

Studying the Characters of Mythical and Mythical Creatures in “Shahnameh” (History of Kings)

Khalil Olah Sadeghloo

Farhangian University, Gonbad, Iran

Abstract

In ancient times, clergymen were the all-knowing men of their era and were doing medical actions. It is very probable that one of these clergymen, called “Sena” (means falcon) was a prominent clergyman and had a reputation for medicine science and treating the patients and over the time the stories of this man the fairies of “Sena” tree and “curing” tree have been all together attributed to the mythical bird. Present study is conducted in descriptive- analytical method and it has studied the concept and feature of mythical and mythical creatures in Shahnameh (History of Kings). The present research contains several verses of Shahnameh about mythical creatures and has evaluated them in a completely analytical method. The aim to the research is studying the concept and character of all mythical and mythical creatures in Shahnameh.

Keywords: character, conceptual, role, mythical creatures, mythical creatures, Shahnameh

Introduction

The first story in which “Simorgh” is mentioned is “Zal” Story. Here, we quote a few verses of this famous story:

“There were no children for “Sam,

And his heart was pounding for love of
“Delaram”,

Which was such a beautiful girl?

Her face was tender as a flower, and her hair
smelled like musk,

She was pregnant from Sam,

She bore to a very pretty baby,

But his hair was all white.”

When people see the face of the new-born baby, they hesitate to take the news to his mom. Finally, his nanny finds the courage to

inform Sam on the matter, which gets so depressed upon seeing the child, whispering to God:

“This child is such as Devil’s child, with his black eyes and snowy-white hair. I do not know whether he is the son of Devil or Mythical.”

Then he commands to take the child so far away. The servants take him to Alborz mountain, in which “Simorgh” resides.

“In the mount they left the child

That was the destiny, so bitter and so wild.”

God does not forgive Sam for his misdeed and gets furious upon this matter. As a result, no children would be born in Sam’s house again. Simorgh steals the child to feed his chicken with him instead of blood of other creatures, but the chickens feel affectionate toward Zal and refuse to eat

him. Zal grows up in the nest of Simorgh. One night, Sam dreams of Zal being alive, and goes to Alborz Mountain the next day. Omniscient, Simorgh realizes that Sam has come for taking back his child. He says to Zal then:

“I have brought you up such a nanny, but your father has come and now I have to give you back to him.”

Zal refuses first, but Simorgh warns him that if he visits the kingdom throne, he will never come back to his nest. However, Simorgh continues:

“Take with you now my feather,

Keep it with yourself forever,

If any hardship you encounter,

Or any evil comes to you

Throw my feather into the fire,

To see at that time my power and honor.”

Zal uses this feather in his hardships, such as the hard and painful delivery of his son, Rostam. Later, Zal throws the feather in the fire. By this, Simorgh appears and finds Zal in a great grief and despair. Then, Simorgh takes another feature off his arm and gives it to Zal, and leaves. It is the second action of Simorgh in Shahnameh. Simorgh appears two more times in Shahnameh. The third scene of his appearance is less known. So, the fourth scene which is the last scene of Simorgh appearance for guiding Rostam in his encounter with Esfandiar is explained briefly here and then we will give more details regarding the third scene.

Esfandiar, Iranian prince and renowned hero travels to Sistan Province along with his father to captivate Rostam and take him handcuffed to his father, Goshtasb. Rostam which do not intend to fight Esfandiar at all, does his best to convince him not to start the fight, or at least not to handcuff him (which means to Rostam as the demise of his heroic profile and greatness), to no avail. Rostam which cannot bring himself to accept it, states:

“Who told you to come and handcuff me? My hands will not be tightened even by all forces in the universe.”

