleasure that he could not hide. Others in the Turanian camp did not share his opinion:

Why this grief? What need is there
 To weep because of Rustam or of Tus?
 With all our soldiers, maces, elephants,
 And scimitars we block the wind itself.
 Why fear then Rustam, Tus, and Kai Khusrau?
 What are the Iranians but as dust to us? [\[142\]](#)

Piran, however, did not learn his lesson. Hearing that Rustam's black pavilion was pitched among the tents of the Iranian army and that Tus and Gudarz had been entertained by the national champion, he despaired. Ignoring the many paladins surrounding the Khaqan, he made his paranoia about Rustam apparent. The assembly, especially Kamus, was not impressed. "I shall not despair," said Kamus, "even if Kaykhusrau himself entered the battlefield. I am a mighty warrior. Neither Rustam nor his Zabuli warriors frighten me. As for you, Pi-ran," Kamus concluded, "you must control yourself. Return to your camp and prepare your men for war":

"O wise one!" said Kamus,
 "Thy heart produceth naught but ill surmise.
 Know thou that Kai Khusrau hath come to war,
 But do not therefore vex thy heart in vain.
 Why harp so much on Rustam? Name no more
 Zabulistan. If he beholdeth me
 With flag in hand his heart will mourn at fight.
 Go thou, array the host, lead forth the troops,
 And bring the standards to the battlefield.
 When I go forth to combat with the host
 Ye must not loiter. Now shalt thou behold
 The combating of men. The wilderness
 Shall be a sea of blood." [\[143\]](#)

In the Iranian epic, the horse plays a major part. At times the very life of a paladin depends on the intelligence of his steed. For instance, Farud saved himself a confrontation with Tus, a confrontation that might have ended his life sooner, by obliging the champion to fight on foot—an act forbidden by monarchic tradition. Similarly, Siyavosh, when he was convinced that his death was imminent, talked to Shabdiz and instructed the horse to obey only Kaykhusrau and lead him to the kingship of Iran.

Rakhsh, Rustam's famous mount, figures prominently in many episodes of the *Shahname*. At this juncture, Rustam used him as part of his strategy to surprise the enemy. Concealing Rakhsh and, thereby, his own identity, Rustam persuaded paladins like Kamus and Shangol to enter the battle on their own to be killed. This is how Rustam's ruse was set up.

Rustam told Tus and other champions that he intended to rest Rakhsh for a day—the first day of battle—so that the animal could ward off the fatigue of having run twice his usual distance. Since it would be impossible to command without a horse, Tus was appointed commander at center. Fariburz and Gudarz were placed on Tus' right and left respectively. The Turanian army had a similar arrangement with the Khaqan at center and Kamus and Piran on the right and the left wings, respectively.

Rustam's strategy worked. The war began with the customary challenges and counter challenges. Finally, a Turanian champion, [Ashkbus](#), challenged the Iranians. Rustam gained Tus' permission to respond to the challenge and walked into the center. His appearance confused the enemy. Without Rakhsh, no one knew who he was or where he hailed from. Seeing Rustam on foot before him, Ashkbus laughed and asked the champion's name. Rustam did not identify himself. He merely said that Tus had sent him to the battlefield to take Ashkbus' horse and to teach him a lesson in fighting on foot. The Kushani was not at all convinced that Rustam could defeat him with only a bow and arrows. He sped his horse to run Rustam down. Rustam shot Ashkbus' horse dead with his first arrow. The Kushani then realized the power of Rustam's arm. He got up quickly and showered Rustam with arrows. Rustam shot through Ashkbus' coat of mail and killed him instantly.

Kamus and the Khaqan watched the combat closely and, as soon as Rustam left the field, inspected Rustam's arrow, which was larger than any they had seen. It resembled a spear. Once again Khaqan rebuked Pi-ran for having given him false information on the strength of the Iranian fighting men:

The Khan's heart aged
 When he beheld the feathers and the point.
 He spake thus to Piran: "Who is this man?
 What is his name among the Iranian chiefs?
 'They are a paltry remnant,' were thy words,
 'Not on a par with men of high degree.'
 Whereas their arrows are like spears! A mountain
 Hath little heart to fight them; thou didst make

The matter small indeed, but thine account

Was false throughout!" [\[144\]](#)

Piran expressed his astonishment. He said that he did not know of anyone in the Iranian army who could pass an arrow through a tree. Giv and Tus are indeed great warriors, Piran admitted, but they are nowhere near the warrior who had just left the field. In spite of Piran's equivocation, Kamus knew well that the mysterious warrior was Rustam. "Could this mysterious paladin be the same Sagzi [\[145\]](#) of whom you have frightened us to death?" Kamus asked Piran sarcastically:

[H]e surely is the warrior,
The man of Sigz, of whom thou speakest oft,
And he hath come upon the field afoot,
Come to give succour to the Iranian host. [\[146\]](#)

"Who is this Sagzi?" Kamus wanted to know. "What does he look like? What words does he use in his opening statement on the day of battle? What tactics must I know were I to face this Rustam?"

"For your sake," said Piran, "I hope you will never have to face the Sagzi. On many occasions, even Afrasiyab has had difficulty coping with him. [\[147\]](#) He is Iran's national hero, devoted entirely to Kaykhusrau. He is quick in reaching for the sword and fights to avenge Siyavosh whom he had brought up like a son and whom Afrasiyab had killed." Piran then described Rakhsh, Rustam's famous steed, and detailed the arsenal of weapons that the paladin uses in combat. After hearing this, Kamus swore before the Khaqan and the rest of the champions that he would not take the saddle off Bur, his steed, until Rustam was dead.

Late in the day, a meeting was held in the Khaqan's pavilion. All the warriors including Kamus, Man-shur, Fartus, Shamiran from Shoghn, and Shangol from India, as well as the commander of the Slavic domains and the king of Sind were in attendance. They talked until late into the night about Iran and about the forthcoming battle. They decided that they had no option but to fight to the last man.

In the morning, before the armies faced each other, the Khaqan advised the other commanders to ignore Piran and overwhelm the Iranians. The warriors paid homage to the Khaqan and proclaimed him the ruler of China and of Turan.

On the Iranian side, Rustam assembled his warriors and told them that despite their previous losses under Tus, the Iranian army was still a major fighting force. He reminded them that they were fighting for Kaykhusrau and that, at the end of the war, much fame and fortune awaited them.

The two armies then put their commands in order. On the Turanian side the Khaqan assumed the command at the center. Kamus led the right and Hind the left wings. On the Iranian side, Fariburz assumed the command of the left and Pur-i Kishwad the command of the right wing. Tus remained in the center as the commander of the whole army.

Rustam's strategy for singling out the major leaders and killing them off one by one worked. He expected the major challenge to come from Turan. It did. Kamus rode out the next day and challenged the mysterious paladin. Rustam walked out into the open carrying a heavy mace and a noose.

The two exchanged routine opening statements and engaged each other in single combat. Kamus reached for his sword to decapitate Rustam but failed. Rustam, on the other hand, caught the Turanian's midsection in his noose. Kamus struggled to free himself but, after a while, he lost consciousness and fell off his horse.

Rustam then tied Kamus' hands up and brought him to the Iranian camp. He threw Kamus at the feet of the Iranian warriors and told them they could do with him anything they pleased. "What I wish you not to forget when dealing with this man," said Rustam, "is that he had intended to destroy not only Iran but also Kabulistan and Zabulistan." He intended to kill Rustam.

The Iranians tore Kamus' body to pieces.

The Khaqan of China

With the death of Kamus, the Turanian army was plunged into disarray. No one believed that the Kushani champion could be eliminated so easily. Questions regarding the identity of the mysterious paladin were on every tongue. The Khaqan was warned that the Turanians would refuse to fight as long as the Iranian paladin's identity was not known.

As Rustam's strategy continued to work for Iran, chaos plagued the Turanian ranks. The Khaqan took it upon himself to learn the identity of the paladin by sending his best champion, Changosh, to the battle-field. But Changosh faced the same fate as Kamus, and the identity of the Iranian champion remained a mystery.

When direct action failed, the Turanians used other tactics. Human visited Rustam in disguise and tried to identify the mysterious paladin by leading him through a maze of questions, the answers to some of which could reveal the identity of the champion. But this, too, did not help. The conversation, however, was not totally fruitless. Human learned the reasons for the Iranian champion's crusade. "The murder of Siyavosh," Rustam said, "is the main reason for the war between Iran and Turan. I seek the instigators of the death of Siyavosh and the perpetrators who have dragged others, especially the house of Gudarz, into this bloodbath. Give up the murderers of Siyavosh and the men and property that he brought to Turan and I shall cease hostility against Turan. I will even go so far as to convince the king, Kaykhusrau, to forgive and forget his vengeance against Turan."

When Rustam named those whom he wanted the Turanians to turn over to the Iranians, Human paled. They were Garsivaz, the main cause of the bloodshed; Guru-ye Zereh and his son; the house of [Visesh](#), which included Human, Lahhak, [Farshidvard](#), Kulbad, and Nastihan. "If you deliver these individuals to me," Rustam said, "I shall cease hostility against your people and your nation; you will no longer need to wear your armor. But if you refuse, you will receive more of the same treatment."

Rustam's words shook Human who recognized his own family identified as the cause of the hostilities between the two peoples. "With such power and greatness," Human asked Rustam, "why are you a mere champion? You could easily be the king of Iran." But neither such flattery, nor Human's false identity as a king tired of battle, convinced Rustam to identify himself.

"Forget about my identity," Rustam replied firmly. "Inform the Turanians about my demands. More than anyone else, Piran carries the burden of the death of Siyavosh," Rustam continued. "Send Piran to me. Together, we might find a solution."

"I have no doubt," said Human when he met Piran and the Turanian champions, "that the Iranian champion is Rustam of Zabul. He spoke eloquently about his grievances and listed his complaints. I was first on the list of those whom he recognized as the contributors to the downfall and death of Siyavosh. He also mentioned Piran, the Visesh champions, and all those who have, at one point or another, harmed Iran. However," Human concluded, "Piran is the only one of whom he did not speak ill. Indeed, he asked that Piran go to him and, possibly, bring this battle to an end. It behooves Piran to ride there and talk to him. He will stay in the field until they meet." "When there," Human addressed Piran directly, "do not anger him. Speak quietly and stay on the side of caution."

Piran regarded the appearance of Rustam in the war as a bad omen and warned Human of the calamity that Rustam could bring on Turanian lands. Then, rather than going to Rustam forthwith, he went to the Khaqan of China to apprise him of this new development.

The Khaqan knew little about Rustam, so Piran told him how Rustam, the Lord of Zabul, had nurtured Siyavosh, how he regarded Siyavosh as a son for whose revenge he was ready to sacrifice all. "I am going to talk to him," said Piran, "and see what the future brings."

The Khaqan encouraged Piran to face up to Rustam. "If the cham-pion is willing to forego the war," the Khaqan said, "ask for plenty of war damages. If, on the other hand, he seeks re-venge, we shall give battle and we shall make his life miser-able. After all, he is a mortal, and all mortals die. Besides, for every man in the Iranian army, we have three hundred," said the Khaqan with pride. "I will fight him per-sonally and show him what a warrior upon an elephant can do."

When they met, Rustam introduced himself as Rustam of Zabul. He then saluted Piran both in the name of Kaykhusrau (*xorshid-i rowshan ravan*) and of the king's mother, the daughter of Afrasiyab (*dokht-i Afrasiyab*).

Piran returned the salutations with appropriate mentions of [Zavareh](#), Faramarz, and Zal. "I know," said Piran, "that you loved Siyavosh like a son. I loved him the same way. He was my son-in-law. I hid Kaykhus-rau and his mother in my house against the will of my king. I made their escape to Iran pos-sible. But I am an unfortunate man, trapped between two mighty lords. I cannot abandon Afrasiyab. He has given me gold, land, and animals. I have a son and many daugh-ters to consider. When Afrasiyab orders me to fight, I have no al-terna-tive but to follow his orders. As for myself," Piran continued, "I would rather see the war end. I do not say this because I like to safeguard my wealth, but be-cause I do not wish to see the army of Iran killed atop that mountain by the tremendous force that awaits it. We have gathered warriors from Kushan and the Slavic lands as well as from Shoghn and India. Our ranks cover the land from where we stand all the way to the Great Sea [Indian Ocean]. I advise you to think the matter over and do what is in the best interest of yourself, your king, and your warriors."

Piran's words did not strike Rustam favorably. "I con-sid-ered you an upright Turanian," Rustam said. "Besides, I thought you would ap-preciate my solution for ceasing hos-tili-ties. We are talking about a mur-dered king. If you wish the hostility to be settled with bows and ar-rows, so be it! Before that, however, let me reiterate my solu-tion. I request that the Turanian leadership deliver to Iran all those who plot-ted the murder of Siyavosh and who were re-sponsible for the subse-quent bloodshed. Furthermore, I re-quest that you your-self sever your ties with Turan and ac-company me to the court of Kaykhusrau. I am sure that my liege will give you ten times the trea-sure, land and ani-mals that you leave behind in Turan."

Piran pondered his situation for a while. He then re-spond-ed that he needed to consult with Manshur, Shangol, and the Khaqan of China be-fore he could give an answer. "Besides," Piran said, "I should send a messenger to Afra-siyab and ap-prise him of your demands."

When Piran returned, he assembled the warriors of the house of Viseh and briefed them. "What Rustam wants," Piran said, "is those who were responsible for the death of Siyavosh. Looking around me here, I don't see anyone who, in one way or another, is not in-volved in the war and the reasons for it. The Irani-ans might just as well ask for us all."

In the camp of the Khaqan, Piran was met by the armies of Kushan, seeking revenge for the death of Kamus. They de-manded that Afrasiyab, the perpetrator of the calamity, show himself and fight like a man in the war he had created, rather than hide in his palace and is-sue orders. "We shall gather an army," they said, "of Kushanis, Chi-nese Buzgush, Sagsar, and Mazandaran; we shall set fire to Sistan; we shall hang Rustam of Zabul and see his family mourn for him as we mourn our fallen warrior. We shall burn Rustam's body and scatter his ashes to the wind. But first give us Afra-siyab!"

Once again, Piran lamented that his army should face a pal-adin like Rustam. He despaired. Shangol, the king of India, saw things differ-ently: "We have traversed long dis-tances," he said, "to help Afrasiyab, and we have benefited greatly as a re-sult. It is not becom-ing that we should fear a Sagzi. We should not confuse the lot of Kamus with the outcome of the war. Kamus' days ended not because of the prowess of this Sagzi, but because God had allowed him only that much life. I suggest that we invade and surprise the Ira-nians. We have one hundred thousand more troops than they do. How can one man con-tend with a force of that magni-tude? I shall fight Rustam per-sonally."

In the Iranian camp, Rustam gathered his warriors (Tus, Ruhham, Gudarz, Giv, Fariburz, Gustaham, Kharrad, Gurgin, and Bizhan), along with his learned men and *mu'bad*s. He briefed the gathering about his meeting with Piran and praised the aged warrior for his up-right stance in all affairs. Rustam further detailed the help that Piran had extended to the king and his mother when they were in Turan and hoped that he would not have to kill the aged warrior with his own hands. "As long as they deliver the individuals in-volved and the trea-sures that were taken to Turan, we shall be satisfied," he said.

Gudarz disagreed. He explained how, on a different oc-ca-sion Piran had worn the same disguise and promised to re-turn to his army and bring an end to hostilities. "Instead," Gudarz said, "Piran sent word to Afrasiyab and asked for re-in-forcements. Piran is as much a friend of Iran today as he was when he told us that he was planning to abandon Afrasiyab and come to live at the court of Kaykhusrau. Isn't Piran the one who entombed the house of Gudarz?"

Rustam agreed with Gudarz that Piran would never be a friend of Iran, but could not disregard Piran's services for the king. "How-ever," Rustam concluded, "were he to double cross us this time, he will re-ceive his due. I shall not hesitate to cut him down my-self":

Said Rustam: "Be thy words
And wisdom wedded. He is as thou sayest.
We and that old man differ, 'tis no secret;
But, in as much as he hath done us good,
I would not fight him to the bitter end.
Remember how he acted toward the Shah,
And how he mourned the fate of Siyavush.
If he should break his word and set on us
I have my lasso at my saddle-straps
To take fierce Elephants. But I will fancy
No ill at first; we may escape a conflict;
But, if he should be faithless, he shall find
[\[148\]](#)
The outcome pain and grief."

In the morning, the drums sounded in front of Tus' tent, and the army was mobilized. Rustam appeared in full ar-mour. The son of Kishwad took the right wing, Fariburz the left, and Tus stood at the center. Rus-tam took the leading position.

The Turanians took up a similar arrangement: the Khaqan with his elephants provided a solid center; Kundor with thirty thou-sand war-riors carrying javelins took the right, and Gahhar with anoth-er thirty thou-sand troops carrying bows, arrows, and Chinese shields took the left. Piran, leading the army, reminded Shangol of his vow to fight Rustam and avenge the death of Kamus. The war began.

Piran's main concern was Human, his brother, whom he did not wish to be seen by the Iranian champion. With two thousand war-riors, he assigned Human the rear center, behind the Khaqan and his ele-phants. He then rode to Rustam, praised the champion and wished him well. "I apprised my chiefs of your proposal," he said, "and am sor-ry to say that I found compromise difficult. Treasures and valu-ables they could give up. But they would not discuss delivering people. Those you name are the relatives of the king; there is no way that relatives of the king could be de-livered to the enemy. Further-more, matters are no longer in Turanian hands. People from all confines of the earth (China, the Slavic lands, and Khuttalan) have assembled here to aid Afrasiyab. War with Afrasiyab, I have come to tell you, is im-minent. Shangol, the king of India, offers the first chal-lenge."

Rustam listened patiently. He expressed his disappoint-ment at Piran, adding that Kaykhusrau, the king of the world, had warned him of such a ruse. Explaining that he had tried to give Piran the benefit of the doubt, he told how the aged Gudarz had also spoken against him. "I see now that they both were right," Rustam said. "You are a liar. You have lived a miserable life, and more is yet to befall you. I in-vided you to splendor and to a meaningful life at the court of the young king. You chose to remain in the plains among the lowly. You deserve what you have."

