


# The Opposition between Good and Evil in the Story of Jamshid

## La oposición entre el bien y el mal en La historia de Jamshid

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## Summary

The good-evil opposition is amongst the most pivotal themes of Shahnameh. Belief in two evil and good forces has found its way from the heart of the ancient Iranian myths into Shahnameh making this epical work the arena of the battle between the good and evil forces. In this eternal battle which is as old as the mankind history, the symbols of good rise up against the manifestations of evil and each of them try overcoming the other. Kingship of Jamshid can be divided into two different sections. In the first period, he invents a lot of things based on his enjoyment of the divine glory and gives rise to a golden period for the Iranians through his services. In this period, the good forces have domination over the evil forces and Jamshid symbolizes the good. His interventions are in line with endowing comfort and tranquility to Urmazd's creatures. In the second period, Jam thinks of himself as the God and starts exercising ingratitude, untruthfulness and insanity and becomes the symbol of evildoing and loses the divine glory and sets the ground for his own wastage and this makes the Iranians resort to Zahhak.

**Keywords:** good, evil, Jamshid.

## Resumen

La oposición entre el bien y el mal es uno de los temas más importantes de Shahnameh. La creencia en dos fuerzas malas y buenas ha encontrado su camino desde el corazón de los antiguos mitos iraníes hasta Shahnameh, haciendo de este trabajo épico el escenario de la batalla entre las fuerzas buenas y malas. En esta batalla eterna que es tan antigua como la historia de la humanidad, los símbolos del bien se alzan contra las manifestaciones del mal y cada uno de ellos trata de superar al otro. Kingship of Jamshid se puede dividir en dos secciones diferentes. En el primer período, inventa muchas cosas basadas en su disfrute de la gloria divina y da lugar a un período dorado para los iraníes a través de sus servicios. En este período, las fuerzas buenas dominan a las fuerzas malvadas y Jamshid simboliza lo bueno. Sus intervenciones están en línea con dotar de comodidad y tranquilidad a las criaturas de Urmazd. En el segundo período, Jam se considera a sí mismo como el Dios y comienza a ejercer la ingratitud, la falsedad y la locura, y se convierte en el símbolo del mal y pierde la gloria divina y sienta las bases de su propio desperdicio, lo que hace que los iraníes recurran a Zahhak.

**Palabras clave:** bien, mal, Jamshid.

## Introduction

The battle between the good and the evil is a fundamental issue lasting from the beginning to the end of creation. According to Bundaheshn, Ahura and Ahriman are always in a fight with one another. Hurmazd is busy guarding his own creatures and Ahriman does his best to do wrong (Dadegi, 2006). In Mazdaean culture, there is no other way than confronting the bad and the devils. Every mythical year lasts twelve thousand years. This cycle is divided into four periods each taking three millennia to complete:

- 1) In the first millennia, Hurmazd is thinking about creation and it is wholly ethereal.
- 2) The second three thousand years is termed Bundaheshn meaning the initial creation which has not yet been stained.
- 3) In the third three thousand years which is termed "Gomichshan" or "amalgamation", the devilish forces start a raid and blemish the Ahuraean creation; the devilish forces invade the clean territory of light and it is after this that the time of mixing and tainting begins. The time of the struggle between the good and the bad, the light and the darkness, the sky and the earth, the body and the psyche, the heavens and the universe and between the whole phenomena of the cosmos is replete with the oppositions between two inconsistent things. Thus, they end and reach

their termination point but the time of suffering and endeavoring is continued till the blemished and tainted things become pure and clean.

4) The fourth three thousand years is the final period termed Vicharshan or the separation and it is in this period that the creation becomes once again unidimensional with the emergence of the three relievers. The tainted and mixed creation is gradually restored to its initial cleanness (Kazzazi, 1991).

In the period of amalgamation, life in the universe is a shadow of the eternal combat between Ahura Mazda and Ahriman. That inconsistency of the two heavenly beings also crawls into their creatures and the world becomes a battlefield wherein the Ahura Mazda's human successor which is the vanguard of the Ahuraean forces finds himself or herself in a long-lasting battle with the badness and wastage of the Ahriman's creatures (Bahar, 2002).

Such a mindset has found its way from myths to Shahnameh. "The battle between the good and the evil is the primary theme of Shahnameh" (Talebian et al, 2007) and "central core thereof" (Eslami Nadushan, 1984). Iranians intend to make the good overcome the evil and this opposition is rooted in the old beliefs and religions and it is one of the distinct attributes of Mazdaean creed.