Finally, the fight breaks out. In the first day of the fight, Esfandiar shoots several arrows toward Rostam and his horse, Rakhsh, causing considerable damages to both. Meanwhile, Rostam’s arrows do not do any harm to Esfandiar. Exhausted, Rostam goes to sleep with little hope to resume the fight the next day, or even the following days. At night, he throws the feather of Simorgh into the fire. Simorgh appears and heals the wounds of Rostam and Rakhsh in the same way as he had cured Roodabeh (Rostam’s mother). Simorgh then warns Rostam not to kill Esfandiar, declaring that Esfandiar’s murderer will be in agonizing pain and torture in this world and the other world. He says the murderer of Esfandiar will soon be killed afterwards. However, he guides Rostam to Gaz tree upon his insistence in order for Rostam to take a two-blade arrow from the tree. The next day, he shoots the very arrow toward Esfandiar’s Achilles tendon (his eyes), killing him. After a while Rostam himself becomes murdered by his brother, Shaghaad, but kills him a few moments before his death. Rostam’s family soon faces him demise in the hands of

Esfandiar's son, Bahman, which does this because of vengeance. Therefore, prediction of Simorgh comes true.

The third scene in which Simorgh appears is in the fifth course of Seven Adventures (Haft khan). In this adventure, a "Seven adventure"-like show has been arranged, of which we do not talk in detail. The fifth adventure is killing the Simorgh in this show. The question is "if Simorgh had been killed in Esfandiar's seven adventure, how come he appears and assists Rostam in the fight?" This question will be answered by Simorgh himself. In this stage the killing of him is being discussed. Gorgsar, Esfandiar's guide tells him about Simorgh:

"You behold a mountain in the air,
On which a bird is governing,
Simorgh calls him efficient,
If he sees an elephant,
He can take hold of him,
Such as whales in the sea and panthers in the land,
Do not consider him equal to magic power,
When he flies to the sky,
Earth and Sun seem inferior to him."
He tries to avoid Esfandiar from fighting Simorgh. But Jahanjooy does not listen to him and prepares himself for the fight. In the third adventure- Killing the dragon- he had commanded to build a strong and firm safe and put blades and spears all over it, placing it on a carousel. Through this trick, he overcomes the dragon. In his fight with Simorgh:

"He gave the authority of army to the commander,

And took the horse, safe and carousel.

When he started commanding,

He saw a mountain, its head up in the sky.

When he saw Simorgh out of safe,

And he saw the army and sounds of horn beyond it,

He came out from the mountain like a black cloud,

Neither sun was visible nor the cloud,

He intended to take hold of carousel,

Such as preying a panther,

Seeing him exhausted and bleeding,
Simorgh's chickens escape the battlefield
and no one ever could find them.

Ferdowsi does not mention anything about Simorgh's mate or the gender of the bird who had stolen Zal in any of the scenes. Even in this scene that Simorgh comes to Esfandiar's fight with his chicken, he is practically alone and his chickens are not of any help, except preventing him from killing the infant (Zal). But when Simorgh arrives to help Rostam and heals his wounds, he scolds him due to his fight against Esfandiar.

"why did you bring up war on Esfandiar?"

You know he is brave and invincible,

"If he did not want to tighten my hand", said Rostam"

I would have no ill thoughts on him,

I prefer to fight and kill him,

Rather than tolerating disgrace.”

But Simorgh believes that Rostam has to obey Esfandiar, and does not consider the allegiance as a disgrace:

“no one is equal to him in his time,

Iran relies on him.

It’s no surprise to avoid him,

We remember how he killed my mate.”

This is the first time that Simorgh’s mate is mentioned. The reason is the previous scene, in which Simorgh was killed and his return in the next scene should be justified.

The other important point is that Simorgh does not hold any grudge against Esfandiar. On the contrary, he adores Esfandiar and calls him “peerless and the cause of Iran survival”.

Body of research

Simorgh has been mentioned in many Iranian folkloric and mythical stories. But since the sixth century, this mythical bird is considered as the “king of birds” which resides in Qaf Mountain. In this perception, sufi and mystic poets have taken Simorgh the same as its western equal, Phoenix and blended Phoenix fairies with the ones of Simorgh. Anyway, considered mystically, Simorgh is an allegory of complete human being which is concealed, and also is a symbol of unlimited and invisible entity.