Piran paid his respects to Rustam and left. Rustam then ad-dressed his commanders:

"My loins are girt for battle, be it yours
 To think but of revenge, and let each warrior
 frown, for no small strife fronteth us to-day,
 But one that will appraise both wolf and sheep.
 The reader of the stars hath said to me:—
 'My heart is troubled by this coming fight;
 'Twill be betwixt two mountains, troops in mass
 Will bathe the world in blood, the veteran chiefs
 Will gather, and the strife unman the world;
 Then feud will cease to stalk, the steel mace grow
 Like wax.' Have no misgivings, whosoe'er
 May come to fight with me, for I will bind
 His hands within the twisted lasso's coils

Although the starry heavens be his ally [.] [\[149\]](#)

Shangol moved to position in front of the Turanian army and challenged Rustam. Rustam felt relieved that a stranger had challenged him. "I shall," Rustam said, "route the armies of India and the Slavic lands, and I shall destroy the might of Turan." He then rode Rakhsh close to Shangol and identified himself to the Indian king as Rustam of Zabul. He re-proached Shangol for referring to him as the Sagzi and not calling him by his given name. He then attacked Shangol with his javelin, lifting the king from his horse and throwing him to the ground. Shangol was stunned for a moment, but quickly reached for his horse and escaped.

The brief encounter with Rustam changed Shangol's attitude. He advised the Khaqan that the Iranian paladin was too strong to be faced alone. "A whole contingent must surround him and do away with him," he said.

"Do I recall a speech very different from what I hear?" said the Khaqan sarcastically. He then ordered the full force under his command to attack Rustam and kill him.

Swarms of enemy troops surrounded Rustam who was, in turn, surrounded by the Iranian troops for protection. Urging his cohorts to fight bravely, the struggling champion attacked and killed Savah, a relative of Kamus who carried the Turanian banner. The banner of the Kushans fell into the hands of the Iranians. Rustam then headed for Gahhar on the left wing. Gahhar fled to the center to take refuge with the Khaqan. Rustam pursued him relentlessly and killed him. The Turanian black banner, too, fell into the hands of the Iranians.

With both wings of the enemy's army destroyed, Rustam took a hundred experienced warriors and headed for the center. He cut his way through until he reached the Khaqan's white elephant. The Khaqan, realizing that defeat was imminent and that he had lost both of his wings, sued for peace. Rustam refused. The Khaqan agreed to withdraw to China and leave all that he commanded outside the borders of China to the Iranians. Still, Rustam refused and continued the fight. Finally, Rustam put his noose around the Khaqan's neck and dragged him off his white elephant. The fall of the Khaqan was the beginning of the end for the army of Chin. The troops dropped their weapons and surrendered. Deprived of all his might and glory, the Khaqan was forced to walk among the prisoners as the army marched to Tus' headquarters on the Shahd River:

[Rustam] flung the lasso coiled and took the heads
 Of cavaliers, neared that white elephant,
 And then the Khan of Chin grown desperate,
 Smote with the goad the creature's head and, roaring
 Like thunder in the month of Farwardin,
 Took and hurled forth at Rustam deft of hand
 A double-headed battle-dart in hope
 To worst him and to take his noble head;
 But Rustam, scathless, flung his lasso high,
 Dragged from his elephant the Khan of Chin
 Noosed by the neck, and dashed him to the ground,
 Where others bound his hands and drove him on
 Toward the Shahd afoot without his crown,
 His litter, throne, or elephant, and there

They made him over to the guards of Tus [.] [\[150\]](#)

After the defeat of Kamus, Manshur, Shangol, and the Khaqan of China, Piran whisked his champions off the battlefield into uncharted territory known only to him. Rustam, unhappy about the flight of the very instigators of the murder of Siyavosh, chided Tus for allowing the enemy to flee. He sent search parties in pursuit of the Turanians, but the searchers returned empty-handed. "With the house of Viseh still standing," Rustam told his champions, "Afrasiyab remains a mighty force. He has the army of Khutan to aid him. We must apprise the king of our progress and ask for direction."

Rustam chose Fariburz, Kayka'us' son, to accompany a letter and the booty they had won back to Iran. In the letter, Rustam explained the situation in which he found Tus' command at Hamavan and the forty days of war that had ensued.

The king received the news with delight. He praised the creator and cautioned Rustam against the ruses of the enemy. "Before long," Kaykhusrau warned, "the Turanians will re-group and reappear on the battlefield. Be forewarned, therefore. As long as Afrasiyab lives, Iran cannot be altogether tranquil."

On the Turanian side, Afrasiyab was informed of the defeat of Kamus, Manshur, and the Khaqan of China. He assembled his council of ministers and his warriors, and spoke, as Piran would, about Rustam and the ominous future that awaited Turan. The council did not agree. It argued that only the Slavs and the Chinese had fielded their men and had lost. "Turan," they said, "had remained as invincible as it had ever been. Afrasiyab, the council decreed, should open his treasures to the army and recruit as many troops as possible for a final encounter with the Iranians." Afrasiyab agreed.

Meanwhile, Fariburz returned from Iran and presented Rustam with a diadem and a decree for the rulership of the new lands. Rustam, the Lord of Khutan and Chin, de-camped and traveled to Sughd where he stayed for two weeks. From there he sent Giv and ten thousand warriors to scout the border of Khutan and insure that the Turanians would not re-assemble there.

The battle at Hamavan is one of the decisive battles in the *Shah-name*. In the course of this battle, Afrasiyab lost the greater part of his army, especially the international force that he had forged. He lost the highlands of the Pamirs, his most trusted natural barrier against Iranian assault, and became even more vulnerable in the southwest where he had lost his stockade at the Iron Gate.

Rustam seized the opportunity to continue his march into Turan and face the combined armies of Afrasiyab and his new allies. Despite Afrasiyab's supernatural skills and the "powers" of his new allies, Rustam was not defeated. Fleeing before the Iranian national champion, Afrasiyab sent all his treasures to Almas Rud, crossed the China Sea, and left Turan for Rustam.

When the Iranian army finally returned from Turan, the champions were met by the king at Pahlav. Seeing the king's crown, Rustam dismounted and paid his respects. The king embraced the paladin, praised his valor, and led him to his pavilion. The other champions followed. In the pavilion, the king placed himself on the throne with Rustam at his right. The other champions assumed their places according to protocol. Throughout the night they talked about the war and about Rustam's

defeat of the various foes.

Rustam spent the next month at court. He then asked permission to travel to Zabul and visit the aged Zal. The king gave his permission. And when the champion's entourage headed for Zabulistan, he showed Rustam with precious gifts.

Piran of Viseh

After his flight before Rustam, Afrasiyab traveled to Khallukh country. There he assembled his counselors, commanders, and champions—Piran, Garsivaz, Qarakhan, Garsiyun, Human, Kulbad, and Ru'in—and complained:

"Since I assumed the crown of sovereignty,
And sun and moon bestowed on me their light,
I have held sway among the potentates,
And nobody hath turned aside my rein;
Thus ever since the war with Minuchihr
Iran hath not laid hand upon Turan.
Now from Iran they make a night-attack
Upon my life at mine own palace-door!
The craven hath become courageous,
The Stag hath ventured to the Lion's lair!
We must be up and doing in this strife,

Or they will make our marches reek [."] [\[151\]](#)

"What must be done is clear," Afrasiyab said. "We must place the combined forces of Turan and China on the marches of Iran and Turan. This army will assure the security of the East." The assembly agreed and further decided that the Turanian army should cross the Oxus and fight Rustam and Giv in Iran.

Happy of the outcome, Afrasiyab sent letters to the Faghfur, to the king of Khutan, and to other rulers sympathetic to his cause. Within two weeks, a large army assembled in Khal-lukh. Afrasiyab opened the treasures of Turan, accumulated since the time of Tur, and gave out untold sums for arms for a mighty army. He even allowed his wild horses to be tamed and trained for service in battle. When all was ready, he divided his forces as follows:

1. 5,000 warriors were assigned to Shideh, Afrasiyab's son, to guard the marches of Khwarazm.
2. 5,000 Chinese troops were assigned to Piran to cross the Oxus and establish a Turanian kingdom in Iran, a kingdom superior to that of the young shah. Piran was warned against any conciliation with Iran.
3. The rest of the army he kept with himself in Khallukh country.

When news reached Kaykhusrau that the Turanian armies had occupied the upper and the lower Oxus; he too assembled his champions—Zal, Rustam, Gudarz, Giv, Shidush, Farhad, Ruhham, Bizhan, Ash-kash, Gustaham, Gurgin, Zange, Gazhdaham, Tus, and Fariburz—and directed them to select 300,000 warriors from India, Rum and Arabia and to prepare to march on Turan within the next forty days:

Those that reach not the presence of the Shah

In forty days shall not obtain a crown. [\[152\]](#)

Hardly two weeks after the announcement, the whole country had responded. Large numbers of commanders and nobles flooded the capital. Like Afrasiyab, Kaykhusrau opened his treasury to the army and equipped it well. And when ready, he divided his forces as follows:

1. Rustam, with 30,000 choice warriors, was commissioned to capture India, Kashmir and Kabulistan:

"Famed hero!

Lead these toward Sistan and Hindustan.
When at Ghaznin make for the upper road,
So thou mayst win a signet, crown, and throne;
But when thou hast achieved the sovereignty,
And pard and sheep are drinking at one trough,
Give Faramarz the signet and the crown
Together with such troops as he may choose;
Then sound the kettledrums, the horns, and pipes,
And stay not in Kashmir or in Kabul,
Because this war against Afrasiyab

Depriveth me of provand, rest, and sleep." [\[153\]](#)

2. [Luhrasp](#), of the Kayanian line, was assigned the marches of Alan[an] and Ghuzz Dizh on the Caspian to check the movement of the Slav and Rus who might aid Shideh in Khwarazm.
3. Ashkash, with 30,000 troops, was commissioned to engage Shideh and capture Khwarazm.
4. Gudarz, son of Kishwad, was assigned the main army and was asked to march on Turan by way of the ford at Tirmidh. Gudarz' army included the troops of Zange, Gustaham, Shidush, Farhad, Kharrad, Giv, Guraza, and Ruhham.

When the main army was ready to pull out of Pahlav, the king said goodbye to the aged Gudarz. "Fight only when necessary," the king advised. "Rather than thinking of yourself, as was the case with Tus, think about the outcome of your deeds; respect the rights of people whose lands you cross; send a wise man to Piran, reason with him, see if he can be brought within the fold, and pray to the Creator for victory."

When he arrived at Zibad, Gudarz summoned Giv and, with ten thousand warriors, sent him to Piran. Gudarz instructed Giv to tell Piran that his past sympathy in the matter of Siyavosh would enable him and his family to defect to Iran without facing the wrath of the Iranian army. "If he were inclined to defect," Gudarz went on, "have him send to me all those involved in the murder of Siyavosh, with their hands tied to their backs. I will dispatch the lot to the shah for consideration of reward

or punish-ment. Additionally, Pi-ran must relinquish all his own possessions to you. As the commander of the Iranian army, I will decide later what needs to be sent to Iran for the king and what could be divided among the troops. Further, I expect from Piran, as a gesture of good will that he send his brothers and his son to me as hostages. As for Pi-ran him-self, he can choose. He can take his clan and go to the shah where he will be honored profusely, or he can move to Chach and rule that region for the shah. Barr-ing these two options, tell Piran, he has to fight Gudarz and the Iranian army."

Having received Gudarz' instructions and command, Giv traveled from Zibad to Balkh. There he left most of his company and traveled on with a select few of his men to Visegird to negotiate with Piran.

Piran prolonged the negotiations for two weeks so that he could send word to Afrasiyab about the arrival of Gudarz and about his need for reinforcements. Afrasiyab sent thirty thousand men, asking Piran to engage and exterminate the Iranians so that they would never again entertain the thought of ruling Turan.

The daily arrival of fresh troops gave Piran confidence. He told Giv to tell Gudarz that his request was not acceptable. "I do not wish," said Piran, "to swap my lordship for slavery, and I find it hard to believe that anyone would want me to pledge my family as hostages. In addition, word has come from King Afrasiyab ordering me to fight. I have no option but to obey."

Giv apprised his father of Piran's rejection of the terms and about the daily flow of reinforcements into the Turanian camp. Soon after, Piran crossed the Oxus and initiated the fight. "It was wrong," said Gudarz to his champions, "to plead with the old warrior, but the plea was not my idea. It was the wish of the king to parley. I argued as well as I could before the king but, in the end, had no option but to carry out his orders":

I spake to that effect before the Shah
When he gave orders for the troops to march:
I said to him: "put from thy heart the love
Of one whose heart and tongue do not accord.
Piran's whole love is for the Turkmans; let
The Shah wash hands of him."^[154]

Before long, Gudarz left his Zibad headquarters in the high-lands and headed for the plain. Piran met him at Kanabad. The battlefield was arranged so that the Iranian army had the mountain to its right and a river to its left. The troops were arrayed so that no enemy could penetrate the ranks:

1. On the right wing stood Fariburz, aided by Guraza and Za-wara; Hazhir protected the baggage at the rear of the right wing, and 10,000 warriors guarded the right flank.
2. Giv, aided by Gurgin and Zange and 10,000 warriors protected the rear.
3. On the left wing stood Ruhham, aided by Gustaham, Guzhda-ham, and Furuhil the archer. 10,000 warriors protected this flank.

Gudarz placed watchmen on the mountain-top to survey the territory and apprise him of the movements of the enemy. He himself remained in the center front; before him was Fariburz and behind him Shidush. The [Darafsh-i Kaviyan](#) banner accompanied him closely.

Gudarz' arrangement worried Piran as he surveyed the battlefield. He found that all the avenues for mounting a successful attack against the Iranian host were closed. Following his usual inclination, he resorted to a ruse. He sent his son, Ru'in, into a thicket to approach the enemy troops from the side and force them out so that he [Piran] could pounce on them. But this strategy did not work. The Iranians stayed put, and a stalemate of three days and three nights followed, with both armies remaining under full armor. Frustration mounted.

On the fourth day, Bizhan tried to persuade his father, Giv, to attack the Turanians in spite of his grand-father Gudarz. But Giv, veteran of the war with the Pechenegs and of Lavan, was not moved. He rejected Bizhan's request for a thousand warriors and advised the youth to muster more faith in the judgment of the aged:

This ancient veteran would have the Turkmans
Advance to battle. When they leave the hills
He will attack in force, and thou shalt see
How he will ply the whole march with his mace.^[155]

On the Turanian side, Piran was facing a similar situation. After a week of inaction, Human, Piran's brother, wanted him to attack. Piran gave four reasons why he should not. The most important of these was that the Iranian position was impregnable. They must be dislodged before they can be destroyed, Piran argued.

Human disagreed and, accompanied by an interpreter,^[156] went to the Iranian camp. The Iranians asked the interpreter about Human's identity and about the purpose of his call. They were told that he was Pi-ran's brother and that he had come to fight the best champion that Iran could field.

Through the interpreter, the Iranians told Human that they had strict orders from Gudarz not to engage in single combat. Having been refused by the underlings, Human worked his way into the heart of the army camp and challenged the champions, even Gudarz himself. The commander reiterated the policy of not fighting until it was time. "This should not prevent you, however," Gudarz said to Human, "from going to Piran and bragging that all Iranian champions feared you and dared not fight you!"

Infuriated, Human headed back for the Turanian camp. On his way he shot down four heralds to provoke the Iranians. No one moved. Bizhan, however, could not tolerate witnessing a single enemy warrior challenge an entire army and be allowed to return unharmed. Ignoring his father's advice, he went to his grand-father, Gudarz, and asked permission to fight Human. He also asked for the armour and the helmet of Siyavosh so that he could wear them when he fought to avenge the fallen king's murder.

Gudarz suggested that a more experienced person than his grandson should fight Human. This further annoyed Bizhan. "You did not see me fight the Pechenegs," Bizhan said, "and you were not there when I fought against Farud. I want to prove myself. If you deprive me of the honor of this fight," Bizhan threatened, "I shall take my case to the king himself. I shall renounce chivalry." Filled with admiration for his grandson, Gudarz agreed. "You will fight Human, and I shall ask your father to hand you Siyavosh's helmet and armor," he said.

Gudarz convinced Giv that he should hand Siyavosh's helmet and armor to Bizhan and allow the youth to fight. Kinship, Gudarz said to his son, is a family matter. It cannot interfere with the correct conduct of the order of the king. The order is to avenge the murder of Siyavosh, and that is what the youth wants to do. We have no right to prevent him and destine him to a life of misery and self-doubt.

In the field, through the interpreter, Bizhan challenged Human to return and fight. Human accepted the challenge, provided they delay the fight till the next day, which Bizhan accepted.

The next morning, to keep the armies away from the scene, Bizhan suggested that they put some distance between themselves and the mountains of Kanabad. A place near Zibad was chosen for their battle ground. Interpreters were to apprise the respective kings of the details of the fight.

The struggle went on for a whole day before both champions agreed to rest and refresh themselves. When resumed, Bizhan finally succeeded in unseating and immediately decapitating Human. Bizhan then thanked God that he had been able to avenge Siyavosh. He tied the decapitated head to his saddle strap and headed for camp:

I have no portion in this doughty deed,
 Not having pluck to fight an elephant,
 Yet have cut off Human's head in revenge
 For Siyawush, and my sire's seventy brothers.
 Now may his spirit be in thrall to mine,
 His body rent to pieces by the lions."
 He bound Human's head to the saddle-straps

Upon Shabrang and flung the trunk to the dust [.] [\[157\]](#)

When Human's interpreter paid his respects to Bizhan, Bizhan asked the Turanian to apprise his coun-try-men of the outcome of the fight. Bizhan himself returned to the Iranian camp where Gudarz or-dered a celebration and lavished great trea-sures upon him.

Upon hearing of the death of his brother, Piran ordered Nastihan, another brother, to take ten thousand warriors and am-bush the revel-ling Iranians. This battle, too, went badly for Turan. Bizhan, whom Gudarz chose to lead the Iranian host, killed Nastihan and brought yet another victory for Iran.