In the Iranians' national epic, the opposition and combat between the two good and evil forces can be seen in most of the stories and it encompasses many symbols and manifestations. Since Ferdowsi's materials have been presented in Shahnameh based on the ancient myths and rituals of Iran and because Ferdowsi has been a committed and trustworthy person, he has represented such teachings in his work with one of them being the duality of the good and the bad and the opposition between the good and the evil.

In Shahnameh, Ahura and Ahriman, nature and anti-nature and Iranians and Aniranians are in a constant fight.

"From the perspective of Shahnameh, the world's creator has created the entire universe essentially in conflict with one another and it is this same essential conflict that has divided the world into two parties, namely good and bad, which are always fighting with one another" (Serami, 1989).

The mankind is also faced with the struggle between the two good and evil forces inside himself and he is not released from the battle between these two opposite forces even for a single moment. In order to be able to make goodness come out as a victor in the fight against badness, the mankind has to make efforts and take the path of humanness and this is the very thing the spirit of which has been blown into Shahnameh and has formed its central nucleus. The confrontation between these two forces matches with the reality of the human life.

The mankind has no other way than confrontation between these two hostile forces. He spends his days in this battle and his art is inclination towards goodness and evading the badness and decorating his existence with goodness and benevolence. The sage man of Iran and the theosophist of Tus is seeking in the entire length of his epical work to help goodness overcome badness and he himself becomes another Rostam in all his battles and enters the battle against whatever the thing that is badness and filthiness with the weapon of thoughtfulness, sagacity and kindness and supports the side of the goodness and benevolent persons even if they are amongst the Aniranians. He honestly and astutely admires the principle of goodness and supports it and this exercising of benevolence by him reaches the extent that he scorns Rostam who is his adored superhero in a human and fatherly tone of voice should he be found with his tongue and hands tainted with badness. The realm of his thought transcends beyond the geographical and racial limits.

The story of Jamshid is the first story of Shahnameh wherein conflict and opposition come about between the human beings; before that, the opposition between the human beings and ogres or between the ogres alone was the important topic but it is in this period that the people turn their faces away from him and Ahriman additionally commences his deceptions and performance of heinous actions in the human community and all these issues cause the emergence of many quarrels and battles.

Jamshid is one of the oldest figures in the Indian and Iranian myths. In India, his most outstanding role is ruling the underworld and he is the greatest Pishdadi king in Iran. He is a king with two different halves during his own reign. The first half of his kingship is mixed with goodness and benevolence and the second period of his governance is dark and blemished with evil and badness. The opposition between the good and the bad is seen in this story in two forms: apparent symbols of the good and the evil are fighting against the covert symbols of the good and the bad. In the first period, Jamshid is the symbol of goodness and he dominates and overcomes the badness and the bad and, in the second period, the manifestations of the evil which were passive in him begin their activities. In this story, the readers are faced with two kinds of opposition between the evil and the good:

- 1) Between the good forces and visible evil forces
- 2) Between the good forces and the invisible evil forces

In this story, the readers are also faced with the metamorphosis of goodness into evil when Jamshid, symbol of goodness, changes into a manifestation of evil.

### **Discussion: Good-Evil Opposition in the Story of Jamshid**

In Gaats, the name “Yama” has been mentioned only one time (Pourdavood, 2005). In other parts of Avesta, the term “Khesh’at” has been added thereto and it has been introduced in the form of Yam Khesh’at and then Jamshid; in the same way, this same word has been added to Hur and has become Khorshid (the sun) meaning light and luster (Pourdavood, 1998) and Jam has been given the epithet “Shid” for his beauty and brilliance.

Some realize Shid as meaning governor and bright and the owner of the good and beautiful herds (Safa, 2011).

After Zoroaster, he is the only one who has spoken to Ahura Mazda in person (Kazzazi, 2006). Jamshid is respected for his one thousand years of governance on earth. His reign period is full of blessing and comfort to the extent that the earth had been filled with herds, domestic animals, people, birds and red flaming fire and the abundance and increase in the blessings and gifts caused Jam to expand the earth in three stages (Dustkhah, 1991).

Jamshid is the first of the immortals who chose to die. He made the gods happy by his selection of death and he took the path of death to show the enteral road to the people. Death has been realized as “the path of Yameh” for he was the king of the dead. During his kingship period, the ogres and their heinous actions like untruthfulness and hunger and disease and death did not have any influence (Hinnels, 2003).

It has been stated in Pahlavi narrations that Jamshid reigned for six hundred and sixteen years and six months and that he had been wandering for a hundred years (Rastegar Fasa’ei, 2009). Ferdowsi mentions that Jamshid has been the king for seven hundred years.