Attar in “Mantegh-o-Tayr” (Story of Birds) has used Simorgh to address unlimited and invisible existence which is nothing else than Simorgh which God worshippers are

craving to see him and be at His nearness. He has made a word trick with “Simorgh” and “Si morgh (thirty birds)” and has indicated that these two concepts are actually one. Of course there is a nominal similarity, but numerous differences exist between these two concepts and Attar’s explanation can be considered a poetic contemplation or popular beliefs.

Dragon

Dragon is a mythical creature in almost all of global cultures. It has a significant status in myths of world.

This word in Persian is “az-daha” or “azi-dahaka” which implies two meanings:

- 1- Large snake
- 2- A mythical creatures like a crocodile which has two wings and sends fire out of his mouth. He is known to be the guardian of underground treasures and in Shahnameh it has been addressed to imply other things such as horse, or sword.

The root of “az-daha” and “Zahak” (tyrant in Ancient Iran) is the same. It has other structural forms such as “Azdar”, “Azdarha” and “Azdahat” which means “a large and mythical snake with an unusual wide mouth.” “Azdaha” which is pronounced “azi” in Avestaai Persian, “az” in Pahlavi Sasanian Persian, and “ahi” in Sanskrit, means “a horrible and mortal snake”. In ancient Iranian transcription, this word is used in a popular way.

The feature of dragon in Iran mythical history is in the utmost ugliness and horribleness. They are mentioned as the first accomplices of “Ahriman” (Devil) which

distort the pure creation and entity of “Ahura Mazda”, but they cannot deform or discredit it.

Dragon in his first appearance, takes the figure of “bad-mannered stranger commander” and attacks Iran, overthrows the king and rules the country. He corrupts people’s lives, blocks the water resources and makes them more needful than ever. This non-Iranian tyrant finally becomes overthrown by a magical weapon and heroics of peerless royal heroes of Iran.

Truce, peace and beauty are the gifts of good and prosperous kingdom in Iran. The war stories of “Fereydoun and Zahak”, “Esfandiar and Arjasb of Touran” and the story of battles of kings such as “Manouchehr” and “Keikhosrow” with “dragon-wise Esfandiar” can be counted as the types of stories in which dragon appears with a non-Iranian tyrant appearance.

Oracle

This word is “Soroush” in Pahlavi Persian. It has two meanings:

- 1- Messenger angel
- 2- 17th day of any month on solar calendar

In Avesta (Zoroaster’s holy book), this word means “obedience and allegiance”, especially obeying God’s commandments. It is derived from “Saroua” which means “to listen” in Avestae Persian. In Gathas, “Soroush” is mostly defined so, such as many segments of Avesta. In Gathas (Sina, book 5) it is the symbol of obedience and surrender to Ahura Mazda’s commands. “Soroush” is prominent considering his position, and in the ancient literature of

Zoroaster, he is one of the angels which will be appointed for giving rewards and punishments in doomsday.

This angel participates in the beginning of doomsday (Sina, 43- book 12) and he has been introduced as courier of God and bearer of revelation in ancient book of Zoroaster. Thus, he has been considered the same with Gabriel in Persian and Tajik books. Also, he is responsible for preserving 16th day of every month. Abouraihan Birouni has mentioned this day as “Soroush” (in Sogdian, “Sor’esh) in the list of Gods’ days in his book, “Asaar-Al-Baghieh”. This word sometimes implies the aforementioned angel in Persian and sometimes Tajik. (Borhan-e Ghate’ corrected by Dr. Moein)

“God has created 35 angels “Soroushan”, and 30 days of month has been named with the name of thirty of them. The other five are called “robbed five and the last five days of the year are named after them. The mentioned thirty angels are working on the affairs and goodness of the month which has named after him, such as khordad month which is guardian of water, Ordibehesht is guardian of fire and Mordad is guardian of tress, as the rest of angels are responsible for preserving what is written on his declared letter (Borhan-e Ghate’).