These events did not discourage Piran. On the contrary, he pre-pared for a major offensive. On the Ira-nian side, Gudarz with-drew from Kanabad to Zibad. Fearing that Piran might receive fur-ther rein-force-ments, he wrote a letter to King Kaykhusrau. In the let-ter, Gu-darz explained his nego-tiations with Piran through Giv, and told of the battles in which Human and Nastihan had been killed by Bizhan. "There is a great possibility," wrote Gudarz, "that Piran might bring Afrasiyab, who is already near the Oxus, into the war. If the king himself does not enter the war," Gudarz concluded his let-ter, "it is pos-sible that the Iranian army might not be able to withstand Afrasiyab." At the end of the letter, Gudarz asked for information on the progress of the campaigns of Rustam, Luhrasp, and Ashkash:

[T]hat done,
 Gudarz spake thus about Afrasiyab—
 "He hath approached the river; should he cross
 Thou knowst that we cannot stand against him,
 O monarch of Iran, lord of the world!
 Unless Khusrau shall come to our support,
 And set a crown upon his warriors' heads;
 But if Piran shall come alone the troops
 Will need no help; Khusrau shall learn how I—
 His slave—have by his fortune used Piran;
 And furthermore the conquering Shah perchance
 Will condescend to let his servant know
 What Rustam—binder of the Div—hath done,

And what Luhrasp hath done, and wise Ashkash. [\[158\]](#)

Gudarz gave the letter to Hazhir, who spent the next week on the road to Pahlav, where he handed his father's letter to the king. Kaykhusrau entertained the messenger, bestowed great gifts upon him, and, when he was ready to return to the front, sent a reply to Gudarz in which he ex-plaind his decision to parley with Piran: "I felt obliged to consider Piran's past and give him a chance to save him-self. But it is apparent that Piran's heart is with Turan. From now on you are free to fight him. As far as the appearance of Afrasiyab near the Oxus is concerned, he is not there so much to aid Piran as he is to es-cape the pursuit of the Khaqan of China. In fact, our intelli-gence indicates that Afrasiyab is being pressed from all sides":

And thirdly, thou hast said: "Afrasiyab
 Will cross the river, having marched thereto
 Because Piran hath sent to ask for aid."
 The matter is so, and we thus reply:—
 'Know, O my thoughtful sage, mine officer
 Approved in all things! that Afrasiyab
 Abideth not by the Jihun to fight
 With us; the Khan is marching forth from Chin
 Upon him; he is ambushed on both flanks,
 Or rather, through the innumerable host,
 Whose chiefs are now disposed around Turan,

 Afrasiyab is threatened on all sides,

And therefore marcheth to the river-bank. [\[159\]](#)

"As regards your query about Rustam and the other champi-ons," the king continued, "Rustam has cap-tured Kabul and Kashmir, Ash-kash has reduced Khwarazm, and Luhrasp has captured Alanan and Ghuzz. Were Afrasiyab to cross the Oxus, he would lose all his posses-sions to the warriors I described above. They will move in from behind him to fill the vacuum. Nev-ertheless I am not re-lying on this strategy. Rather, I am commissioning Tus to capture Dehistan, Gur-gan, and its environs. I shall bring up the rear of his army and will join you for a great war with Afrasiyab. Until then do not fear Piran. The loss of his most trust-worthy warriors has weakened him. Fight him, if he chal-lenges you. I am sure that by the time I join you, Piran and his kinsmen will be nothing but names. Kayka'us and Tus send their regards."

As soon as Hazhir left Pahlav, Kaykhusrau opened his trea-sures to recruit the largest army ever assem-bled to meet not only the Turanians but the Chinese as well. Wit-nessing the increasing army and ac-tivity in the Iranian camp, Piran felt that he should dissuade Gudarz from fighting him. He wrote a letter to the Ira-nian commander: "If your intention was revenge, you have already killed enough of my people. If it is re-venge for the murder of Siyavosh that fuels your hatred against Turan, he was only one man. How many should be sacrificed for one? If you seek to ex-pand Iran to this side of the Oxus, I can dis-cuss the matter with my king and negotiate with you. We recognize Iran to begin in the foothills of the great mountain and the land of the Gharcheh (qarchigan) at Bust. It then ex-tends to Taliqan and Fariyab. From there it continues to Balkh and to the Oxus. On the other side of Bust, we recognize Panjshir and Bamiyan to belong to Iran. Going north from there we rec-ognize Guzganan, Muliyan, all the way to Badakhshan to be-long to Iran. On this side of the great mountain we recognize the Amu plain, Zam, and Khuttalan as well as Tirmidh, Vise-gird, and Bukhara all the way to Sughd to belong to Iran. In addi-tion, we rec-ognize all the terri-tories that Rustam had (Nimruz) and has con-quired (Kashmir, Kabulistan, and Qandahar); all that Luhrasp has (Alanan and Ghuzz); and the lands that Ashkash has reduced, to belong to Iran. I shall send word to all my men to leave these regions and re-turn to me with our livestock. I shall do all of this for you, if you ac-cept my friendship and cease hostili-ties. I shall even go so far as to send you all the treasures of Turan and, if neces-sary, even hostages. I make these conces-sions," Piran concluded, "not out of fear of you or of your king, but because God does not like innocent people killed. A war of this magnitude would annihilate the better part of both armies. It is prudent, therefore, that the champions of the armies fight to de-cide the fate of the rest. I want a pledge, however, that if in this 'battle royal' you kill me, you allow my army to re-turn to Turan unharmed, and I will do the same for you. I will allow the Iranian army to return to Iran unharmed."

When the letter was complete, Piran chose Ru'in, his son, to take it to Gudarz. Gudarz received Ru'in af-fec-tion-ately and enter-tained him for a week while the

Iranians de-cided the right course of action and an ap-proprate reply to Piran. At the end, Ru'in took Gudarz' reply to Piran. It read: "Your past activities fail to support the good will that your letter communicates. I extended a hand of friendship to you by sending my son with a request to cease hostility. You opted for war. You have consistently sided with Salm, Tur, and Afrasiyab. How can you change? Doesn't this very war rage because of you? How can you talk about the de-struction of innocent lives? Didn't you al-low the murder of an innocent king? I see no harm in send-ing your family to Iran to assure their safety, but I don't think that should, in any way, interfere with the war. Be-sides, I should tell you that we no longer consider the lands you have agreed to evacuate as Turanian land. Luhrasp has reduced Bakhtar all the way to the Caspian Sea, and Rus-tam already has everything from Nim-ruz to Sind. The leader of the Hindus and their ban-ner arrived before the king just re-cently. The Dehistan region and Khwarazm, which you thought were Turanian territory, have now been captured by Iranians. The only battle that re-mains undecided is the one between us. The day has come for this aged warrior to re-duce Turan. Your ac-tions must be punished, and I am re-sponsible before God to avenge not only Siyavosh, but the seventy warriors from my house as well. You have sowed the seed of evil, and you must accept the bitter fruit. I could have accepted your terms, if I were still following my old orders. They specified that I should not wage war with you or kill you. But those orders have changed. My new orders specify to avenge the murder of Siyavosh. I shall give you time to send for reinforce-ments, or-ganize your army, attend to your wounded, and do whatever needs doing. I do not wish you to accuse me of ambushing you. Even if it takes a hun-dred years, I shall wait until I have ful-filled my king's orders. Final-ly," Gudarz con-cluded, "I agree to the 'battle royal' that you have pro-posed, provided that the armies have a chance to engage in an all-out war to rid themselves of the pent-up frustration of the past few days. Who knows? This all-out battle may itself end in a victory."

When the letter was written, Gudarz assembled his learned council and his warriors and read the letter to them. They all ap-proved his course of action. He then dispatched Ru'in with the letter.

Seeing all avenues to compromise closed, Piran decided to fight, if not for victory, then to avenge the deaths of Human, Nastihan, and the nine hundred warriors who had been killed in the recent wars. He opened his treasures to the army and sent a messenger to Afrasiyab. He apologized for past differences on account of Kaykhusrau, and in-formed Afrasiyab that an army, as large as the army that Manuchihir had mobilized against Turan, waited at Zibad to attack Turan.

Piran then detailed the battles of Bizhan with Nastihan and Human, as well as his own war in which nine hundred of the king's men had been killed. "The bad news," Piran warned Afrasiyab, "is that Kay-khus-rau himself is coming to the aid of Gudarz. Without my king here, in person, my army will not withstand the Iranian force."

Afrasiyab, himself harried by armies from surrounding lands, re-sponded with praise for the aged war-rior. He blamed himself for al-owing Kaykhusrau to reach Iran and begin the war. He then dis-avowed his blood ties with Kaykhusrau. "This was the will of God," he said, "and it has been accomplished." He told Pi-ran, however, not to suppress his urge to avenge Human and Nastihan. With regard to Kay-khusrau's per-sonal in-volvement in the war, he assured Piran that he would come personally and rout the Iranians. "After I am done with them," he said, "neither Gudarz, nor Tus, nor Kaykhusrau will remain in this world. I have dis-patched ten thousand men to aid you. Urge your warriors to keep on fighting until I arrive."

Upon the arrival of the messenger, Piran assembled his lieu-tenants to hear the message of their king. He gave them courage, but in his own heart he knew that Afrasiyab could not win the war. He won-dered at the workings of Time, the way it had pitted a grandfather and a grand-son—two kings—against each other. But war was war, and he had to fight.

On the day of the battle, Giv dispatched his warriors to de-fend the wings and the rear. To Bizhan, how-ever, he gave a special mis-sion. "Head for the heart of the enemy and chal-lenge Piran. I am sure that, on ac-count of his brothers, Piran will not resist your chal-lenge. If you kill Piran," Giv concluded, "Afrasiyab will lose his main support and his kingdom will col-lapse. If that happens, his army will be spared certain annihi-lation."

Giv's psychological assessment of Piran was not on tar-get. Piran did not engage Bizhan in battle. Rather, he reached Giv and battled with him. Neither Giv nor Piran succeeded in de-stroying the other, and the out-come of the battle remained un-certain.

At night, the war effort was reassessed. Gudarz and Pi-ran talked to their respective warriors and made arrange-ments in case they did not return from the field the next day. Gudarz appointed his able com-man-der, Gustaham, to lead his army if he were to be killed. He told Gustaham not to con-tinue the war, but to wait further orders from the king. Piran made similar arrange-ments, informing his re-maining rela-tives that if he were killed, they should leave the battlefield and head for Turan immediately.

The next day, Piran suggested a new arrangement for the war. He proposed that ten Iranian fighters and ten Turanian warriors engage in mortal combat and that the heads of the two armies do the same. The win-ner of the mortal combat would be accepted as the commander of both armies. Gudarz, who had always wanted to have the opportunity to fight Piran in exactly such a situation, accepted the terms. The fol-lowing warriors faced each other in mortal combat. The result of the combat appears in the rightmost column:

<u>Turan</u>	<u>Iran</u>	<u>result</u>
Guruy	Giv	Guruy was captured
Kulbad	Fariburz	Kulbad (Piran's brother) killed
Barman	Ruhham	Barman (Piran's brother) killed
Siyamak	Gorazeh	Siyamak killed
Andariman	Gurgin	Andariman killed
Ru'in	Bizhan	Ru'in (Piran's only son) killed
Zangaleh	Faruhal	Zangaleh killed
Ukhast	Zange	Ukhast killed
Kahram	Bartah	Kahram killed
Sepahram	Hazhir	Sepahram killed

The two commanders, Piran and Gudarz, also fought. Having lost all his men, however, Piran was alone and insecure, while Gudarz boasted of an army supporting him. "Give up the fight and let me take you to Kaykhusrau alive," Gudarz advised Piran after the latter re-ceived his first decisive blow. The wounded Pi-ran refused. In-stead, he tried to kill the Iranian commander with his javelin but suc-ceeded only in injuring him. Gudarz in turn threw his spear at Piran and killed him.

As promised, Gudarz allowed Piran's army to return to Turan. Farshidvard and Lahhak left the battle-field as their brother had in-structed and headed for Turan. They were ap-prehended in the desert by Gusta-ham and were killed.

When Kaykhusrau finally arrived at Gudarz' camp and his pavil-ion was erected, he saw Piran's body among the Turanian dead. He in-structed that Piran, to whom he owed a great deal, be given a royal funeral. He further in-structed that Guruy, the murderer of Siyavosh, be cut up, limb by limb. "De-capitate him like a sheep when no more limbs remain," the king ordered. "As for the army of Turan," Kay-khus-rau said, "I forgive them all as long as they swear to follow my decrees and fight for Iran."

Finally, the moribund Gustaham, wounded by Piran's brothers and returned to camp by Bizhan, was pre-sented to the King, who viewed the dying man and wished that he should not die. He then untied a sa-cred bracelet from his arm, a bracelet that had the blessing of the *farr* and that had come down to him from Jamshid, Hushang, and Tah-muras. He tied the bracelet around Gus-tahm's arm. He also ordered physi-cians from Rum, India, China, Greece, and Iran to hold a vigil over the warrior. Gustaham was cured. Then the Great War between Iran and Turan flared up.

The Great War of Kaykhusrau

With Piran dead and his house overthrown, Kaykhusrau moved his army into the field. He held court, summoned his victorious commanders from the marches, and sent letters to the rulers of the world for assistance:

[He] sent this letter in the ancient tongue
 To all the chiefs and nobles: "Kai Khusrau,
 The victor, seated on his elephant,
 Hath dropped the ball; the land is like the Nile.
 Let there be neither rest nor sleep for you,
 But only vengeance on Afrasiyab."^[160]

After the commanders arrived and innumerable nobles responded to his call, Kaykhusrau praised Rus-tam, Tus, and Gudarz. Opening his treasure chests to the army, he arrayed his host:

On the left wing, Gudarz, of the house of Kishwad, was aided by Hazhir, Shidush, and Farhad. The nobles of Barda' and Ardabil were assigned to Gudarz.

On the left hand of the king, Dilafruz, was aided by such descendants of Kayqubad as Sammakh, king of Sur and Giveh, king of Dawar. Bizhan, Ruh-ham, Gurgin, and the warriors of Ray were assigned as backup.

At the center was Kaykhusrau, aided by 30,000 select warriors. The warriors of Zarpas and Azargashasp protected the rear.

Tus was on the right hand of the king, aided by Manushan and Khuzan—kings of Fars. [Arash](#), king of Kirman; Sabbak, king of Yemen; and Iraj, king of Kabul, also assisted Tus.

Rustam, aided by the warriors of Zabulistan, took the right wing.

Kaykhusrau formed a moving wall of elephants carrying towers in the center front to protect the marching troops. The towers were manned by bowmen from Balkh. Three hundred Baghdadi guards protected each elephant. They were instructed to march before the animals and shoot at the approaching enemy. A similar contingent protected the rear of the wall. They carried shields and fifteen-foot Gilani spears. This was followed by a row of infantry and cavalry, carrying bows and arrows.

Arraying a host of this size entailed not only the elaborate right, left, and center, but many auxiliary contingents as well. To meet the needs of the host, Kaykhusrau placed troops under his lesser commanders. These commanders oversaw the rule of justice, rounded up cattle for slaughter, and spied for the king. They reported directly to the king and apprised him of enemy positions.

Meanwhile, the Turanian monarch resided beyond Chach at Baikant.^[161] He enjoyed life on his ivory throne, while his myriad of warriors devastated the fields of Khallukh all the way to the Krushan^[162] lands, where his relatives held sway. He intended to strike camp and join Piran in the battlefield.

One night, about midnight, a swift messenger arrived with a report about Piran. The wounded soldier informed Afrasiyab of the sad fate of Piran and of the death of Lahhak and Farshidvard. The sight of the army of Kaykhusrau, the messenger said, shook the confidence of the Turanians.

Upon hearing this, the shah dismissed all but his closest advisors. He stepped down from his throne in a rage, threw his crown to the floor, and cried openly:

He sorrowed for the soldiers, then he swore
 A mighty oath and cried in grief and anguish:—
 "By God, I will have none of ivory throne,
 My head shall have no commerce with the crown,
 My tunic shall be mail, my throne a steed,
 My crown a helmet and my tree a spear.
 Henceforth I wish not feast and banqueting,
 Or e'en provision for the crown itself;
 I want but vengeance for my famous men,
 My swordsmen and my men of high emprise,
 On base-born Kai Khusrau, and may the seed^[163]
 Of Siyawush be lacking to the world."

When news came that Kaykhusrau had reached the Oxus, Afrasiyab addressed his army. Extolling the late Piran and praising Farshidvard, Ru'in, and Lahhak, he said, "It is time to seek vengeance and fight Giv and Gudarz. I know that this war with my grandson will not be easy, but I shall fight alongside you with all my might."

The Turanians cried as he spoke. "We recognize no king but you," they said. "We share your grief for the fallen warriors and pledge to fight Kaykhusrau with all our might."

The army's pledge pleased Afrasiyab. He opened his treasury and made the warriors masters of his flocks of wild steeds. Then he dispatched thirty thousand warriors to Balkh and Bamiyan (Balkh-Bami) and another thirty thousand to cross the Oxus and ward off possible attacks from Iran. His advisors not only lauded his decision, but encouraged Afrasiyab to cross the Oxus himself and meet the Iranians on their own territory.

Afrasiyab summoned his eldest son, Qarakhan, gave him half of his army, and commanded him to march on Bukhara. "Remain at Bukhara," Afrasiyab told Qarakhan, "as my reinforcement. Keep sending troops and provisions for my fighting force in Iran." Then, heading the Turanian army, Afrasiyab left Baikant for the Oxus.

It took the army a week to cross the river on the thousand boats furnished for the passage. On the other side, the army reassembled on the Amu plain. Upon setting foot on the shore, Afrasiyab who had brought up the rear, ordered his heralds to report on the positions of all troops. The army, they reported, is situated between the Caspian and the Oxus. The former provides good pasture for the animals, the latter satisfies the provision demands of the host.

Having assessed the situation, Afrasiyab organized his army before it set up camp. To the rear left he placed Jahn with 100,000 Chigils; on the left wing, Shideh with 30,000 troops; as the rear central core he placed Garsivaz with 40,000 troops; on the right wing, Qarakhan (governor of Balkh) with 30,000 Chigil Turks; and on the rear right, Gav with 30,000 troops from Taraz, Ghuzz, and Khallukh. In addition, a contingent of ten thousand cavalymen was given the task of attacking the Iranian army at various places to create confusion in the enemy ranks. Thus organized, he ordered the army to face the southwest (Nim-ruz), from which direction an attack was expected. A wall of elephants protected the army from attack.