“He has lived for seven hundred years and he has created all the good and all the bad” (Ferdowsi, 2011).

Hakim Ferdowsi knows Jamshid as the first king who has had the divine glory. The period of Jamshid’s kingship is the time of comfort and magnificence and glory. Jamshid is a half-god king and an immortal and, though not being enumerated amongst the kings, he has to be

considered as equal and identical to them; he lived in the absolute lightness of the sky and he grants long life to the mankind and if the human beings present him with fatty milk, he would grant them long life amongst the animals” (Safa, 2011).

He is a political and religious governor and he carries along the divine affirmation of himself; in other words, besides being a sovereign, he is the people’s religious leader and he enjoys religious and corporeal governance.

“I told it to the man with divine glory that you are both the sovereign and the magus” (Ferdowsi, 2011).

In Veda, Jamshid is the son of the sun and the first mankind dominated by death and, in Avesta, he is the first person to whom Ahura Mazda entrusted his religion. In Avesta, Jamshid has been given the epithet of the good of the herd and the semblance of the sun; moreover, due to the possession of a Kiani glory, his period of governance is the first period of the creation of the good and it has been also introduced by some as the period of the golden paradise.

He intends to defend goodness and benevolence and fight with the bad. In this period, he is the vanguard of the goodness and benevolence and he seeks guiding the people towards the path of goodness and benevolence.

“I will cut the hands of the bad from evildoing and guide the souls towards brightness”

Many inventions are made during his time, including the fabrication of war instruments. Ferdowsi underlines that it is in the light of his Kiani glory that his inventions become successful and he uses his Kiani glory to soften iron and forges hood and a rigid armor and a sword and saddle and its accessories.

“He softened the iron by his Kiani glory and used it to make hood and armor and caftan” (Amini & Gudarzi, 2011).

He teaches the people how to spin wool and knit fabric and prepare clothes.

“He taught them to spin and knit and how to make fabric through the use of warps and wefts” (Balkhi, 1995).

Everybody is his servant and peasant and there is no sign of fight and engagement. He renders the society’s system coherent and forms the social classes. He creates the four classes of Katouziyan (ascetics and pious persons), Naisarian (warriors), Ahtukhoshi (shopkeepers) and farmers. In fact, the formation made by Kiyumarth was later on made coherent by Jamshid. By creating and rendering coherent the social classes and by specifying the duties of each, Jamshid caused the prosperity and reconstruction of Iran.

“The group which was called Katouziyan exercised piety and worshipped the god” (Bal’ami, 1974).

After fifty years, he ordered the ogres to build palace and public bathrooms and extract precious stones from the mines.

“During these fifty years, as well, he was busy eating and pampering and bestowing things”

He started curing the patients and spreading good odors.

“He started treating and curing every person in pain and made a lot of efforts for their healthiness”

“He also discovered the secrets of the world; no benevolent person like him came after him”

“The ogres were building walls using stones and gypsum and they were geometrically cutting stones” (Javanshir, 2014).

Construction of “Varjamkard” by Jamshid is the sign of progress and spreading of civilization. Jamshid chooses the best pair of every living being and gathers them around in this place and he preserves and prolongs the mankind and other creatures’ generations by doing so. All the things Jamshid does are in line with spreading comfort and peace and they are in this regard benevolent deeds causing the persistence of the Urmazd’s creation.

The period of Jamshid’s kingship is the era of the ogres’ subjugation and obedience and they have been prevented from doing bad and evil; the symbols of goodness have dominated the manifestations of evil. “Seven countries on earth were under his command. All the people, ogres, wizards, fairies and infidels had been defeated by him. In his time, the people and the animals were immortal. The edible and drinkable things did not rot. Waters and plants did not dry. There was no cold and heat or senescence and death” (Pourdavood, 1998).

“Amongst the advantages of Jamshid, a descendant of Vivahvant, was that he presented all the creators of Urmazd with immortality for six hundred years and made them free of any pain and harm and aging” (Mirfakhra’ei, 2011).

“It was a time of peacefulness due to his judgment for the ogres and birds and fairies were all under his command”

Besides subjugating the filthy ogres, Jamshid exploited their power for creating and forming civilization and community and ordered them to build palaces and porches and public bathrooms.

“He ordered the filthy ogres to mix the water with soil” (Ferdowsi, 2011).

The overcoming of the evildoing and devilish symbols by Jamshid reaches the extent that they carry his throne of kingship which was as big as the area from Hamun to the sky.