Any angel who is a courier, especially the courier of good news is called prescient caller (Rashidi). The one who just carry all kinds of news is called (Ghias-Al-Ghas) and the angel who carries revelation equals to Gabriel (Jebrei’l) in Arbaic.

Discussion

“God sent an auspicious angel,

Which appeared to me the night before?

To make a secret solution.” (594- Vol. 1-24)

So, Devil sees his wish fulfilled and appears two more times. After Zahak’s story, Devil is mentioned with the name of “Ahriman”. But, when kavoos releases from Hamavaran prison and comes to Persia, he makes demons (Divs) to construct glorious buildings. This causes demons to be exhausted. One day, when Kavooos is not present, Devil secretly provokes the demons to think of a way for Kavooos’s demise. They send one of the demons to Kavooos, which encourages him to fly to the skies.

“One day, far from Kavooos,

Devil made a gathering with demons,

“”Today” he said, “is the day of hardship for king,

“Now a demon has to rise to kill the king,

To save the demons from this pain,

Other usages of this word indicate the deceit of this creature.

“Both Zahak and Jamshid lamented,

“Devil deceived us,

And prevented us from any good deeds”,

Even the king, was misled by Devil’s mischief,

Anyone who turns his back to God,

His vow is considered broken,”

“You must have heard that King Kavooos,

Lost the right path due to Devil’s tricks.”

In Persian poem, the word “Eblis” (Devil) has been used instead of “Ahriman”. It should not be forgotten that Ahriman is not created by Ahura Mazda. But, “Eblis” is God’s creature. However, in Persian literature, these two words are replaced and also “Sheitan” (Satan) has been used instead of the mentioned words.

Demon (Div)

This is a Pahlavi Persian word and is an imaginary creature which is figured as a horrible creature and has a very tall stature. Demons are considered to be from Satan’s ancestry. Its plural form is “Divan” (demons). (Moein Dictionary, 705).

“Div is some kind of devil (Dehkhoda dictionary, pages 587-589)

In Tarjoman-e-Quran (translation of Quran) it is named Sheitan (Satan), and in “Asadi Toosi” dictionary it is named “Ahreman”.

In Zoroaster religion, any of mischief forces, or Satan was considered evil and this was shared between old ancestry of Iranians and Indians before Zoroaster. But after the separation between Iranians and Indians, some of demons which were holy for Indians and worshipped by them, considered evil and deceiving. In Zoroaster religion we have numerous demons (death demon, fury demon, darkness demo, etc.) but seven demons are more important than others (including Ahriman) and are against seven Amshaspands. In Iranian local legends demons are mentioned several times. For instance, Tahmoures is famous for captivating the demons and Jamshid governs the demons as Suleiman the Prophet did. In some of these legends, Mazandaran is considered as the land of demons. However,

one cannot recognize the real meaning of demon in all contexts (Dehkhoda dictionary, pages 587-589).

Persian Encyclopedia states: "Div Saran (demon-wise group) in Mazandaran was a bunch of demons which ruled Mazandaran until the era of Safavieh dynasty. One of them was called Alvand Div, which they captivated and prisoned him in Fars Province."

In Avesta, word "Daeva" (Bartolomi, page 677), in ancient Persian, "Daiva" (Kent, page 189) and in Sanskrit "Deva" (Kent, page 188) is mentioned. It has been now reformed in Indo-European language to "Div" in modern Persian. The precedence of this word dates back to Aria tribe. Divan (demons) was a group of Arian Gods which were berated and rejected upon Zoroaster emergence (Iran culture and myths in Pahlavi literature, Rahim Afifi, page 522).

This word means "light" in Ancient India and also was one of the names of God, as it is in most of current Indo-European languages, such as Zeus in Greek (Vameghi, Angderoshan, page 90) and "divos" in Greek, "dieu" in French and "deity" in English (Oxford, page 227).