Similarly, Kaykhusrau assembled his commanders and planned his strategy. He assigned Gustaham the protection of Balkh and Ashkash of Zam, a precaution lest a force arrive from the rear to rout the army. When all was in order, Kaykhusrau set off to meet Afrasiyab in the desert. As he traveled in the direction of Khwarazm and the army of Afrasiyab, he had Dehistan (present-day republic of Turkmenistan) to his left and the Oxus to his right. He was within sight of the Turanian army:

The Shah, when he had reached the waste, inspected
 The bearing and equipment of his men.
 The army's route was toward Kharazm, where sands
 And plains were fit for strife, with Dahistan
 To left, the stream to right, the sands between,
[\[164\]](#)
 Afrasiyab in front.

Upon spotting the Iranian army, Afrasiyab ordered the drums sounded and the army mobilized, while the thought of fighting his grandfather saddened Kaykhusrau. Accompanied by Rustam, Tus, Gudarz, Giv, and other notables, Kaykhusrau surveyed the Iranian position, assessed his forces, ordered a moat to be dug around the army, and sent scouts out to survey the enemy positions. At night, he ordered the section of the moat between the armies to be filled with water. The armies remained in their places for two days and nights; as the stalemate continued, star-gazers went hastily about assessing the heavens with their astrolabes to determine which king would be the victor.

On the fourth day, when there was still no movement on either side, Shideh addressed his father. "No king," he said, "except that fatherless brigand (i.e., Kaykhusrau), would have the audacity to challenge you, especially since Siyavosh was killed for a just cause":

Thou didst hold Siyawush as son, didst bear
 A father's pains and love for him, betooming
 No noxious blast from heaven to visit him.
 Thou didst distaste him when assured that he
 Aimed at thy crown, thy throne, and diadem,
 And if the king of earth had spared his life
 The crown and signet both would have been his.
 The man that now hath come to fight with thee
 Shall not have long of this world. Father-like
 Thou didst encourage this black reprobate,
 Forbearing to consign him to the dust;
 Thou didst support him till he spread his wings,
 Fit through thy favour for the throne of gold,
 And bird-like flew Iranward from Turan;
 Thou wouldst have said: "He never saw his grandsire."
 Look at Piran's own deeds of kindness
 Toward that faithless and unworthy man;
 Yet he forgot Piran's love and fulfilled
 His heart with vengeance and his head with strife,
 And when he caught Piran as he desired
[\[165\]](#)
 He put that kindly paladin to death.

"Why has he come with a large army to fight his own grandfather? Why does he refuse money, the throne, and the crown? Why is he not seeking horses, swords, and treasures? Because he lusts for a relative's blood," said Shideh. "You are my father and, beyond that, my king. Do not disappoint the army. Astrology is not the answer to our problem. The Iranians recognize the sword, and it is with the sword that we must respond to their intrusion. Allow me to move my army and rout them."

Afrasiyab disagreed. "Piran and many others were killed near this very spot. The hearts of the Turanians ache for them. This army must remain in this spot and look at the Iranians long enough to develop a formidable desire for revenge. Once that peak is achieved, then it is appropriate to attack haphazardly, killing off their warriors at random." Shideh volunteered to be the first to fight:

I passion for a combat with Khusrau
 Because he is the new king of the world,
 And if he shall encounter me, as I
 Doubt not, withal he shall not scape [sic] my clutch,
 The Iranians shall be broken—heart and back—
 And all their projects marred, while if another
[\[166\]](#)
 Come forth I soon will lay his head in dust.

"Kaykhusrau is not likely to fight you," responded Afrasiyab. "He will want to fight me, his grandfather, if he fights at all. And that would be good only if the armies are spared a great struggle":

"O inexperienced one!
 How should the king of kings encounter thee?
 If he would fight I am his opposite,
 'Tis mine to trample on his name and person,
 And if we meet thus on the field both hosts
[\[167\]](#)
 Will rest from strife."

In order to give his son an opportunity to face Kaykhusrau in a less hostile setting, Afrasiyab sent Shideh to Kaykhusrau with a plea to cease hostilities. "Apprise Kaykhusrau of my feelings," said Afrasiyab. "Tell the young king that it is not proper for a grandson to rise against his grandfather. It was the Creator's wish that the world should be filled with anger and revenge. That is why Siyavosh was killed. Siyavosh was not innocent. He ignored tradition. Furthermore, if I were to blame, ask the young king, why Piran? What had Ru'in, Lahhak, and Farshidvard done that they should be tied on the backs of rogue elephants? Grandson, it is not my line that is at fault. You must blame Gudarz and Kayka'us. That is where the lie rests. *They* invaded my land. Tell him I have an army that numbers the same as the sands of this desert. At my behest, it becomes a raging sea and moves mountains. Yet, the fear of the Creator bids me to guide you so that you do not bring shame upon yourself. If you accept my terms, sign a treaty and promise to keep your word, I shall become your guide. I shall aid you in every way. I shall order whatever lands you name as belonging to Iran to be immediately evacuated. I shall send you money, crown, throne, horses, and armour. Accept my son as your champion and myself as a relative. In this way, the armies will not have to fight and our war will turn into a feast. But if you choose to follow Ahriman and ignore my words," Afrasiyab impressed upon Shideh to warn Kaykhusrau, "let there be a combat between the two of us in a spot away from the armies. If you kill me, my army will follow your command and my son will remain your relative. And if I kill you, I promise to give your champions prominent positions in my army. Finally, if you do not wish to fight an experienced fighter, I propose that you take on my son, Shideh. Let the Firmament choose whom to protect. In the event that you do not wish to fight Shideh either, in the morning, let our chosen warriors fight."

At the Iranian camp, a herald announced Shideh. The king became melancholy. He asked [Qaran](#), standing nearby, to receive the message. When Qaran reported Afrasiyab's admonition against war, Kaykhusrau laughed. "My grandfather has second thoughts about a battle for which he has already crossed the Oxus," the king said. "He wants to influence me by bringing up kinship, and he wants to intimidate me by citing the numbers that he commands. We accept the challenge and we shall fight Shideh," he announced.

Kaykhusrau's decision saddened his commanders and advisors. They expressed their dismay at Afrasiyab's intention to annihilate the king's supporters. It is advisable for the king not to make this judgment hastily, they advised Kaykhusrau. We hoped that the king would reject the challenge to single combat against Shideh:

The wise men and the captains of the host
 All spake out, saying: "This must never be:
 Afrasiyab is wise and veteran,
 And never dreameth but of stratagems;
 He knoweth naught but sorcery, black arts,
 Deceit, malignity, and wickedness.
 Now he hath chosen Shida from the host
 Because he saw therein the key to loose
 The bonds of bale. He challengeth the Shah
 To fight that he may fill our day with dust.
 Adventure not thyself against his rage,
 Or weary of Iran and of the crown.
 Engage not rashly in a fight with him,
 And let us not be left in grief and anguish.
 If Shida now shall perish by thy hand
 Their host will merely lose one man of name,
 But if thou perishest in some lone spot
 The darksome dust will go up from Iran,
 And none among us will be left alive:
 Iran will perish—city, field, and fell.
 We have none other of the Kaian race

To gird himself to execute revenge [."] [\[168\]](#)

"In addition," they argued, "Afrasiyab is an experienced man, favored in Turan and China. He has recognized his mistake and, apologizing, is giving up horses, the treasures of Zadsham, and the lands that you claim. Wouldn't it be advantageous to return to Iran victorious, with these concessions?"

Rustam, on whom the murder of Siyavosh weighed heavily, thought differently. "The king should not give in easily," he said. Nervous, the king chewed on his lip. Finally, he agreed with Rustam: "It is not proper for us to return to Iran under these conditions. We have a tradition to uphold, an initial resolve to bring to fruition and our investment in the war. How can we counsel our subjects on the merits of struggle for the Right? Afrasiyab's return to the throne of Turan would spell disaster for Iran. Besides, what excuse shall we present to Kayka'us? What of Tur's treatment of Iraj, and what of Siyavosh? Suppose a well-spoken Turanian appears and apologizes; does that right all those wrongs? He challenged *me*; why did *your* faces pale? I never thought that Iranians would ever forget this vendetta. Yet, none of you accepted the challenge to fight Afrasiyab."

Recognizing their guilt, the Iranians praised the king and declared their support. "But," said the king, "we must be realistic. Shideh will not fight a fair fight. Afrasiyab, a magician, is bound to equip him with an impregnable armour. Whoever fights him must be protected by the *farr*":

Khusrau replied: "Know counselling archmages!
 That Shida on the day of battle holdeth
 His father as no man. Afrasiyab
 Made armour for his son by magic arts
 Perversely, darkly, and malignantly.
 The arms which ye possess are not sufficient
 To pierce that breastplate and that helm of steel.
 The charger is of demon pedigree
 With lion's action and the speed of wind.
 A man that is not dowered with Grace from God
 Would lose both head and feet in fighting Shida;
 Besides he cometh not to fight with you,
 For that would shame his Grace and birth. The scions
 Of Faridun and of Kubad are twain
 As warriors, but one in heart and habit,
 And I will burn his father's gloomy soul

As he burnt Kai Kaus for Siyawush." [\[169\]](#)

Kaykhusrau appointed Qaran to accompany Shideh and carry his message. "Tell my grandfather," he said, "that although our affair has become complex, it is my duty as a warrior to make swift decisions. Let the god of the sun and the moon decide. I reject your offer of horses, money, treasures, and land. Who did ever live to enjoy eternity? By the grace of God and by the *farr* of Kayka'us, I shall not allow you the possession of what you enumerated past this fall season. Wealth accumulated by injustice does not interest me. Yazdan is my support; He keeps me happy and content."

"Finally," Kaykhusrau concluded, "all you own, including Shideh who just signed his own death by challenging me, belongs to me. I shall fight him in the morning and I shall show him a glimpse of Doom. When I return from that combat, let us carry on with your plan and allow our champions to decide the outcome of the war." His message for Afrasiyab at an end, Kaykhusrau told Qaran to apprise Shideh of his mistake and of what Fate had in store for him:

O full of wisdom and aspiring chief!
 Thou hast come here alone within the net,
 Not come in quest of fame, or to deliver
 Thy father's message, but by adverse fate:
 The Worldlord hath impelled thee from the host,
 And here will be thy shroud and sepulchre;
 Harm will befall thee for that harmless head,
 Which they struck off as though it were a sheep's;
 Thy sire will weep o'er thee as bitterly

as Kay Kaus is weeping for his son. [\[170\]](#)

Kaykhusrau's response reinforced Afrasiyab's apprehension arising from a recent dream. But Afrasiyab could not dissuade his son from entering the battlefield. In the morning, Shideh donned his armor and faced Kaykhusrau. The terms of the fight were spelled out: neither army should enter the field under any conditions. Further, the rights of the auxiliaries must be respected. The warriors then headed for the plains of Khwarazm:

When Shida saw the valour and the might
Of Kai Khusrau the tears fell on his cheeks:
He felt: "This Grace hath been bestowed by God,
And I have reason to bewail myself."
His steed moreover was distressed by thirst;
The man's own strength was failing. In his straits
He thought: "If I say thus to Kai Khusrau:—
'Come let us try a wrestling-bout afoot,
And make ourselves run down with blood and sweat,'
He will not for his honour's sake dismount;
His person as a Shah would be disgraced;
Yet if I 'scape not by this artifice
Good sooth I am within the Dragon's breath!" [\[171\]](#)

The king, aware of the ruse, accepted the challenge. Shideh, after all, was from the line of Fereydu. Once the combatants met and struggled to bring each other down, Shideh found himself at a disadvantage. When he became certain that Kaykhusrau had the stronger *farr* and that his own end was not much farther than the day's, he decided to run. Kaykhusrau stopped him, lifted him up above his head and threw him down, breaking his back. He then went quickly for his sabre and stabbed Shideh in the heart.

In the Turanian camp, everyone expected Shideh to emerge and fill them with pride. Instead Shideh's page, with disheveled hair, brought the ominous news. Afrasiyab pulled his white hair and cried profusely. He swore to continue the fight until Kaykhusrau was no longer. His warriors supported him.

The next day, Jahn with 30,000 warriors attacked Qaran and Gustaham. He was defeated. Afrasiyab withdrew his army and, under cover of night, crossed the Oxus to the Turanian bank, leaving behind his tents, treasures, and heavy weaponry.

In the morning, when Kaykhusrau was informed that the enemy had fled, he knelt before God and thanked Him for His support. The army did the same. For the next five days the Iranian army rested while bodies were found, cleaned and laid to rest. Finally, a letter was dispatched to Kayka'us, detailing Kaykhusrau's arrival at Fariyab, his victory over Afrasiyab in the battle on the Khwarazm plain, and his intention to continue the animosity. "Three hundred heads," the letter went on to inform Kayka'us, "have been sent to you. These include the heads of Afrasiyab's brother, his son, and relatives. Two hundred of Afrasiyab's best warriors are also sent to you in chains."

On the other side of the river, Afrasiyab joined the forces of Qarakhan. He stayed a short while at Bukhara and assessed his army's strength. It became apparent that only twenty out of every hundred men who had accompanied Afrasiyab beyond the Oxus had survived. It was decided that Afrasiyab should relinquish Chach and [\[172\]](#) Gulzarriyun and make his stand at the fort of Bihisht Gang. Afrasiyab then headed for Gulzarriyun, where he stayed for three days and from where he sent for reinforcement. The armies gathered:

"If now the monarch will be well advised
He will withdraw the army hence to Chach,
And, if suggestions may be made to him,
Cross the Gulzaryun and wait a while
At Gang-Bihisht, because it is a place
As fit for recreation as for fight."
No other plan was mooted, all agreed.
They marched to Gulzaryun, with eyes
Wet and full hearts; there spent the Turkman king
Three days, recruiting with his hawks and cheetahs,
Thence on to Gang-Bihisht where, though he had
But short repose, he thought it Paradise;
To him its soil was musk, its bricks were gold;
There he was happy, laughing in his sleep.
Thou hadst said: "Safety is his bedfellow." [\[173\]](#)

Pursuing Afrasiyab, Kaykhusrau crossed the Oxus and took control of the area. He lavished gifts on the people and brought them to his side. The city of Sughd welcomed his arrival and received a handsome gift in return. As other cities and peoples learned about the king's largesse they, too, came to his court and paid their allegiance.

The first Turanian resistance occurred near Chach where Golgola, a descendant of Tur, took it upon himself to fight. Kaykhusrau did not dignify the battle by going there himself. He stayed in Sughd for the next month, sending Gustaham with the Ardabil and Barda' contingents to put down the rebellion. The Nimruz contingent under Rustam was also dispatched as reinforcement.

In Sughd, the king opened the treasury and invited experts in opening fortifications and infiltrating enemy defenses to add their technological expertise to his efforts against Afrasiyab. This accomplished, he moved in the direction of Gang Dezh. Strict instructions were given to the army to fight only those who did not accept the suzerainty of Kaykhusrau.

As the Iranian army marched on Gulzarriyun, Turanian forts fell one after another. Their inhabitants joined Kaykhusrau. At the end of the one hundred *farsangs* that separated Sughd and Gulzarriyun, the Iranian army had swelled into a mighty host. Kaykhusrau rested and waited at this beautiful paradise for Afrasiyab to make his move.

In Gang Dezh, Afrasiyab constantly consulted with his commanders and champions, seeking a solution to the war with Kaykhusrau. Everyone, however, felt that further war with the Iranians was inevitable and that arrangements had to be made to meet the challenge. Consequently, a massive Turanian force left Gang Dezh for Gulzarriyun.

Initially the battle did not go well for the Iranians. Kaykhusrau felt that if he did not seek help he would lose the battle to Afrasiyab. In private, therefore, he faced his Maker and pleaded for assistance:

When Kai Khusrau observed the battle's stress,
The world grown straitened to his heart, he went
Apart and prayed to God to do him right:—
"O Thou beyond the ken of saints," he said,

"The Lord of this world and the King of kings!
 If I had never been a man oppressed,
 And tried like iron in the crucible,
 I would not ask to be victorious,
 Or urge my cause upon the righteous Judge."
 He spake and laid his face upon the ground;
 His bitter lamentations filled the world.
 At once there came a furious blast, which snapped
 The green boughs, from the battlefield raised dust
 And blew it in the Turkmans' eyes and faces. [\[174\]](#)

Kaykhusrau's prayers were heard. The next day, Gustaham routed a contingent of sleeping Turanians and Rustam eliminated the survivors, including their leader, Qarakhan.

Alerted to the role of Rustam's army, Afrasiyab decided to eliminate Rustam before facing Kaykhusrau. He abandoned Gang Dezh and rode ceaselessly to head off Rustam. Kaykhusrau, who was staying away from the battlefield grooming his army, sent a message to Rustam. He apprised the champion of Afrasiyab's intention to ambush him.

In time, Kaykhusrau moved closer to Gang Dezh. Afrasiyab, too, realized the futility of trying to ambush Rustam, especially since the champion had been alerted by Kaykhusrau. He dispatched a messenger to the Khaqan of China for help before he returned to Gang Dezh. There he saw to the fortification of the Dezh and sent Jahn to mediate with Kaykhusrau.

"Afrasiyab repents," said Jahn. "He accepts that he has been an instrument of Evil. He wants the king to know that the slaying of Siyavosh had not been his doing. He does not want his grandson to become an instrument of the devil and eliminate people whose lives had been spared. He also wants his grandson to know that winter is near and that this whole plain turns into an ice-box. Since the might of the adversaries is equal," Jahn said, implying that Afrasiyab also carried the *farr*, "would it not be better to cease hostility and sign a peace treaty?":

"I will take the Turkmans
 Of Chin, will dash the heaven upon the earth
 And pierce this people with the scimitar,"
 Shall I become a captive in thy hands?
 Presume it not, for this shall never be;
 None will erase a man indelible.
 The grandson am I of Zadsham the king,
 Descended from Jamshid and Faridun,
 My knowledge and my Grace are both from God,
 And I possess a pinion like [Surush](#). [\[175\]](#)

"He offered to leave his kingdom to you," said Jahn to Kaykhusrau, "and cross the Kaymak River, if you allow him to keep Gang Dezh as a resting place. He will recognize your suzerainty and bestow upon you the very treasure that Tur denied Iraj."