“By the power of his Kiani glory, he made a throne embossed with gems and precious stones”

“When the ogres picked it up, it was so wide and vast that it covered the area from Hamun to the sky” (Ibid, 20).

This glory is a divine gift by the aid of which Jamshid succeeded in performing many tasks and it is by this divine glory that he lays the foundation of human civilization. The time of Jamshid is the golden era of the governance of the good over the evil.

“There was no sign of the suffering and badness for he had subjugated the ogres and made them his servants” (Ibid, 20)

The time of Jamshid is the era in which “Aryans remember it before separation and migration; a period they regretfully recall; a golden paradise which was at the side of the good river of “deity” based on what has been stated in Avesta and it is the scene of the fatherly kingship of Jamshid, the king of myths. In the dream world of this holder of the “good herd”, the human beings associated with the gods and spent time along with their herds in happiness and cheerfulness and good kingship. The human generation was increased several times and the possessor of the good herd widened the earth for the sake of the human beings. Finally, a cold storm that was threatening everything and known as the presence of ogre in the mythical tradition

came and the possessor of the good herd constructed an edifice (Varjamkard) by the advice of Ahura Mazda and did his best to gather as many human beings and other creatures as possible under its refuge so as to save them from the harm of Ahriman" (Vahed-doost, 2000, p.151).

But, this situation was not eternal for the battle between the good and the evil should continue till the last millennium of creation.

The invisible monster of haughtiness and snobbishness which is a lot more dangerous than the visible ogres overcomes him.

In the light of the numerous progresses, not only the people but also the ogres symbolizing the evil and filth give up to his command and verdict and Jamshid becomes drunken by haughtiness and snobbishness. He makes the people and the ogres his own servants but he himself forgets his servitude of the God and his existence is tainted with ingratitude and snobbishness. Drunkenness and haughtiness are amongst the symbols of the internal evil that blemishes the existence of Iran's sovereign and makes him get close to his annihilation. "His heart became hard as stone and he started exercising selfishness and haughtiness, cruelty, tyranny and mutiny and said "I am your great god"; he gave up servitude and reached the position that he claimed that he is the God" (Ta'alabi Neishabouri, 2007, p.16).

"That God-knowing king started exercising egoism; he deviated from the path of God and became unthankful" (Ferdowsi, 2011).

The monster of haughtiness made him think of himself as the God and he thought that all the things he does are by his own power. He reckoned that he had succeeded in all his works and social services without the assistance of the God and the other symbols of goodness. Ferdowsi holds that haughtiness and snobbishness and ingratitude and thinking of oneself as the God have been the cause of his turning of his face away from the God.

In Pahlavi narrations, as well, Jamshid's sin has been mentioned to have been his claim of being the God (Mirfakhra'ei, 2011).

"The art came to existence in the world by me; the throne of kingship has never seen anyone more famous than me"

"I have well-decorated the world with goodness and the universe is as I want it" (Ferdowsi, 2011).

It is following his practicing of ingratitude that the divine glory, one of the symbols of goodness, is separated from him and his life becomes dark and blurry. According to Zamtad Yasht as well as Shahnameh, Jamshid has not been mortal but, after exercising selfishness and boasting about himself and speaking untruthfully, his glory is segregated from him three times; in the first time, his glory flies away from him in the form of a bird and a melody (Mokhtari, 2000).

"Upon saying that, the divine glory flew away from him and the whole world started talking about it"

"The day become dark to Jamshid and he was deprived of that world-illuminating glory" (Ferdowsi, 2011).

According to Mithraism creed, telling lies and staining the tongue with falsehood is a dead sin hence unforgivable and Jamshid set the ground for his own wastage and decline by telling lies and exercising falsehood (Mo'azzen, 2000).

In Yasht 19, as well, Jamshid's failure and separation of the divine glory from him has been mentioned. "In the end, Jam started telling lies and, because he allowed lies to enter his heart, the glory flew away from him vividly in the form of a bird. So, Jamshid, the good of the herd, failed and became restless. He was overthrown for his malevolent heart and started looking for a hiding place in the world. The first glory was separated from Jamshid, son of Vivahvant in the form of a bird and melody and the Mithra possessing the vast grasslands took it; Jamshid lost another glory for a second time in the form of a bird and melody and Fereydun caught it and became the most victorious of all the men. In the third time, Jamshid lost another glory in the form of a bird and melody and it was caught by Garshasp" (Razi, 2000).

The good and the bad cannot live together in a peaceful symbiosis for they are two opposite poles the presence of one is to be accompanied by the absence of the other. Haughtiness and snobbishness infiltrate into his existence and the divine glory flies away from him. "Hakim Ferdowsi realizes the divine glory as being synonymous to the ethereal horse" (Meskoub, 1995).