We are not completely sure that whether Mithraism proclaimed duality or not, or what Mithraism followers call demonic creatures. In corrected version of "Yasht" which is available, "Divan"(demons) are considered as harmful creatures, but "Div" was equal to "God's light" in Mithraism from the very first. That is why demons are considered responsible for evil, and are defined as Gods rejected by Zoroaster. In other words, demons are Gods of Eastern community which conflicts with the society

which believes in "Gahan", and gradually they transform into fake Gods.

Based on myths of Creation, after Ahura Mazda creates mundane and spiritual world and Amshaspandan, Gods and Farvehar, Ahriman starts to create harmful and vicious creatures to form the evil world. Therefore, a div is appointed against each God. In fact, these demons are the associates of Ahriman and "there is no evidence to prove they are the symbol of Ahriman himself" (Iran culture and myths in Pahlavi literature, Rahim Afifi, page 523).

It should be noted that "Kamaleh Divan" appears only in Zarathustra literature and in Achaemenid inscriptions only "divan" has been mentioned. In a part of Xerxes inscription (which is in three languages: Ancient Persian, Elamite and Babylonian) which is available in Persepolis, "Divan" has been referred to. Kent has included this inscription with the title of "Xph" in pages 150 and 151 of his book about Grammar of Persian language:

"Among these countries there was a place in which demons were worshipped. Upon command of Ahura Mazda, demons were worshipped in that temple, and I worshipped Ahura Mazda and Art with utmost modesty and humbleness."

Some of orientalist such as "Kent", "Hans Hartmann", "Nieberg" and "Levy" believe that the demons mentioned in this book are non-Iranian Gods. Among them, only "Hertsfield" confirm that they are Iranian. "Hans Hartmann" states that demons of inscriptions are Gods of Babylon, and he gives Herodotus's narrative as a document. "Levy" declares that the rebellion which has been remarked in the inscription is the

rebellion of Greek people which Xerxes referred to them as Persia subjects. The story of destroying home of demons is strongly interpreted as burning "Acropolis" palace and its temples.

However, Xerxes has explicitly banned worshipping demons in this inscription; thus, the demons mentioned in it cannot logically be Greek Gods and researcher should not investigate the concept of "home of demons" in Greece. In fact, evidence suggests that the demons which are referred to in the inscription are not non-Persian. Maybe the writer felt no need to mention the location due to the fame of that event and the person involved in it.

A segment of Avesta book is named "Vandidad". "Vidaeva" is an adjective which means "not being demonic". Vi- is a prefix which means "except" and daeva- means "demon" or "Div". vidaeva is translated "anti-demon" in some contexts. Ancient Iranians used to have two types of God: one was called "Ahooreh" and the other, "deva-". Seemingly, Ahooreh group could maintain its divine position by Zoroaster reforms and on the other side, "deva" group changed into demons. Div is the remaining part of "dew" in middle Persian language, which is the remaining of "daeva-" itself. "Dad" means "law", and Vandidad is equal to "non-demonic law" all together.

In text of Ancient Iran era we face numerous demons (Divan) which have particular duties and unique adjectives. But some of them are anonymous, such as Gods. These demons do not have equal power and their positions and statuses differ according to their function and importance. Demons'

business is corrupting the world and creatures living in it.

Ghoul

A ghou (Gul in Persian) is a word which is used mostly as a noun. It has two common meanings:

- 1- The place where sheep sleep in it in the night;
- 2- In some texts it has been used in the meaning of "ear".
- 3- The iron collar for animals which helps pulling the thresher.

This word is originally Arabic. It is a mythical creature with a horrible body and very tall stature. "Jagual" and "Gilan" are any kind of living creature which deceives and finally destroys human. It has been used in the meaning of a horrible and wicked person (Moein dictionary, page 1050).