Kaykhusrau listened carefully and then responded. "Although I find your speech very convincing on the face of it," he told Jahn, "your eloquent speech remains just that, eloquence. There is not a grain of truth in either your statement or in the words of your father. How can I rule the whole world while my father no longer lives? Has Afrasiyab forgotten his crime? Has he forgotten that after my father's death, he had my mother whipped so that she would lose the child she was carrying? Which shah, lord, or champion has treated his kin with such contempt? He dragged my mother, a noble woman, his own daughter, out of her quarters and handed her to common criminals to dispose of. Thanks to the intervention of wise Piran, we were saved. Tell Afrasiyab," said Kaykhusrau firmly, "that I am here and that I have the grace of God on my side."

"Afrasiyab could not change Destiny then," Kaykhusrau continued, "and he cannot change Destiny now. He put me with the shepherds. I was denied rest and sleep throughout my childhood. When I grew to a young man, he had Piran bring me to his presence. He questioned me to find out if I would be a threat to his throne and crown. But the Almighty put a seal on my lips; I appeared like a dumb mute in his eyes. He felt he could spare me. Could not truthfulness have cost me my life? What sin had Siyavosh committed? Didn't he recognize Afrasiyab's sovereignty? Didn't he set up a whole kingdom in Afrasiyab's name? Wasn't he a most loyal servant? He was all this, but Afrasiyab's evil nature could not tolerate him. Afrasiyab is heir to Tur, who treated his father in exactly the same way that Afrasiyab treats his family. Didn't Afrasiyab kill Nawzar the valiant king? Didn't he kill his own brother, [Aghriras](#)? Are not these actions provoked by Ahriman? Is he not producing the very excuse that Zahhak and Jamshid produced to justify their evil deeds? Even in the war of the Pechenegs, where Piran decimated the house of Gudarz, Afrasiyab was the main evil force. Did he not bring a major force to the Oxus and did he not send Shideh to kill me and bring him my head? The Almighty is on my side. He has bestowed upon me the throne and the crown. He keeps my memory of the crimes of Afrasiyab fresh. Henceforth, the sword will speak for us and we shall not meet until the Day of Judgment. Tell my grandfather," Kaykhusrau concluded, "that I have come to eradicate evil wherever it dwells."

Kaykhusrau's response infuriated Afrasiyab, who ordered his army to prepare for war. Kaykhusrau, too, arrayed his host, placing Rustam's forces on the river side of the fort. Gustaham and Gudarz were placed on the adjoining two sides, while the king himself occupied the remaining side.

Kaykhusrau had a moat two spear-lengths deep dug around the fort to prevent the Turanians from mounting a surprise attack. He placed two hundred war machines, equipped with catapults and *naphtha* throwers, in front of each gate. Other catapults were positioned along the wall. Finally, a tunnel was dug into the massive wall of the fort. In this tunnel, Kaykhusrau ordered wood, soaked in *naphtha*, to be placed and set on fire:

Around were ranged two hundred arbalists,
 And, when a foe's head showed above the ramparts,
 Those engines showered like hail thereon; behind
 Were Ruman troops engaged in working them.
 The Shah then bade that elephants should draw
 Shores to the hold. He undermined the walls
 And shored them up; upon the wooden props
 He smeared black naphtha, such was his device,
 Whereby the walls were stayed and overthrown. [\[176\]](#)

Having checked Afrasiyab's attacks from all sides, once again, Kaykhusrau, sought the Almighty's aid:

When all had been prepared the king of earth
 Drew near the Maker of the world in prayer,
 Writhed in his quest of vengeance like a serpent
 Upon the dust, and praised the Almighty, saying:—

"Thine is it to abase and to exalt;
 In every strait we look to Thee for succour.
 If Thou perceivest that my cause is just
 Make not my foot to slip, hurl from the throne

This sorcerer-king, and give me joy and fortune." [\[177\]](#)

At Kaykhusrau's behest, Afrasiyab's impregnable fort was set aflame and simultaneous assaults were mounted on its four walls. Afrasiyab's troops found themselves hit from both within the fort and without. From the outside they were hit by rocks thrown by catapults and by arrows; from the inside they were assaulted by the ever increasing flames.

Smoke forced the Turanians to make a choice. They could either give themselves up or throw themselves off the high walls. Before long, the main wall, too, was penetrated, and Iranian troops entered the fort. Turanians, incited by Afrasiyab, fought on the broken walls, but to no avail. Rustam carved his way through the Turanian forces with ease and led his champions to the middle of the fort. There he captured Garsivaz and Jahn, pulled down the black banner of Turan, and hoisted Iran's purple flag above the fort.

Defeated, Afrasiyab looked at Gang Dezh; he was filled with disappointment. On the one side stood his captured brother and son, on the other the Turanians who had trusted him and who were being put to the sword or thrown under the feet of formidable elephants.

When building Gang Dezh, Afrasiyab had foreseen the possibility of a day when he might need to lead his elite force out of the fort unseen. For that purpose, he had built an underground tunnel from the center of the fort to the desert. Leaving his people in consternation, now he used that tunnel and, with his elite force, fled to the safety of the desert.

In due time, Kaykhusrau entered Gang Dezh, placed himself on his grandfather's golden throne, and ordered his men to bring Afrasiyab to his presence. But Afrasiyab was nowhere to be found. He had vanished. Even Garsivaz and Jahn did not know his whereabouts.

Kaykhusrau took charge of the Dezh. He opened Afrasiyab's treasures to the Iranians. He gave strict orders, however, that no commoner should enter the harem and none of Afrasiyab's women should be seen in the city. Turanians were given amnesty so that they could live their lives as they had before their defeat.

This benevolence was not welcomed by the Iranians, especially those inclined to enter the enemy's home and grab whatever booty they could. Kaykhusrau, they said, had forgotten his mother's and his own misfortunes at the hand of the Turanians. "Rather than its conqueror and master," they complained, "he treats the Dezh like an invited guest."

Kaykhusrau summoned the *mu'bad*s and explained his reasons for leniency. "As pleasing as revenge upon the defeated enemy is," he explained, "I have decided to side with justice. It is your duty, therefore, to preach to the multitude that revenge must be tempered with justice and that justice was served when Afrasiyab was overthrown. Tell them they should go about their lives and, rather than creating grief for others, be sources of joy and benevolence themselves. After all," he concluded, "it is benevolence that remains when all else perishes."

To this assembly of champions and learned men, Kaykhusrau ordered the women of the court to be brought. Everyone thought that he intended to have them all beheaded. Instead, he listened very carefully as the women, led by Afrasiyab's chief wife, pleaded their case. The latter swore that she had been a pawn in the hand of Ahriman and that wherever possible she had tried to dissuade Afrasiyab from inflicting harm:

The chiefest of the ladies with her daughters,
 Came wailing to the Shah; each daughter had
 A hundred slaves with ruby crowns before her,
 Their jewelry was like the shining sun;
 The raiment that they wore was cloth of gold.
 All carried golden goblets in their hands,
 Their hearts were awe-struck at the king of kings;
 The dames were all musk, rubies, gold, and gems,

And hung their heads down in their shamefastness[.] [\[178\]](#)

With regard to Siyavosh, Afrasiyab's consort wife was sympathetic. "I tried," she said, "to dissuade my husband from harming the innocent prince, but I was not able to prevent his murder. I did what I could. I cried tears of blood. It is, however, not worthy of a king such as yourself," she pleaded, "to treat us in the manner that Afrasiyab treated your father. We are innocent":

Unworthy 'tis for monarchs to behead
 The innocent. Thou hast another home,
 For none may tarry in this Wayside Inn,
 So act as God requireth at thy hands,

And hold in awe the Day of Reckoning. [\[179\]](#)

After listening to both the women and their accusers, the king forgave the women and sent them back to their quarters. "It is true," he said, "that Afrasiyab did not treat my mother as a royal lady deserved. But it would be wrong to correct a wrong with another wrong":

"Be at your ease; hear what I say in person:—
 No miscreant that breaketh faith am I;
 Henceforward ye have naught to fear from me,
 And none shall entertain the wish to harm you,
 Or otherwise his own life shall be brief.
 Now in your palaces at ease abide,

Your souls and bodies unto God confide." [\[180\]](#)

To appease the Iranians, Kaykhusrau gave up to them all the treasures of Turan, except Afrasiyab's personal treasure. "Use this money," he said, "and rule the lands that I bestow upon you as God pleases." Seeing his benevolence, the Turanians flooded the new king's court, each seeking to contribute to his vision of a unified Iran and Turan.

As was the custom after every victory, Kaykhusrau wrote a silken letter to Kayka'us. "I have captured Gang Dezh," he wrote, "but I have not been able to capture Afrasiyab. He has vanished. I shall inform you about his whereabouts as soon as I hear from my scouts."

Kaykhusrau spent the winter and most of the following spring in that beautiful paradise, hunting while waiting for intelligence on Afrasiyab. Finally he received word from Khutan and China that, as a result of an alliance between Afrasiyab and the Faghfur, a formidable force led by the Khaqan had reached Gulzarriyun:

Then tidings came from Chin and from Khutan
 Now that Afrasiyab was with that folk:—

"His cause is taken up by the Faghfur,
 And clamour filleth all the land of Chin
 Whence troops extend to the Gulzaryun;
 The Khan of Chin himself is in command.
 None knoweth how much wealth, how many slaves,
 And steeds with harness, the Faghfur hath sent
 Afrasiyab. A host acclaimeth him,
 And he hath all the treasures of Piran—
 Enough dinars to load six thousand camels—
 And as he bare them from Khutan an army
 Flocked round him." [\[181\]](#)

The news of Afrasiyab's return caused the newly rehabilitated Turanians to revolt against Iran and seek revenge. Afrasiyab's ranks grew daily. When the armies met, Afrasiyab, against the wishes of his allies, champions, and wisemen, challenged Kaykhusrau to single combat. Advised by Rustam, Kaykhusrau refused. "Were the kings to settle the affairs of war by single combat," he responded through the messenger, "why was it necessary to assemble such formidable armies? Supporting me are champions like Rustam and Giv. If your master wishes, he is welcome to challenge them. The chapter on personal enmities between us is henceforth closed."

That day the war raged on and many were killed. At dusk, Kaykhusrau exhausted, returned to his headquarters to discuss the day's events with his champions. "Afrasiyab did not fight today as I had expected," said the king. "He has reserved his energy, I believe, to mount a surprise night attack. To prevent disaster, therefore, have a ditch dug between the armies and, before the army rests, extinguish all fires." He assigned a major force to Rustam and sent him to the adjacent plain and another to Tus and sent him to the side of the mountain. "Now," said Kaykhusrau, "the army can rest. If Afrasiyab implements his plan, as I think he will, he will face a ditch in front of him with two major forces attacking his rear."

Kaykhusrau was right. As soon as the scouts brought news that the Iranians were sleeping and that they had neglected to assign guards, Afrasiyab ordered his warriors to mount the attack. And he fell squarely in Kaykhusrau's trap. His troops, mostly killed in the ditch, were decimated by Tus and Rustam as they retreated. Exhausted, Afrasiyab dragged himself to his headquarters with difficulty.

Once again, Kaykhusrau sought his grandfather but, as soon as the sixty-year old man saw Iran's purple flag replace his black banner, he disappeared. Kaykhusrau then gave an audience and, after entertaining his champions, went into seclusion to pray. This done, he granted his army all that they had captured and left for Bihisht Gang.

When news arrived that the Turanians had lost the war, the Faghfur and Khaqan regretted having allied themselves with Afrasiyab. To mend fences, they decided to shift their allegiance towards Iran and, to that effect, prepared a treasure trove for Kaykhusrau. The Iranian king accepted the gifts and sent encouraging words to Khutan and China. The import of his reply was that the rulers of those regions must make their enmity against Afrasiyab explicit.

The departure of his allies worried Afrasiyab who now felt totally insecure. For days he led his men across the desert. He climbed Asparuz, built ships, and crossed the Zereh to reach Gang Dezh.

Once again Kaykhusrau had to worry about his grandfather. "This is my last battle with my grandfather," he said. "And to bring this episode to a close, I intend to capture Chin and Maha Chin, cross the Kaymak Sea, and make Makran submit to my rule. I shall then cross the Zereh waters and annihilate Afrasiyab."

Crossing the waters of Zereh did not sit well with the army, but Rustam, convinced that Kaykhusrau was right, supported the king's plan. Following Rustam, the army too gave its support to the king.

Kaykhusrau then sent Giv with a letter and many gifts and beautiful damsels to the court of Kayka'us. Garsivaz and Jahn were sent along in chains for punishment.

Kayka'us received Giv with great honor and read Kaykhusrau's letter. After listening to Giv, he ordered Garsivaz to be thrown into a dungeon for his part in the murder of Siyavosh, and he put Jahn under house arrest. Kaykhusrau then set out in the direction of China. He stopped first at Khutan, where he was met at a distance of about fifteen miles before the city walls by the Faghfur and the Khaqan of China. His hosts had spent lavishly in decorating his camping quarters and had revitalized the country for him to enjoy. The Faghfur, especially, opened his treasury and gave handsome gifts to all those who accompanied the king, including the border guards.

After a three-month stay, the king forged ahead in the direction of Makran. He marched on Makran, leaving Rustam behind. The ruler of Makran was the only king to refuse to provide provision for the king's army. He was slain, but accorded proper burial:

The monarch of Makran at the army's centre
 Died smitten by a double-headed dart.
 One asked: "Shall we cut off his head, O Shah!"
 Who answered: "We will treat him with respect.
 Who cutteth off kings' heads unless he be
 A villain of the seed of Ahriman?
 Prepare a charnel-house, musk, and rose-water—
 A sleeping-chamber worthy of a king—
 And, seeing that the wound is through his mail,
 By that same token strip ye not the body,

But veil his visage with brocade of Chin,
 For he hath died the death that heroes die." [\[182\]](#)

The treasures of the king of Makran were divided among the Iranian nobles and the army. Orders were issued to allow the defeated Makranis to live as they had in the past.

Kaykhusrau stayed the next year in Makran until spring brought new life to the region. He then moved in the direction of the desert and of Zereh, leaving Ashkash in charge of the conquered region. For seven months his ships traveled on the water. The bewildered troops saw strange scenes played in the deep. Finally, when they disembarked on the edge of the desert, Kaykhusrau was informed that Afrasiyab had again appeared in Gang Dezh. From where they had landed to the Dezh was a distance of about five hundred miles. Kaykhusrau installed Giv here and himself set out in the direction of the Dezh.

Upon his entrance to Gang Dezh, Kaykhusrau ordered his warriors to find Afrasiyab and bring him to his presence. Again, the Turanian ruler was nowhere to be found. Kaykhusrau spent the rest of the year in the Dezh. He enjoyed himself so much that he did not wish to be bothered by travel any more. The Iranians, however, especially those who wished to return to their homes and families, convinced the king that if Kayka'us were left alone in Iran without protection he might fall victim to Afrasiyab. In that case, they warned, there was the possibility that while Kaykhusrau held the Dezh, Afrasiyab could proclaim himself the ruler of Iran.

The king, sympathizing with the concerns of his advisors, summoned all those who ruled the provinces and discussed his plans with them. He installed the most capable of these governors as the commanders of the marches and left the Dezh. On the way, he was met by myriads of his subjects who brought provisions from all regions of the country. Each received gifts from the king's treasury in return.

On the way Kaykhusrau was welcomed by Giv who, along with his sailors, so facilitated the king's voyage across the sea that a one-year journey was completed in seven months. When on land, Kaykhusrau showered gifts upon the sailors and headed for the desert. Hearing about the arrival of the king in those parts, Ashkash hastened to welcome the king to Makran. The nobles of Makran, too, brought gifts and received the king's blessings. The king then appointed a prominent

Makrani ruler of Makran and went to China.

The ruler of China, Rustam, welcomed the king. Kaykhusrau talked to Rustam about the strange things he had witnessed and heard in the course of his voyage. He also apprised Rustam of the disappearance of their common foe, Afrasiyab. After a week of rest, Kaykhusrau continued his journey to Maha Chin to visit Siyavoshgird (the city of Siyavosh). Here both Kaykhusrau and Rustam mourned for Siyavosh. They recalled his untimely death and renewed their vows. Before leaving the city, Kaykhusrau, following his mother's directions, found his father's buried treasure and opened it to the public. He gave large amounts of gold and valuables to Rustam and Giv.

In Siyavoshgird, Gustaham welcomed the king, and, after the sovereign's visit to the new territories was completed, accompanied him to Gang Dezh. The king stayed one more year at Gang Dezh before he returned to Pahlav to see Kayka'us.

Upon his departure from Gang Dezh, Kaykhusrau gave Gustaham a large army and installed him as the ruler of the territory between Qachqar and the China Sea. Furthermore, he advised Gustaham to keep an eye on China and Makran and to send scouts to seek out Afrasiyab.

Kaykhusrau then collected all the valuables, animals, and slaves that he had acquired as a result of his victories and headed for Iran. His army was so large that it took ten days and nights to cross each pass between the Dezh and Balkh:

Thus Khusrau reached Chach,
And hung the crown above the ivory throne;
Then as he tarried one more week in Sughd
Khuzan and Talaman [or Baliman] appeared before him;

[All of Sughd welcomed him and rose in joy] ^[183]
He marched thence to Bukhara while the earth
Was hidden by his troops. In rest and feasting
One week was spent, the next, lamenting sore
Past times, he donned new raiment and approached
the Fane of Fire built with its towers by Tur,
The son of Faridun. He showered gold
And silver on the archmages and flung jewels
In numbers on the Fire. Then, fain to go,
The happy Shah went with contented heart,
And crossing the Jihun arrived at Balkh,

Experienced in this world's salt and sours [.] ^[184]

After this rest, it was Kaykhusrau's plan to tour Iran, town by town, until he reached Ray, Pars, and Baghdad. But Kayka'us could not wait. Upon receiving Kaykhusrau's message that he was in Balkh, the aged king rode to Taliqan and Marvud to welcome him. They met on the way to Nishapur.

After ceremonies, assignment of kingdoms, and dispatching of new rulers, the kings met and discussed the affairs of the kingdom. Kaykhusrau was worried that Afrasiyab might return to Gang Dezh and reduce his own efforts—crossing the desert and a year-long voyage in strange waters—to naught. Kayka'us proposed a solution.

"Were we to don appropriate robes and plead with the Almighty in the temple of fire to direct us to Afrasiyab's hideout," Kayka'us suggested, "it is possible that we might prevail upon him before he can restore his rule." Kaykhusrau agreed. The kings then sped to Azerbaijan where they stayed a week, addressing the sacred fire and pleading their case.

On the other side Afrasiyab, deprived of a place wherein to stay, came to Barda'. There he took up residence at the Hang. ^[185] This was a cave on the summit of a mountain which even eagles could not reach. For days on end he ruminated on his past deeds. He contemplated with such intensity that his dreams could be heard in the adjacent cave where Hum, a benevolent supporter of the Kayanian, stayed. ^[186]

Hum, upon recognizing Afrasiyab, invaded the Hang and captured the aged king. Using his *kusti* belt as a rope, he tied Afrasiyab's hands and dragged him out of the cave. ^[187] Afrasiyab's eloquence had little effect on Hum. He could not convince Hum that evil was innate in him and that he followed the bidding of Ahriman. Failing this, Afrasiyab tried a different strategy. He complained that the tight rope hurt his wrists. Hum, pitying the fallen king, loosened the knot. Afrasiyab then broke away from Hum, dove into the bosom of the waters below, and disappeared.

It so happened that at the same time when Hum sought Afrasiyab in the deep waters, Gudarz and Giv passed by. They inquired of the old man the reason for his consternation. Hum told them about his discovery of the Hang, his capture of Afrasiyab, and the disappearance of the aged Turanian king into those waters. The warriors quickly apprised the kings of what they had heard. The kings rode to where Hum had last seen Afrasiyab, listened to his story, and welcomed his wise solution for bringing Afrasiyab back to the surface. They ordered Garsivaz, Afrasiyab's brother, to be brought out of the dungeon and tortured beside the water.

Hum's solution worked. Garsivaz' cries brought Afrasiyab to the surface. Hum approached him from the side, threw his noose around Afrasiyab's neck, dragged him out, handed him to Kaykhusrau, and left the scene.

For the last time, Afrasiyab admitted that he had made a mistake and wished that his mistake be overlooked. The kings did not agree with him. Instead, Kaykhusrau drew his sword and severed Afrasiyab's head, putting an end to a feud that had consumed all the energies of Iran and Turan. Garsivaz' end was no better. He was sliced in half. Both bodies were left by the water as the kings returned to the temple of fire to thank the Almighty for His guidance. A treasure was bestowed on the temple to help carry out its mission.



Kaykhusrau kills Afrasiyab and Garsivaz

Letters were soon dispatched to all confines of the empire that the dragon-fiend Afrasiyab was dead, Siyavosh's soul revived, and justice restored. For forty days thereafter people took to the meadows to celebrate the new day inaugurated by the new king. At the end of the celebrations, the kings left Azerbaijan for Pars.

In Pars, thankful to have had as a grandson the wise Kaykhusrau who had avenged Siyavosh and restored justice among the kings and nobles of all lands, Kayka'us died at the age of one hundred and fifty. And Kaykhusrau retired into seclusion not to be seen for the next forty days.

When the wake for Kayka'us was over, Kaykhusrau sat upon his throne and addressed his people. "I have conquered all the corners of the known earth," he said, "and have expanded the kingdom of the Almighty as far as one is able. There is nothing more for me to do":

The Shah's great soul became solicitous
 About God's dealings and his own high state:
 He said: "From Hind and Chin to Rum each place
 Is prosperous; withal, from west to east,
 Mount, desert, land, and sea have I made void
 Of foes; the rule and throne of might are mine;
 The world no longer dreadeth enemies.
 Full many a day hath passed above my head,
 And I have gained from God my full desire,
 Besides the vengeance that I had at heart,
 Yet let me not grow arrogant of soul,
 Corrupt in thought, an Ahriman in faith,
 And be an evil-doer like Zahhak,
 Jamshid, or such an one as Tur or Salm .
 Sprung from Kaus on one side, on the other
 Sprung from Turan—all rancour and vainglory—
 I, like Kaus and like Afrasiyab,
 That warlock froward even in his dreams,
 May grow an ingrate unawares to God,
 And fray mine own pure soul. His Grace will quit me,
 I shall incline to falsehood and unwisdom,
 And when I pass within the gloom, and when
 My head and diadem shall come to dust,
 I shall but leave a bad name in the world,
 And make an evil ending in God's sight.
 This face of mine, this colour of my cheeks
 Will fade, my bones be clad in dust, and all
 Accomplishment be lost. Ingratitude
 Will come instead, and in the other world
 My soul be dark. Another will assume
 My crown and throne, and tread my fortune down.
 A bad name will be my memorial;
 The roses of mine ancient toils will turn
 To thorns. Since now I have avenged my sire,
 And have adorned the world with goodness,
 Have slain who should be slain, because they were
 Perverse and hostile to all holy God,
 No place remaineth—settlement or desert—
 That hath not read the legend on my sword;
 While all the mighty of the world obey me
 Albeit they be monarches throned and crowned.
 Thanks be to God who gave to me the Grace,
 With feet and wings amid the change of fortune.
 And now I deem it better to depart
 To God in all my glory, and perchance
 The Almighty's messenger may, though unseen,
 And while I still am flourishing, convey
 My spirit to the dwelling of the just,
 Because this Kaian crown and throne will pass.
 None will excel me in success and fame,
 In greatness, welfare, peace, and revelry,
 For I have heard and witnessed this world's secrets,
 Its good and ill both privy and apert;
 But still for husbandman and king alike

There is a common end—the way to death." [\[188\]](#)

Having concluded his speech, he ordered the chamberlain to lock the door and turn away those who sought his audience. For the next week, Kaykhusrau remained in seclusion, praying to Yazdan, pleading with Him to keep evil away from him so that he would not follow the way of the fallen: Zahhak, Jamshid, and Kayka'us.

A week later, amid the consternation of his champions and nobles, Kaykhusrau returned to the throne room only to announce that he intended to continue his prayers and seclusion. He asked all present to do the same and left strict orders not to be disturbed either by the royal court or by the general public.

A week after that, the Iranian champions, greatly dismayed, assembled at court to decide on a course of action for the future of Iran. It was decided that Giv should go to Rustam in Zabulistan and that another messenger should be dispatched to Kabulistan for aid. The nobles of these lands must be told, the champions concluded, that Kaykhusrau has chosen the company of Ahriman. "We are afraid," said the champions in their message, "that Ahriman may lead our great king astray in the same way that he led Kayka'us away from the right path. We urge you," the message concluded, "to bring with you the astrologers of Kabulistan, the wisemen of Zabulistan, and all the savants of Qinnauj, Danbar, Murq, and May."

Rustam and Zal received the messenger graciously and complied with the order of the assembly. As soon as the astrologers, the wisemen, and the savants reached Zabul, the entire body set out for Iran.

Having concluded another week in seclusion, Kaykhusrau appeared before the assembly to discuss his situation. Refusing to sit in their places as protocol required, the champions addressed the king from where they stood. They wondered if their actions had triggered the stance that the king had chosen for dealing with matters of state.

"It is not that I do not need your help," said the king, "but that at present I cannot involve myself in matters of state. Our land is secure. Our troops need not be mobilized. My problem is personal. I have set myself a task that requires my undivided attention. As soon as I have reached my goal, I shall discuss everything with you. For the present, however, I wish you well and bid you to return to your homes."

When the champions were gone, Kaykhusrau ordered the chamberlain to resume the seclusion procedures and returned to his chambers to pray. "You have created the universe," he prayed, "and You have kindled the light of benevolence, justice, and love in this world. What benefit would I draw from this kingship, if You are not pleased with me? Assess my good and evil and, if worthy, accept me to paradise."

For the next five weeks, Kaykhusrau remained in prayer. His body could no longer tolerate lack of sleep. His mental abilities, however, kept the vigil until he met Surush. Surush's message was simple. If you wish to reach heaven, you must abandon all involvement with your terrestrial existence. Appoint a just overseer for your kingdom and depart: Surush's departure woke the king. He praised God and, soon after, met with his champions to discuss the future:

I have attained my wish,
 And must dispatch because glad news hath come.
 Whenas mine eyes were sleeping yester-morn
 Surush, the blessed, came to me from God,
 And said: "Prepare, for 'tis thy time to go,
 Thy watching and distress are overpassed."
 So now mine audiences, care for the host,
 For crown and throne and belt, are at an end. [\[189\]](#)

Zal praised the king and pledged his allegiance. "This," Zal said, "is not my pledge alone, but the pledge of the peoples of kingdoms as far as Qinnauj, Danbar, Murq, and May. We all feel that throughout history, no king has ruled Iran as well as you or has possessed your benevolence and eminence."

Kaykhusrau thanked Zal and others for their support and concern. "As I told you earlier," said the king, "my problem was personal. It took me five weeks of constant vigil and supplication until, last night, Surush finally blessed me with an answer. There is an end to everything, including kingship. And there is a time when the concerns of a kingdom become secondary to the greater good. For this reason, I have decided to step aside and allow a new king to continue the rulership of Iran."

The king's decision came upon the Iranians like a bolt from the sky. Zal questioned the king's wisdom. "The king is not himself," he said. "Is this the king speaking," he asked, "or is this Ahriman? Fereydu and Hushang were great kings; they did not abandon their kingdom and seek seclusion!"

"Great king," said Zal, addressing Kaykhusrau, "my conviction requires that I relate some history that might not be pleasant. But so far as the telling of this history might bring about a change in your decision I feel compelled to tell it. You are a Turanian by birth and you grew up in Turan. The involvement in magic of your maternal grandfather, Afrasiyab, is well-known. Your other grandfather, Kayka'us, is not any different. A kingdom stretching the face of the earth from east to west could not content him. He had to travel in the sky so he could count the stars. Ancestry, however, is not the only measure of a man's status. As king, you have contributed greatly to the well-being of this land. In the war with the Pechenegs, you showed great chivalry before Khwarazm was reduced. And had Afrasiyab defeated you, Iran would have been naught but a bowl of dust. No one could have prevented him from enslaving all Iranians, men, women, and children. God helped you defeat that fiend and erase evil from the face of this earth."

"You might deem," continued Zal, "that the problems of Iran are solved. But that is a false impression. Leaving kingship to others at this crucial juncture will deprive Iran of its most reliable pillar of strength, and you of the *farr*. My advice is that you break away from Ahriman and allow wisdom to guide you to the Creator":

If thou art bent on such a course, O Shah!
 No one will go about to do thy bidding,
 And then thou wilt repent thee of thine acts.
 Consider! Do not what the divs command.
 Moreover if thou seekest thus their way
 The Worldlord will withdraw from thee the Grace,
 Thou wilt be left in misery and sin,
 And men will never hail thee Shah again;
 God is our Refuge; therefore turn to God,
 Because He is our Guide to what is good.
 If thou rejectest this my counselling,
 And trustest unto wicked Ahriman,
 Thou wilt retain no homage and no fortune,
 No royal majesty, no crown, no throne.
 May wisdom be the leader of thy soul,
 Because the way in front of us is long.
 Mayst thou be prudent, may thy counsels prosper,
 And may thy brain be steadfast and devout. [\[190\]](#)

Kaykhusrau responded with reserve. "I have listened carefully to the aged Zal," he said, "and I do not wish to dismay either him or Rustam who has many times saved my life in battle. Yet I, too, must say what needs to be said. I praise Zal for being forthright in assessing the situation. His allegation that I have abandoned the Creator, however, is not correct. My very life flows from the Creator. My decision is based on my experience and wisdom. I have not, as Zal intimates, turned away from the path of wisdom. Now, let me put Zal straight in his understanding of who I am. First, regarding his assertion about my Turanian ancestry and his claim that no wise men were ever born in Turan. I am the son of Siyavosh, from the seed of Kayan. My grandfather is Kayka'us, whose wisdom and benevolence is recognized worldwide. True, my mother is the daughter of Afrasiyab. But we should not forget that Pashang sired Afrasiyab and that Pashang's grandfather was Fereydu. I am not at all ashamed to be reminded of my genealogy. A whole world trembled at the feet of Afrasiyab. Second, Kayka'us' attempt to reach the stars should be evaluated in the context of kingship. Kings are required to deal with the extraordinary. I challenged Shideh for exactly the same reason. Besides, Shideh was not a commoner":

He said to Zal: "Forbear thine anger, thou
 Shouldst speak in measured words. First, for
 thy saying:—
 'None wise and shrewd hath issued from Turan,'
 Worldlord and son of Siyawush am I,
 A prudent monarch of the Kaian stock,
 The grandson of the worldlord Kai Kaus—
 The love-inflaming, wise, and fortunate—
 And through my mother from Afrasiyab,
 Whose wrath deprived us both of food and sleep.
 Sprung thus from Faridun and from Pashang,
 I shame not at my birth because the sea
 Could not have purged the Lions of Iran
 Of fears inspired by Afrasiyab.
 Next for the carriage which Kaus once made
 To raise his head above sovereignty,
 Know that no blame attacheth to a king
 For lofty aims [." [\[191\]](#)

"Third, when I became king," Kaykhusrau went on, "there was only one black spot on my ancestry. I erased that black spot. And with that, I have expended my *raison d'être*. Remaining as your king, I feel, will give me cause to indulge in extravagance and traverse the route that Zahhak and Tur took—the road to Hell. I have been in prayer for five weeks. The Creator has accepted me. Where I intend to go, I have no need for an army, a crown or a throne. I have to travel light." Then

addressing Zal, he added, "interpret my intentions as you wish; nothing changes my course in the direction of the Creator."

Kaykhusrau's words affected Zal greatly. The old man blamed himself for his lack of insight and begged the king's forgiveness. "Perhaps," he said, "it is I who am being misled by Ahriman. I looked to the past for guidance; no king, to my knowledge, has chosen the path you are about to walk. I spoke out because I could not bear parting with my king."

Zal's words pleased Kaykhusrau. He held the aged warrior by the hand and placed him next to himself on the throne. "I know," said the king, "that your intentions were good. Now, I would like all champions to move their armies out of the city and set themselves up in pavilions in the country. Provide a palace for me as well."

When the camp was in order, the champions assembled and took their places before the king, according to protocol. Kaykhusrau addressed the assembly: "Great champions of Iran! You well know that only good and evil are eternal and that everything else is ephemeral. We try hard, we gather riches and fame only to leave them for our enemy. For our struggle, however, there is a reward and a punishment. Of the kings of the past all that remains today is a name. We know Hushang, Jamshid, and Kayka'us. They did some good, but in the end they are remembered for their oppression and evil deeds."

"I am an individual like them," Kaykhusrau continued. "I devoted my life to my people. Now I have reached a point where this world no longer sustains my interest. I have been given access to a domain that is greater than the crown of the Kayanian. I am ready to leave this kingdom. But before I go, I intend to bestow my lands, weapons, and treasures to the people of Iran. While I make a count of my properties, slaves, and animals and divide them equitably among you, I want you to stay in this camp for the next week, eat, drink, and have a good time."

While some warriors and nobles questioned the king's sanity, others followed his decree and spent the week as he wished. On the eighth day, the king ascended his throne in full regalia. The main treasure of the *khusraus*, known as the *Abad* chest, was open and waiting his decree.

Kaykhusrau called Gudarz of the House of Kishwad. "Gudarz," he said, "there is a time for hoarding and a time for spending. I want you to travel the length and breadth of Iran and refurbish any house that has come to ruin and any water course that has been neglected or destroyed by Afrasiyab. I want you to find the orphans, the widows, the homeless, and the needy and invite them to share this treasure among themselves. If you find a city that has come to a disastrous end, or a temple of fire that needs repair and attendants, or old men who can no longer sustain themselves, I want you to dip into this *Bad Avard* treasure and help refurbish and rejuvenate them. A third, the *Arus* treasure, founded and enriched by Kayka'us, is now in the city of Tus. I want you to take charge of that treasure and divide it among Zal, Giv, and Rustam."

Having divested himself of the world, Kaykhusrau addressed the people of Iran. "My time has come," he said. "Ask me for what you want and I shall grant your wishes."

The champions were distressed. They did not know whom to follow in time of war. Zal, the most loyal of the champions, took the floor. "Your Majesty," he said, "it is appropriate that I speak frankly about Rustam and his contribution to the well-being of the royal house. He is the champion who rescued Kayka'us when he was in fetters in Mazandaran, along with Gudarz and Tus. He killed the White Demon and he decapitated Sanjah. He sacrificed his son, [Suhgrab](#), to avenge Kayka'us and eliminated Kamus the Kushan. Now that the king has decided to leave the throne, what reward does he have for the hero?"

"The Creator," said the king, "more than anyone else will reward Rustam for his good deeds. For my part, I shall bestow upon Rustam the rulership of the territory of Nimruz." A proclamation was written, signed, and handed to Rustam. Along with this, he rewarded all those who were known to Rustam and who had contributed to his realm with silk garments, gold, silver, and a cup full of jewels.

It was then Gudarz' turn to defend his son, Giv. "Your Majesty," Gudarz said. "Since the time of Manuchihr to Kayqubad and from the latter's time until the Auspicious Rule, I have served this crown and throne. Of my total of seventy-eight sons and grandsons, only eight live. The rest have been martyred for the king and crown. My son Giv combed Turan for seven years, eating nothing but zebra's flesh and wearing deer's hide, until he accomplished his mission and brought the shah back to Iran. Now that the king intends to leave the kingdom, what reward will this champion receive?"

The king praised Giv, whom he called his own double. "You underestimate the contributions of your warrior son," said Kaykhusrau. "I bestow on Giv the rulership of Isfahan and Qum." Addressing the Iranians, he then praised the deeds of Gudarz. He reminded all present of the sacrifices that the family of the warrior had made and asked everyone to respect and heed Gudarz.

After Gudarz, Tus stood up and addressed the king. "Your Majesty," he said, "from among the champions assembled here, I am the only one from the line of Fereydu. I have served the throne since the time of Kayqubad. I commanded the army that was mandated to pursue the revenge of Siyavosh in the mountains of Hamavan, I did not abandon my command in the battle of Lavan, and I had the honor of being fettered with Kayka'us in Mazandaran. Now that His Majesty intends to leave the kingdom, what will become of me?"

The king told Tus that he would remain the commander-in-chief of the armed forces and the ruler of Khurasan. An order to that effect was written up, signed, and handed to Tus with golden bracelets and belts.

Although the affairs of the realm were now in capable hands, Luhrasp had not yet been among those rewarded. The king asked Bizhan to summon Luhrasp. When Luhrasp arrived, Kaykhusrau stepped down from the throne, took the crown from his own head and placed it on Luhrasp's head. "Luhrasp," he said to the consternation of all present, "you are now the shah!"