Dehkhoda dictionary and Persian dictionary of Dr. Moein has introduced "Gul" as an originally Arabic name which has entered into Persian. Dehkhoda dictionary has quoted from Holy book: "Gul means "hairy" and it has been sometimes translated to "goat", and in some cases "demon" (div). This word refers to the images of idol worshipping practice, sometimes performed with a goat or statue of goat as an idol. This was done by Ancient Egyptians in Mendis. In Greek translation of Holy book, "Gul" is translated to "Divan" (demons). It implies the obscene spirits which reside in wrecks and ruins in the belief of Eastern people. Therefore, the word "Gul" should be derived from Hebrew. Translator of Mckenzie Pahlavi dictionary has translated the word "Manzndar" to "horribly big demon" or "ghoul". Arabic to Persian Larousse

dictionary has defined Ghoul as:” hardship and pain, what deceives and destroys human being, kind of Jin which has unique spells and changes constantly, an imaginary creature which is half-human and half-beast.”

Fairy

Fairy is used in the meaning of beautiful woman. This word is equal to “Parika” (پریکا) in Avesta, “Parig” (پریگ) in Pahlavi of Parthian Era and “Parik” (پریک), which means a stranger woman.

Fairy is one of the imaginary and legendary creatures which are frequently referred to in public and superstitious culture. In Avesta, fairy is a satanic creature which is depicted as deceiving and beautiful woman who mislead people or makes them lose their mind with his constant appearances and disappearances.

In Seven Adventures of Rostam, a gorgeous woman approaches Rostam while she is playing a musical instrument, inviting him to a party to rejoice. But both heroes recognize her and kill her in the battle. In Islamic culture which became prevailing after Arabs’ invasion on Iran, fairies are depicted as lovely and benevolent individuals who love generous and well-hearted people, making them prosperous. King of fairies is a good and high-souled man and his son and daughter exemplifying perfection, beauty, wealth and prosperity. The story of beautiful fairy who shared the fortune between people has been detailed in King Jamshid stories. In Iranian myths, fairies are from the generation of angels exiled to heaven, they would have been allowed to return to Heaven if they would

repent. The name of fairyland in mythical literature is Peristan, Qaf Mountain.

The word “fairy” (پری) is equal to “Pairika” in Avesta, “Parig” in “middle Persian language, “Parik” in Parthian Pahlavi, “Parig” in Tarfani middle Persian, “Parik” in Sogdian, “Parik” in Armenian and “Perai” in Pashtu. This word has no equal in Indian language. The root and derivation of this word is not known exactly. Several theories have been suggested on this matter:

Bartholomi considers “Pairika” as the feminine form of “Paraka” and compares it to ancient Indian word “Parakiya” (accomplice to others, enemy), concluding that it means “strange woman”.

In Zarathustra religion and in Mazd Yasna literature, fairy has been introduced as one of symbols of evil and traps of Devil. It depicts fairy as a follower female of Devil (Ahriman). In Vandidad, fairy is considered the enemy of earth, plants, water, fire and beasts. And even fights with Tistrya, God of raining. Also, it is mentioned that the seventh country Ahura Mazda created was Veakarata (Kabul) in which Ahriman produces fairy. Further, it is explained: “Zoroaster tells Ahriman that he shall destroy Khonseiti fairy and Nasou demon. One of other fairies of which Avesta mentioned is Dejasiri or demon of famine. Tistrya captivates this demon with firm and unbreakable chains.

Also, in religious texts of middle Persian and Pahlavi literature, fairy is a satanic creature which enjoys from her magical power and can transform into any figure to deceive the heroes and damage Ahura Mazda creatures. In selections of “Zad Esparam” book, fairy’s navigator cow

transforms into a dog. Upon seeing this, Srit shoots an arrow to him which results in changing the dog into two dogs. Continuing the shooting makes the dogs to one thousands. Then, the dogs attack at Srit, killing him.

One of the features of this story is fairies stealing heroes' horses. The only way for heroes to take back their horses is mating with fairies and producing child for them.

This mythical behavior is exemplified in "Rostam and Sohrab" story, where Rostam goes hunting in the Border of Iran and Touran. After preying a zebra and eating it, he goes to sleep. While he's asleep, Rakhsh is stolen by a bunch of Turani people. Then, Rostam goes to Samangan in order to find Rakhsh. Following the conversation between Rostam and the beautiful Tahmineh, Tahmineh accepts to find Rakhsh provided that Rostam marries her to give her a child.