Zal contested the ascension of Luhrasp. "Your Majesty," he said, "we will accept dirt as king, were you to wish such. But how can a lowly man, who arrived in Iran upon one horse, become the king of the land? Had you not commissioned him to the battle of Alanan and had you not bestowed upon him an army and a banner, where would he be today? Who is this man? What is his ancestry? Did Your Majesty not see anyone among the present company better suited for the rulership of Iran?"

The Iranian army, too, echoed the sentiments of Zal and refused to carry out the mandate of a king whose rule was not sanctioned by the Creator. But Kaykhusrau continued to support Luhrasp. "Luhrasp," he said, "is not who you think he is. He is the grandson of Hushang; he is wise and, more importantly, he carries the *farr*. Like me, he will fight evil and will inaugurate a just rule. Furthermore, Luhrasp's son, [Gushtasp](#), will bring a new day and a new age to the world. Heed my advice and follow his decrees":

Since God approveth not of ill from us,
And bad men writhe 'neath time's vicissitudes,
While he whom God createth for high fortune,
Fit to be monarch and adorn the throne,
Endowed with modesty, Faith, birth, and Grace
Will flourish, conquer, and rejoice in justice.
The Maker is my witness when I say
That all these qualities are in Luhrasp.
He is descended from Hushang the worldlord,
A noble of discernment and clean hands,
A scion of Pashin and Kai Kubad,
Well stocked with knowledge, righteous in his thoughts.
He will cut off the sorcerers from the earth,
And manifest the way of holy God,
His counsels will renew the age's youth,
And as he is his stainless son will be.
God said to me: "Look thou upon Luhrasp,"
And I have acted only as He bade.

Now do ye homage to him as your Shah,
 And as ye love me slight not mine advice,
 For if a man transgress mine parting counsel
 I shall esteem his past exertions as wind [.] [\[192\]](#)

Convinced of his mistake once again, Zal dipped his finger into the dust, passed it across his lips and proclaimed Luhrasp the shah of Iran. "We are ignorant, Your Majesty," he apologized to the new king. "It takes a king to know the true genealogy of another king." The new king accepted Zal's apology.

When the time for his departure arrived, Kaykhusrau spoke to his wives. He asked them to regard him as one who is already dead. The women did not wish to let him go. They cried as they pulled their hair, beseeching the king to take them along with him. Kaykhusrau calmed them. He then addressed Luhrasp: "These are the women of the court of the Kayanian," he said. "They are the mothers, daughters, and wives of kings. I trust their well-being to you, and I wish to receive a good report on the day that you meet Siyavosh and me."

Luhrasp accepted the responsibility. Kaykhusrau's last advice to Luhrasp was one of humility and acceptance: "Rule justly and keep the interest of your subjects in mind. As soon as you feel that kingship no longer interests you, rather than trying to make it interesting, leave it and save your soul." Luhrasp kissed the ground before Kaykhusrau.

Zal, Rustam, Gudarz, Giv, Bizhan, Gustaham, Fariburz, and Tus accompanied Kaykhusrau on the first leg of his journey. The army followed. At every station, attempts were made to persuade the king to give up his intention and return to his kingdom. But Kaykhusrau was determined to leave. He assembled the *mu'bad*s and asked them to work for the final reunion. "I have a long way before me," he said, "a way which yields neither water nor grass. Only those endowed with the *farr* can walk this road and reach its end. For this reason, I feel it is in your best interest to return. Let me pass into my other realm alone."

Zal, Rustam, and the aged Gudarz heeded Kaykhusrau's admonition and returned. Tus, Giv, Bizhan, and Fariburz continued on the way. They went for a day and a night into the desert, until Kaykhusrau stopped at a fountain. "We shall stay here for the night," he said, "and we shall talk about the past. We will not be together much longer. As soon as the sun rises, Surush will meet me and my journey will come to an end."

In the evening, the king washed in the fountain and said goodbye to the champions. "You must return now," he said, "before the sun rises from behind the mountain. At that time, a wind will blow the intensity of which would uproot trees, a black cloud will cover the sky and blanket the ground with deep snow. You will not find your way back to Iran." The champions were not convinced. They stayed.



Kaykhusrau passes the crown to Luhrasp

When the sun rose the next morning, the king disappeared into thin air. The search of the champions for Kaykhusrau took them deep into the desert, but they could not find a trace of their king anywhere there. Disappointed, they returned to the fountain. "This is a pleasant place," Fariburz said. "Why not stay here for the night and take the news to the army tomorrow? It will, of course, be difficult to convince people of what we have seen—a living being walking to meet the Creator. On the other hand, who would doubt that Kaykhusrau was an extraordinary being!"

They hardly had finished their supper when the wind picked up and snow covered the ground. Soon the snow became intense, overwhelming the champions. One by one, they perished.

For three days, Rustam, Zal, and Gudarz waited on the mountain to meet the returning champions. No one came. "If the king has gone," Gudarz wondered, "what could have happened to the rest?" Nobody had an answer. The stay was prolonged a week, until Gudarz was convinced that, once again, members of his house have been sacrificed for the house of Kayan and that he would never see Giv and Bizhan again.

Succumbing to the rule of the Creator, an unwilling Gudarz allowed himself to be brought down from the summit. He cried for the departure of his son, his king, and his companions while, along with the surviving champions, he pledged to spend the rest of his life at the threshold of King Luhrasp.

Appearance of the Prophet Zoroaster

After the disappearance of Kaykhusrau in the Pure Light, Luhrasp, the grandson of Kaypishin from the seed of Kayqubad, ascended the throne. As the exchange between Zal and Kaykhusrau regarding Luhrasp's ascension to the throne indicates, many of those present at the court were not supportive of Kaykhusrau's choice. On the contrary, the Iranian champions looked upon Luhrasp as a relatively small player who had only recently been appointed the governorship of Alanan and overseer of the Ghuzz Fortress. The Iranian champions deemed those positions to be too inferior compared to the position to which Kaykhusrau intended to elevate Luhrasp, i.e., the rulership of the united Iran and Turan. Besides, we should not forget that at court, and in the presence of the king, Zal only ceremonially conceded to Kaykhusrau's wishes and supported Luhrasp; in reality, however, he regarded the king's choice an affront to the House of Nairam, a House that had descended from Zahhak, on the one hand, and Jamshid, on the other hand. Predictably, therefore, at the beginning of Luhrasp's rule, Zal, Rustam, and the rest of the champions of the House of Nairam left the capital for their own kingdom of Zabulistan.

From its very inception, Luhrasp's rule was confronted with difficulties. The departure of Zal and his clan for Zabulistan was only one of the adversities that befell Luhrasp. His other difficulty was caused by the violent death of four of Iran's best champions—Fariburz, Tus, Giv, and Bizhan. When the monarch set out to meet Soroush, they accompanied him then, on the way back, they were caught in a violent storm and perished. The departure of the House of Nairam, the death of these four major champions of the realm, and the conflict between Luhrasp with his son, Gushtasp, over the rulership of Iran affected the country's standing in the world of the time adversely. Enemies from within and without could congratulate themselves that the end of the Kayanian dynasty was at hand.

Luhrasp had two sons, [Zarir](#) and Gushtasp. Ancient Iranian tradition dictated that at the end of his rule, the king should pass the scepter to one of his sons. Luhrasp, ignoring this tradition tried to pass the kingship on to one of the grandsons of Kayka'us. But he was not able to carry out his plan, which was detrimental to the interests of valiant and headstrong prince Gushtasp. In fact, Gushtasp insisted that the kingship of Iran was his by divine right. In the long run, Luhrasp agreed with his son and retired to the Nowbahar Firetemple where he became a recluse. The Iranians hoped that the new king, after reconciling the differences between the two houses, would return the House of Nairam back to serve at the behest of the kings of the Kayanian dynasty.

The importance of the kingship of Luhrasp was in that during his rule the mode of operation of the government of Iran underwent a noticeable change. Until the end of the kingship of Kaykhusrau the Iranians had believed in saint-heroes like Kaika'us and trusted them. During the rulership of Luhrasp, the human element in government begins to show itself alongside the divine. This to the point that a son would demand from his father to abdicate his kingship in order for him and his

commanders to reorganize the kingdom and right all wrongs. This gravitation to human rule, be it the rule of a king or the guidance of a seer, paved the way for the emergence of the Prophet [Zoroaster](#). After Zoroaster, the organization of the Iranian state becomes the business of a divinely chosen monarch assisted by divinely recognized *mu'bad*s. Even in historical times, during the reign of kings like Cyrus and Darius, the same dual structure remained as the mainstay of Iranian rule.

Recall that Kaykhusrau foretold the ascension of a king from the line of Luhrasp during whose reign a prophet with a religion based on justice will appear. Gushtasp was that king. He was wayward and headstrong since childhood. As a youth he tried to persuade his father to abdicate the throne in his favor; when his father refused, he left Iran and traveled in India. Luhrasp, with the help of Zarir, persuaded Gushtasp to return to Iran. Once in Iran, Gushtasp tried again to unseat his father and again was unsuccessful. This time, he traveled to Rum and married the daughter of the Caesar of Rum, Katayun. By the time that Luhrasp eventually relented and allowed Gushtasp to ascend the throne, Gushtasp was a seasoned individual. His marriage with Katayun indicated that his worldview was far superior to the worldview of his predecessors. During Gushtasp's rule, Iran came into contact with some parts of the world that until then had existed as mere words in the culture.

One of the major events of the kingship of Gushtasp is the appearance of the Prophet Zoroaster. Gushtasp accepted Zoroaster's religion and supported, promoted, and even personally propagated it wholeheartedly. The introduction of the religion into the newly united kingdom resulted in reviving the old rivalry between the Iranians and Turanians, but Gushtasp did not pay any attention to that. Rather, with the help of his iron-clad son, [Isfandiyar](#) confronted [Arjasp](#) around whom the Turanians had rallied and killed him. The elimination of Arjasp prevented both the dismemberment of united Iran and Turan and the destruction of the Zoroastrian faith.

The conflict between Gushtasp and his son Isfandiyar over the kingship of Iran is reminiscent of the conflict between Luhrasp and his son Gushtasp. On several occasions, Gushtasp promises his son Isfandiyar that if he could accomplish certain tasks, he would abdicate his throne in his favor. But each time that Isfandiyar returns victorious, Gushtasp finds a way to renege on his promise. For instance, on one occasion he imprisons Isfandiyar and releases him only when he desperately needs his help to defeat Arjasp. Once when Isfandiyar seriously demands his father's abdication, Gushtasp assigns him a task that he knows Isfandiyar would not be able to carry out. He asks Isfandiyar to bring Rustam, who had refused to pay tribute, in chains, to his court. Before this assignment, Gushtasp had traveled to Zabulistan and lived two years with the champions of the House of Nairam, familiarizing them with the precepts of the new religion. He thought that the conflict that he was creating between Rustam and Isfandiyar would familiarize the youth with a real champion and put some sense into his head. Rustam, however, viewed Isfandiyar's challenge differently and rose to confront his challenger. Once engaged in mortal combat, the aged Rustam could not withstand Isfandiyar's blows and was nearly killed by him. Additionally, none of his tested tactics were effective against the youth. Out of necessity, Rustam sought the advice of Zal and Simorgh. From them he learned about the mystery of Isfandiyar's iron-clad body. He also learned that if he were to fashion an arrow from the wood of the *gaz* tree and shoot it directly into Isfandiyar's eye, the only vulnerable part of his body, he would be able to destroy him. When they engaged in battle the next time, Rustam followed [Simurgh](#)'s advice and killed Isfandiyar.

After a rule of 120 years, Gushtasp died and the rulership of Iran passed to [Bahman](#), Isfandiyar's son. After Bahman, his sister-wife [Humay Chihrzad](#) ruled for 23 years. After Humay Chihrzad, especially during the rulership of [Darab](#) and [Dara](#), the line between myth and history becomes blurred.

Summary

With regard to the role that the *farr* plays in the conflict between Iran and Turan, the *Shahname* of Firdowsi can be divided into three parts. Part One begins with the creation of the world and the kingly *farr* and continues to the downfall of Jamshid followed by the tyranny of Zahhak. This part is abstracted from far-off Iranian myths in which the Creator participates directly in the organization and operation of the cosmos. Any deviation from his dictates, such as the insubordination of Jamshid, results in great calamities like the appearance of the man-eating Zahhak. In this part of the *Shahname*, the *farr* accompanies the single individual that deserves it.

Part Two begins with the division of the kingdom by Fereydun among his three sons and ends in the disappearance of Kaykhusrau in the Pure Light. During this time, the rulership of Iran is in the hands of god-kings who are constantly in direct communication with the Creator. During this time, Good and Evil are distinct, the *farr* resides with Good and guides princes like Siyavosh and kings like Kaykhusrau to deliver their people from Evil by setting a good example. Additionally, only the royal house of Iran has the *farr*. The royal House of Turan has lost its *farr* due to the murder of innocents like Iraj and Siyavosh. It strives, however to retrieve its *farr*, using all its evil resources. At this time, the individual Iranian, too, can choose between Siyavosh and Kaykhusrau (e.g., Rustam), on the one hand, and Afrasiyab (e.g., Piran), on the other hand. It needs to be emphasized that this is the most important part of the *Shahname*. During this time two Iranian houses are separated by one king (Fereydun) and reunited by another (Kaykhusrau). Were it not for a lack of hard evidence, the reconstruction of this part of the *Shahname* could illuminate many a dark corner of Iran's pre-history.

Part Three includes the reign of Luhrasp and his descendants including Gushtasp. During this time, the mythical aspect of the *Shahname* gradually gives way to its historical aspect. After the disappearance of Kaykhusrau in the Pure Light, and the appearance of Zoroaster, individuals who consider themselves deputies of the Creator manage the affairs of the kingdom. However, the direct link that existed between the god-kings and the Creator no longer exists. Before the coming of Zoroaster, kings and their commanders saw to the well being of the people. After the appearance of Zoroaster, the *mu'bad*s participate in the resolution of the increasingly complicated affairs of the kingdom. At this time, only the wisdom of the king, his consultants and *mu'bad*s prevents the country from disintegration and the religion from destruction. Furthermore, in this part of the *Shahname*, the accounts of the lives of the kings like Darius I and Darius III are related in the same vein as the accounts of the lives of Kaykhusrau and Gushtasp. Perhaps, a better understanding of the cultures of Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia might shed more light on this part of ancient Iranian history.

Bibliography

See also:

- [The Role of Farr in the Shahname](#)

- [The Shahname of Firdowsi](#)
- [Firdowsi's Shahname in Iranian Society](#)
- [Who's Who in the Shahname](#) The Characters of the *Shahname*
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[1] Tabari, 1980, pp. 3-8.

[2] Yarshater, 1983, pp. 325, 345-6, 371-2; Boyce, 1975, p. 151.

[3] For details, see Bashiri, 1994, 181-2.

[4] See, for instance, Djalal Khaleghi Motlagh, 1983, pp. 553-559. In his discussion of Asadi's Garshasname, Khaleghi points out that both Firdowsi and Asadi drew on the same or similar sources for their introductory remarks, especially in relation to the roles of Yazdan and knowledge (xirad) in creation. See also Mahmaminov's "Abu al-Qasim Firdowsi in Sadriiddin Aini's Investigation," in "Part Two" of the present volume.

[5] Warner, vol. I, p. 100.

[6] Warner, vol. I, p. 102.

[7] Same as Qayomart, the cosmic man.

[8] For a study of Gayomart and the myths related to him, see Yarshater, 1983, pp. 416-420. Same as Gayomart. The British spelling and the spelling of names in the Warner translation may differ somewhat from those in the narrative.

[9] Warner, vol. I, pp. 118-119.

[10] For a discussion of the "first man" and "first king" attributed to Hushang, Tahmuras, and Gayomart, see Yarshater, 1983, pp. 420-422.

[11] Warner, vol. I, p. 126.

[12] Warner, vol. I, p. 127.

[13] Warner, vol. I, p. 131.

[14] For a discussion of the four classes, see Darmesteter, vol. I, pp. xxxii-xxxiii. See also Yarshater, 1983, pp. 397-398, for the mu'bad's steadfast stand on keeping the hierarchy intact; see, 'Abbas, 1970, pp. 78-80.

[15] Warner, vol. I, pp. 132-133.

[16] Warner, vol. I, pp. 133-134.

[17] Warner, vol. I, p. 133.

[18] Warner, vol. I, p. 135.

[19] Warner, vol. I, p. 139.

[20] For a discussion of the development of the myths related to Azi Dahaka (Zahhak) and of the demon's eastern origins, see Yarshater, 1983, pp. 426-427. Firdowsi's version, which places Zahhak's origin in Babylonia, is a relatively new development. See also Eslami-Nodushan, 1985, pp. 131-148.

[21] For a discussion of Fereydun, his rise to power, and his harnessing of Zahhak, see Eslami-Nodushan, 1985, pp. 149-172.

[22] The land attributed to Salm is variously reported to be the European lands, the Semitic lands, or as Marquart understands it, the lands between the Aral Sea and the river Volga, i. e., western Central Asia. Salm's subjects are generally regarded to be uncivilized. Some consider the Medes among Salm's people. See Dehkhoda, Letter Sin. See also Yarshater, 1983, pp. 428-429.

[23] Turan as opposed to Turkistan is the region geographically referred to as Dehistan and Iranshahr. Turan borders Tukharistan and Chitral in the south, Khwarazm and the Qibchaq Plain in the north, the Caspian Sea and Khurasan to the west and the greater Turkistan and Mongolia to the east. Arab geographers refer to it as Mawara al-Nahr (what rests beyond the river Amu Darya). The Greeks knew it as Transoxania. See Dehkhoda, Letter Te.

[24] Warner, vol. I, p. 217.

[25] Warner, vol. II, p. 19.

[26] Tus and Gustaham are the sons of King Nawzar. Tus, a wayward champion, is not endowed with the kingly *farr*. We find him frequently at odds with the royal house and with the house of Gudarz. The latter is a staunch supporter of Kaykhusrau who wins the kingly glory in a contest against Tus.

[27] Giv, the son of Gudarz, is one of the most loved heroes of the epic. He is credited with finding and bringing Kaykhusrau from Turan to grace the Iranian throne. For a detailed study of the house of Gudarz and its relation to the Parthian dynasty, see Yarshater, 1983, pp. 457-461.

[28] See, A. Ahrarov's "Epic on the Screen," in "Part Two" of the present volume.