This notion also exists in "Bijan and Manijeh" story. Once again, a fairy appears, tricks him into sleeping and steals his horse. All these issues are being attributed to a Devilish fairy, a notion which derives from the moralities of that era. She is Goddess of fertility, and she chooses a new husband for herself every year. This man becomes the city ruler, and this scenario repeats every year. Old texts state that this Goddess possessed a temple and governed people like a queen.

At last, the tradition of killing the heroes leads to emergence of "Mirnoroozi" ceremony which was commonplace in different years all over Iran. This issue is being repeated in the story of "murdering Jamshid upon Zahhak's command" or

"zahaak's captivation in the hands of Fereydoun", which both of them bed Shahnavaaz and Arnavaz respectively after overthrowing the king. Perhaps all of these stories are a "mythical memory" from the matriarchy era.

New and popular species of marriage with heroes in folkloric stories and legends are reflected in the form of wedding of young prince with the fairy king's daughter or the marriage of a man with a pigeon-appearance fairy, which leaves her husbands and children after a while and return to her homeland among fairies. The love story of "Shaikh of San'an" to a Christian girl, which its ancient form can be found in gnostic myths and literature, is considered as another form of this ancient mythological context.

This research reveals that opposite to Christensen's idea, all the "fairy" words in Shahnameh are not used in the meaning of gorgeous and attractive face and this word has several mythical usages and implications such as "demons" or other ominous creatures.

First time we face with fairy's face in Shahnameh is in Kioumars story. Fairy fights beside Ahriman (Devil) and his army to revenge Siamak's murder and thus, she is counted as another devilish creature:

"Fairies, panther and lion gathered,

And so did the wolf and tiger (299- page 1-13)

An army consisted of the wild, the domestic, the birds and fairies,

Which had the most ominous thoughts and intentions." (300-page 1-13)

In Shahnameh, fairies obey Jamshid:

“you have all the world under your thumb,

The wild, the men, the birds, the demons
and fairies.” (6911-page 1-29)

In other instances, “fairy” is used to describe the appearance of women and men, and sometimes we observe that benevolence appears to Fereidoun in the face of a fairy. Fairy appears again in the story of “Bijan and Manjeh” as it was describe earlier.

Along with its derivatives, “fairy” (Pari in Persian) word has been used 50 times in Shahnameh. These compositions include: “Pari-chehreh, Pari-chehregan, Pari-rooy-Pari-zadeh, Pari-zadegan.” (all of which means “pretty face).

Simorgh

“Simorgh” word is used as a noun: a mythical and imaginative bird.” (Moein dictionary, page 1984).

Simorgh is a well-known creature, and it is called Simorgh (which means thirty birds) because any color of a given bird’s feather can be found in Simorgh’s feathers. (Ghias-Al- Ghaas) (12255-12256- Dekhoda dictionary)

Originally, It is Sin morg (in Pahlavi Persian), china (in ancient indian), mogha soanava (on Armenian). In Paragraph 97 of “Farvardin Yasht” (book of worshipping Farvardin) we read: “we praise Farvavar of good religious (Farvavar-e Pak din, Saena) which is the son of “Ahoom setot”. He is the one who emerged in this land with hundreds of followers. In paragraph 5 of chapter six in seventh book of “Dinkard” we read: “it has been stated that he was born one hundred