[29] Same as Fereydun.

[30] Same as Garsivaz.

[31] ME, vol. III, p. 9; Warner, vol. II, p. 195.

[32] The name Rustam is listed neither among the *Kavis* of the *Avesta*, nor among lesser personages like Tusa and the sons of Vaeska. He might be a figment of Firdowsi's imagination, a replacement for a *Kavi* otherwise not mentioned, or a hero of the Sakian tribes immortalized in the Sistan chronicles. For Sam and his son, Zal, and the Sakian genesis of the eastern house, see Yarshater, 1983, pp. 453-457. See also Eslami-Nodushan, 1985, pp. 291-389.

[33] The story of Siyavosh also appears in Nizam al-Mulk's *Siyasatname* (Book of Government), where the Wazir discusses the shortcomings of allowing women of the court to participate in the affairs of State. See Darke, 1962, pp. 242-245. For the role of women in the epic, see Eslami-Nodushan, 1985, pp. 119-128.

[34] Warner, vol. II, p. 201.

[35] Warner, vol. II, p. 203.

[36] Warner, vol. II, p. 207.

[37] Warner, vol. II, p. 208.

[38] Warner, vol. II, p. 212.

- [39] Warner, vol. II, p. 220.
- [40] Warner, vol. II, p. 225.
- [41] According to the *Hodud al-'Alam*, Marvrud was a "pleasant and prosperous town situated at the foot of a mountain. It abounded in fruit, and the river of Merv skirted it (*bar karan*)," p. 105. Marvrud was also on the highway (*shahrah*) that passed Fariyab and Shapurjan (now Shabirqun) to Balkh, *Hodud*, p. 39.
- [42] A survey of the literature on Taliqan reveals three locations: Taliqan of Ray, Taliqan of Tukharistan, near Qunduz, and Taliqan of Khurasan or, more precisely, of Juzjanan. This latter seems to be the one meant by Firdowsi. It was three days journey from Marvrud in the direction of Balkh. The town fell to Chingiz Khan after a seven-month siege in 617 A.H. and was razed. It was never rebuilt. See Mir Abul Ghasemi, 1970, pp. 5-25. See also Le Strange, 1977, pp. 423-32.
- [43] Quotations in the body of the text are the present author's renditions of long passages in the original text. They will not be marked for reference.
- [44] Warner, vol. II, p. 236.
- [45] Warner, vol. II, p. 237.
- [46] Warner, vol. II, p. 241.
- [47] Warner, vol. II, pp. 242-243.
- [48] Warner, vol. II, p. 244.
- [49] Warner, vol. II, p. 248.
- [50] Warner, vol. II, pp. 248-249.
- [51] Warner, vol. II, pp. 249-250.
- [52] For the significance of covenant as explained in the *Mihr Yasht*, see Gershevitch, 1967, pp. 42.
- [53] Warner, vol. II, p. 250.
- [54] Warner, vol. II, p. 250.
- [55] Warner, vol. II, p. 252.
- [56] Warner, vol. II, p. 255.
- [57] Warner, vol. II, p. 255.
- [58] Warner, vol. II, p. 258.
- [59] Warner, vol. II, p. 258.
- [60] Warner, vol. II, p. 260.
- [61] Warner, vol. II, p. 263.
- [62] Warner, vol. II, p. 264.
- [63] Warner, vol. II, p. 268.
- [64] Warner, vol. II, pp. 273-274.
- [65] Warner, vol. II, p. 276.
- [66] Warner, vol. II, pp. 277-278.
- [67] Warner [amended] , vol. II, p. 285.
- [68] Warner, vol. II, pp. 296-297.
- [69] Warner, vol. II, p. 307.
- [70] Warner, vol. II, p. 310.
- [71] Warner, vol. II, p. 311.
- [72] Warner, vol. II, p. 312.
- [73] Warner, vol. II, p. 315.
- [74] Warner, vol. II, pp. 316-317.
- [75] Warner, vol. II, p. 317.
- [76] Warner, vol. II, p. 318.
- [77] For further study of the life of Siyavosh, see Eslami-Nodushan, 1985, pp. 173-224.
- [78] Warner, vol. II, p. 321.
- [79] Warner [amended] , vol. III, p. 17.
- [80] Same as Nairam.
- [81] Warner, vol. III, p. 18.
- [82] Warner, vol. III, p. 19.
- [83] By the time of Firdowsi, Central Asia had all but lost its importance as the center of Mazdian and Zoroastrian Iran. By that time, it seems, the western Iranian lands, identified with the Achaemenian and later Sassanian powers, had become increasingly prominent.
- [84] Warner, vol. III, p. 20.

[85] Warner, vol. III, p. 21.

[86] It should be noted that *kin* (vengeance) bred *kin* and that without vengeance to set a chaotic world right, justice could not rule. To Kaykhusrau, the murder of Siyavosh represented an impudent infringement of Ahriman on the most hallowed sanctuaries of his Creator. It represented a violation of his *farr*. It was not unusual, therefore, for him to seek assistance from his co-sufferer, his Maker, in this cosmic duel for restoring the reign of justice.

[87] Note that Firdowsi does not consider language as a growing and changing part of the culture. He assumes that Pahlavi (i.e., Middle Persian) had been the language of Iran even in pre-Zoroastrian times.

[88] Warner, vol. III, p. 22.

[89] Warner, vol. III, p. 22.

[90] Warner, vol. III, p. 24.

[91] Warner, vol. III, p. 25.

[92] Piran, the ever-present commander-in-chief of Turan, was in disgrace at the time of Kaykhusrau's preparations to invade Turan. Kaykhusrau, it should be mentioned, was the cause of this disgrace because Piran had facilitated his flight from Turan.

[93] Dehkhoda (and other Persian sources) does not give this river a definite location. He merely identifies it with Turan and with the incident in the *Shahname* under discussion here. See Dehkhoda, Letter Kaf, Tehran, 1339.

Le Strange, while he does not mention either Kasseh Rud *per se* or relate his discussion to the *Shahname*, discusses a gorge in which the pile of wood to be set ablaze by Giv might have been: "One march north-west of Tirmidh, on the road to Kish and Nakhshab in Sughd, was the town of Hashimjird, a place of some importance in the 4th [10th] century, and two marches north of this the road passed through the famous Iron Gate.

"This defile in the mountains was described by the Chinese traveler, Hwen Thsang, who as a Buddhist pilgrim visited India in AD 629. The Arab geographers speak of a town here, and Ya'qubi names it the City of the Iron Gate (Madinah Bab-al-Hadid), of which he also gives the Persian form, Dar Ahanin." See Le Strange, 1977, p. 441.

Tirmidh is on the Amu Darya. The gorge, therefore, is three marches, north-northwest of Tirmidh. What other river than the Jeyhun or the Amu can Kasseh Rud be? Le Strange further observes that "with the Arabs, rivers were very commonly named from the great cities on their banks; hence the Amu Darya, the River of Amu, also was often called the Balkh River, although that city stands some miles distant from its southern bank."

For Kasseh Rud's relation to Kath, see Dehkhoda, Letter Kaf.

[94] Warner, vol. III, p. 29.

[95] Warner, vol. III, pp. 30-31.

[96] For the life story of Farud and his relation to Piran, see Eslami-Nodushan, 1985, pp. 224-249.

[97] Warner, vol. III, pp. 39-40.

[98] Warner, vol. III, p. 40.

[99] The site of this fortress is variously identified with Kalat-i Naderi, about thirty miles north of Meshed and with Kalat-i Ghilzai in southeastern Afghanistan. Neither of these locations fits Firdowsi's description. The former is the impregnable fortress that gave Alexander his share of difficulty (see, Engles, 1978, p. 88) and which Curzon considers "one of the most extraordinary natural phenomena in the world, and famous even in this land of mountain fastness and impregnable defiles for its inaccessibility and amazing natural strength" (Curzon, 1966, p. 113). This fortress, however, is not located on Sepid Kuh, the mountainous region southwest of Afghan Turkistan. Kalat-i Ghilzai is too far from Kasseh Rud and leads to the Punjab rather than to the Oxus and Sughd. This author believes that since Farud's fortification is not regarded a major fort—the Iranian army did not have a hard time capturing it—it is a *qal'a* somewhere on the Sefid Kuh between the fork beyond Herat where the traveler has to decide whether to cross the mountainous region of Afghan Turkistan to reach the Amu or enter the Qara Qum desert. Tus chooses the former. That he chooses this route in spite of his knowledge that it crosses many hills and dales further strengthens the argument that he took his army through northern Afghanistan in the direction of the Amu.

See also M. Aurel Stein, 1907; 1975, p. 37, where he attributes Tashqurqan to Afrasiyab. This stone tower is likely to have been the site of Farud's castle, especially if Tus crossed the Oxus east of Tirmidh. Furthermore, the area described above has often been in Turanian hands while the other two locations have usually been in Iranian and other hands.

[100] Warner, vol. III, p. 46.

[101] Warner, vol. III, p. 50.

[102] Warner, vol. III, p. 51.

[103] Warner, vol. III, p. 58.

[104] Warner, vol. III, p. 60.

[105] Warner, vol. III, p. 62.

[106] Warner, vol. III, pp. 71-72.

[107] Warner, vol. III, p. 75.

[108] Warner, vol. III, p. 78.

[109] Warner, vol. III, p. 80.

[110] Warner, vol. III, p. 83.

[111] Warner, vol. III, pp. 87-88.

[112] Warner, vol. III, pp. 88-89.

[113] Warner, vol. III, p. 94.

[114] Warner, vol. III, p. 95.

[115] Warner, vol. III, pp. 110-111.

[116] Warner, vol. III, pp. 111-112.

[117] Warner, vol. III, p. 112.

[118] Warner, vol. III, p. 112.

[119] Rustam's son, Suhrab, was killed at Rustam's own hand due to political intrigue and mistaken identity. Rustam never forgave himself for not recognizing Suhrab until it was too late to save the mortally wounded youth.

[120] Warner, vol. III, p. 115.

[121] Warner, vol. III, p. 116.

[122] According to Dehkhoda, Shahd is the name of a mountain in eastern Iran, located between Kashmir, China, and the Indus River. It is also the name of a river that takes source at that range. See Dehkhoda, Letter Shin. The location of the Shahd River is of particular importance here because a major battle, the Hamavan, occurs in the vicinity of this river. We shall return to a discussion of this region later.

[123] Warner, vol. III, p. 117.

[124] Warner, vol. III, p. 118.

[125] Warner, vol. III, pp. 120-121.

[126] Warner, vol. III, p. 122.

[127] Warner, vol. III, p. 123.

[128] Black magic, *divs*, and dragons were a favorite of Iranian audiences in the past. Firdowsi, however, unlike those who succeeded him in epic composition, used such devices sparingly. Here, apparently, the chronicles dictated that the Iranian army must lose again. Firdowsi assures his reader that the loss has not been due to a lack of human effort on the side of his compatriots. For discussion of magic and the role of the *divs* in the epic, see Yarshater, 1983, p. 349.

[129] Warner, vol. III, p. 132.

[130] In spite of its importance for understanding Firdowsi's epic, the name Hamavan has received little attention. Dehkhoda, following *Burhan-i Qati'*, provides the following: a mountain in Iran and, following *Anjuman Ara*, gives the following: a famous mountain from the Khurasan range where a major battle between Tus and the sons of the commander-in-chief of the Turanian army resulted in Tus' defeat. See Dehkhoda, Letter Heh.

Tus' first expedition failed because he had to cross the Amu and because he was marching directly on Sughd, Afrasiyab's domain. On this expedition, rather than turning left in the direction of Balkh and Tirmidh, Tus marched past Qunduz and Badakhshan to Shahd Rud and Hamavan.

We do not have a satisfactory location for either the river or the mountain. But what if like Kasseh Rud, Firdowsi is again using a universal attribute for the region? An appellation like *ham-ab-an* (where all waters take source) makes good sense here; three major rivers—the Amu, the Indus and the Tarim—take source here. Furthermore, the Pamirs, identified with the Shahd Mountain is the logical place for an international confrontation. Three major cultures—Indian, Turano-Iranian, and Chinese—come together in this region. Aurel Stein, who surveyed the area in 1900, described it in this way: "[At 15,800 feet] I was close to the point where the drainage areas of the three great river systems of the Indus, the Oxus, and the Tarim meet, the representatives as it were of the still greater ethnic areas of India, Iran, and Turkistan. That the view from the height of the Kushbel Peak...simultaneously comprised the confines of British India, Afghanistan, Russia, and China, was the best illustration of the abiding influence which geographical facts must exercise over political developments even in this desolate region."

Describing the advantages of the Pamirs as a means of communication, Stein continues, "But it was only in the light of subsequent observations...that I fully realized the historical interest of the route which leads through this valley." See Stein, 1907, 1977, p. 22. For Wakhan/Wakhab and the four rivers that form the source of the Amu as it flows to the Aral Lake, see Le Strange, 1977, pp. 435ff. In addition, as we shall see, the battleground is not far from Khutan, where the Iranian army enters after it defeats the Khaqan of China.

[131] Warner, vol. III, p. 134.

[132] Warner, vol. III, p. 134.

[133] Warner, vol. III, p. 142.

[134] Warner, vol. III, p. 144-145.

[135] Warner, vol. III, p. 150.

[136] Warner, vol. III, p. 151.

[137] Warner, vol. III, pp. 152-153.

[138] Warner, vol. III, pp. 155-156.

[139] Warner, vol. III, p. 161.

[140] Warner, vol. III, p. 164.

[141] Warner, vol. III, pp. 164-165.

[142] Warner, vol. III, p. 166.

[143] Warner, vol. III, p. 175.

[144] Warner, vol. III, p. 181.

[145] A native of the Sistan province.

[146] Warner, vol. III, p. 183.

[147] It should be noted that Piran is not describing Afrasiyab's physical might, rather that even his sorcery had been ineffective against Rustam.

[148] Warner, vol. III, p. 214.

[149] Warner, vol. III, pp. 219-220.

[150] Warner, vol. III, p. 230.

[151] Warner, vol. IV, p. 10. The "night attack" refers to the story of "Bizhan and Manizheh." In that story, Rustam disguised as a merchant enters Khutan, saves Bizhan from Afrasiyab's prison and attacks the Turanian king's palace by night. Afrasiyab escapes unharmed.

[152] Warner, vol. IV, p. 14.

[153] Warner, vol. IV, p. 14.

[154] Warner, vol. IV, p. 22.

[155] Warner, vol. IV, p. 29.

[156] The appearance of an interpreter is unusual for this stage of the development of the events. Both sides knew each other's language and had had no need for such help. Since this device is used only in this episode, it is possible that Firdowsi has used some of the tactics of his time, when Turks and Persians had to communicate through interpreters.

[157] Warner, vol. IV, p. 50.

[158] Warner, vol. IV, pp. 56-57.

[159] Warner, vol. IV, pp. 59-60.

[160] Warner, vol. IV, pp. 145-146.

[161] Built by Jamshid and the capital of Afrasiyab, Baikant is reported to have been in the vicinity of Bukhara. See Dehkhoda, Letter Be. Firdowsi, however, places Baikant beyond Chach, somewhere between the Syr Darya and the Issy Kul in Kharlukh country.

[162] Refers to the region beyond the border of Chach. See, Dehkhoda, Letter Kaf.

[163] Warner, vol. IV, pp. 152.

[164] Warner, vol. IV, p. 157.

[165] Warner, vol. IV, p. 159.

[166] Warner, vol. IV, p. 161.

[167] Warner, vol. IV, p. 161.

[168] Warner, vol. IV, p. 166.

[169] Warner, vol. IV, p. 168.

[170] Warner, vol. IV, pp. 169-170.

[171] Warner, vol. IV, p. 173.

[172] Apparently the name of a town that no longer exists, Gulzarriyun has given its name to the Syr river that, according to Le Strange, at some point passed through it: "In the 8th [14th] century, according to Mustawfi, the Mongol population of these parts knew it [i.e., the Syr Darya] under the name of Gil-Zariyan." See, Le Strange, 1977, p. 476.

[173] Warner, vol. IV, p. 187. Dehkhoda places Bihisht Gang, also referred to as Gang Dezh, in the region of Khwarazm. See Dehkhoda, Letter Be. The *Bundahishn*, however, speaks of a fort located in the east. Firdowsi places the fort beyond Gulzarriyun, itself beyond Chach. The present author believes that this fort must be viewed in the context of the developments of the Indo-Iranian, Iranian, and Turanian cultures. Originally, somewhere on the headwaters of the Ganges, the fort was the location from which Evil invaded the Indo-Iranian lands. During the conflicts of Iran and Turan, the location was moved to areas closer to Khutan. By the time of Firdowsi, it seems, it no longer had a particular location; it had an orientation—northeast. Firdowsi placed it in Khallukh country. The importance of Gang Dezh, whether in Jerusalem, Babylon, on the Ganges or in Khallukh country rests in the fact that it is the place from which Evil issues and chaos begins.

[174] Warner, vol. IV, pp. 191-192.

[175] Warner, vol. IV, pp. 202-203.

[176] Warner, vol. IV, p. 208.

[177] Warner, vol. IV, pp. 208-209.

[178] Warner, vol. IV, pp. 213-214.

[179] Warner, vol. IV, p. 215.

[180] Warner, vol. IV, p. 216.

[181] Warner, vol. IV, p. 219.

[182] Warner, vol. IV, p. 243.

[183] The Russian edition prefers the verse in brackets to the one citing Khuzan and Taliman.

[184] Warner, vol. IV, p. 255.

[185] In the *Avesta*, the Hankana (cf., Hang) is an impregnable subterranean pleasure palace built by Afrasiyab. Possibly related to the abode of Ahriman from where he launches his assaults on the kingdom of Good, the Hang is located in the east of Iran rather than in Barda', in the west where Firdowsi locates it.

[186] Hum is a reference to the god *Haoma* who drags Frangsiyana along in the seas and brings him to the lake Chaechasta (read Lake Urmia) for Kaykhusrau to execute. Cf., Yarshater, 1983, p. 441.

[187] *Kusti* is a ceremonial belt worn by the Zoroastrians.

[188] Warner, vol. IV, pp. 272-274.

[189] Warner, vol. IV, p. 285.

[190] Warner, vol. IV, p. 288.

[191] Warner, vol. IV, p. 289.

[192] Warner, vol. IV, p. 302.