years before Zoroaster’s birth, and died two hundred years after emergence of religion. He is the first man in “Mazdisna” who lived 100 years.” Also in ninth book of Dinkard in chapter 24, he has been introduced as one of Zoroaster’s pupils. Researchers have translated “Saena” word in Avesta to “eagle” or “falcon” and have considered it the same with “Vaghana”. Undoubtedly, there is a relationship between “Saena” in Avesta and “Simorgh” in Persian language. As we know, clergymen performed the medical duties in addition to their religious tasks in ancient eras. So it can be perceived that “Saena” was one of wise people in ancient era whose named was derived from the name of the mentioned bird. He possessed an important clergy position which has been mentioned clearly in Avesta, and he was famous for curing and healing patients on the other hand. Afterwards, “Saena” was used as the name of the bird and its medical aspect was attributed to “Simorgh” and the bird on which he lives. In paragraphs 24 to 28 of “Bahram Yasht” (book of worshipping Bahram) we read: “anyone who carries a bone or feather of this brave bird (Vaghana) with himself/herself, no hero can overcome him, and the feather makes him be praised and eminent. No tyrant, wild beast or evil creatures can outfight him until he/she is carrying the feather.” (West translation, chapter 62, paragraphs 37-40).

Taghipour Namdarian, the eminent researcher, believes that Simorgh in this story is in fact the code of “Gabriel”, because almost all attributes of Simorgh exist in Gabriel. Their appearance (large stature, glory and beauty, and feathers) are similar to each other. According to Verse 1

of “Fater” Surah in Holy Quran, angles have wings.

In story of “Zal and Simorgh”, Simorgh is the mediator of occult force and Zal has a prophet-like appearance. This connection resembles the one of Gabriel (revelation angel) and the prophet. A story similar to bringing up a baby by Simorgh cannot be found about Gabriel in Islamic culture.

Gabriel is the protector and maintainer of children of Israeil tribe which their mothers have hidden them in caves due to the fear of Pharaoh. The similarity between healing Rostam’s wounds by Simorgh with Islam stories can be observed in Mohammad (Peace Be upon Him)’s chest tearing apart in Me’raj event. As Simorgh has his nest on “Hervisb Tokhmak”, Gabriel lives on “Sedrat-ol- Montaha” tree.

Sometimes Simorgh is being confused with other mythical birds such as Phoenix (Anghaa in Arabic). The common feature of them is that both are “bird” and “legendary”. In fact, Anghaa is mythical related to the “ignorance era” of Arab tribes and Simorgh is a Persian bird. The mentioned similarities caused poets and authors to take these two instead of each other, but their roots and origins are different (Taghipour Namdarin, Visiting Simorgh)

Simorgh, Anghaa, thirty birds

All Iranian people have heard the name of “Simorgh”. Most of them are aware that Simorgh has brought up Zal, Rostam’s father. Fewer people know that Simorgh was of valuable help to Rostam in his fight against Esfandiar and healed the wounds of him and his horse over the night, and also he

guided Rostam toward “arrow of Gaz tree” which caused Esfandiar’s demise finally.

The second part of this word (Morgh) means “bird” in ancient languages and also in Persian. The bird which we call its female species as “hen” was named “fowl” (Makian) in older times. The first part of this word in Avesta is “Sena” (“Sin” in Pahlavi Persian) and means “eagle” or “falcon”. So, Simorgh means eagle or falcon originally. That is why Simorgh is considered a huge bird in Iranian myths. But since old times, the wise men knew that such bird does not exist and the words “Simorgh” and “Kimia (Alchemy) are the symbols of qualities which are imaginative and cannot be found in real world.

In Avesta, nest of Simorgh is on a tree in the middle of “Farakh kart” sea. This tree “contains effective and healing medicines and the seeds of plants are placed in it”. Pahlavi books have elaborated about this tree (Shit 12-17):

“Simorgh nest is over a tree which contains the seeds of plants and can counter any kind of damages. Anytime Simorgh takes off of it, one thousand branches grow on it and when he lands on it one thousand branches break and its seeds will be distributed. Another bird takes the distributed seeds to a place of which “Angel of Rain” gets water, and therefore all the seeds fall down with the rain and various plants will grow.”

Thus, in Shahnameh, medical and healing aspects of Simorgh along with his knowledge and wisdom are attributed to a tree on which he resides. But moreover, Simorgh can speak, and there are several instances of him talking to Rostam, Zal and others. There are several talking birds.

References

The Shahnameh: The Persian Book of Kings
[Abolqasem Ferdowsi, Dick Davis, Azar Nafisi]