"The divine glory became dark to him and he started inclining towards badness and insanity" (Ferdowsi, 2011).

Following the separation of the divine glory and confirmation, the people also turned their faces away from Jamshid. This great king is a reflection of the God's power. It is the God who is capable over the servants and all the goodness and badness stems from Him.

Glory is a divine luster and blessing that a person enjoying it deserves kingship. "Glory can be obtained through dutifulness and piety meaning that if a person performs his duties, s/he will be given the glory and s/he can subsequently reach felicity and have all his wishes come true" (Dustkhah, 1991).

"The bright and white day became dark and the bonds were all disconnected from Jamshid" (Ferdowsi, 2011).

After the people turned their faces away from Jamshid, he started inclining towards badness and evildoing. If the king of a country does wrong things, the road will be paved for his or her tribe to perform bad and incline towards futility.

"Armies started independently coming from Iran and taking the path towards the raiders"

"They heard that there is an elder there and that he has the figure of a king and the body of a dragon" (Ferdowsi, 2011).

The tyrant and artless sovereigns are the stimulators of the enemies for attacking the country. Jamshid's injustice in the second half of his kingship led to the emergence of Zahhak. Kings are in opposition to the malevolence of the devils who try disrupting and disordering the kingship affairs and this is why the sovereignty is laid on a divine foundation. Governance is impossible without the divine glory. However, if a king thinks of his divine glory as a means of exercising boldness and lordship on earth and goes beyond justice limits, s/he will be stripped off the divine glory.

In this story, the readers are faced with the invisible presence of evil. Haughtiness and defiance before the God is an internal filthy trait that made Jamshid enter a battle with the God. His enemy is internal and there is no sign of the enemy troopers. He has himself started insurgence and become prepared to fight with God.

Jamshid is no longer that ideal king. His existence has become full of pride. Ferdowsi calls him unorthodox and infidel. The symbol of goodness, Jamshid, turns into the symbol of evil and it is consequently destroyed following his inclination towards evil. Jamshid reappears once again at the side of China Sea after a hundred years and Zahhak halves him into two parts. The



notable point is that when the symbol of goodness turns into the symbol of evil, Ferdowsi's tone of voice also changes and he realizes him as a horrible creature that is not anymore worthy of kingship and his annihilation secures the people.

“That unorthodox king once again reappeared at the side of the China Sea after a hundred years”

“He was halved into two parts by a saw and the world became whole fearless by his destruction” (Ferdowsi, 2011).

The cost of an insane king is incurred not only by he himself but also by all the people for a long time; thus, Iranians were condemned to one-thousand-year domination of Zahhak's governance” (Amini & Gudarzi, 2011).

In Bal'ami history, the people in Jamshid's time did not stay immune of their own king. “So, Jamshid started a huge fire by the order of Satan and asked all the people to gather around. A group of innocent persons was burnt until everyone confessed to his lordship” (Bal'ami, 1974). Ibn Balkhi, as well, realizes Jamshid's claim for being the god as the reason of the reversion of his luck (Balkhi, 1995).

Ferdowsi realizes the sole uprising against Jamshid as a natural and necessary issue to the extent that when Zahhak defeats him and halves him into two parts by the use of a saw, Ferdowsi does not even shed a single drop of tear and conversely realizes him as an infidel deserving such an ending” (Javanshir, 2014).

This fairness of Ferdowsi in supporting the right and truthfulness is admirable for he realizes goodness and badness as being independently good or bad and it does not differ for him if badness is performed by an Iranian king or by an Aniranian king. There is no room for wrongdoers within the extensive intellectual framework of the Tus's sage that goes beyond the limited geographical and racial borders and the evildoer is naturally condemned to punishment and the glorious king of Iran is no exception to this axiom. Jamshid is adored by the wisdom of the Tusi man as far as his existence is full of cleanness and goodness and he is detested by him after he starts performing badness and evil in heart and by hands and the poet does not mourn for his death.

## Conclusion

The opposition between the good and the evil is perpetual and the human beings cannot evade it. The two good and evil forces cannot live a peaceful life alongside each other; one's presence entails the other's absence. The symbols of goodness are sometimes the victors of the battle and the manifestations of the evil occasionally prevail. In the first period, Iran's glorious king ruled the ogres and, in the second period, his haughtiness and snobbishness as well as his thinking of himself as the god and also his exercising of ingratitude in respect to the God which are the symbols of the invisible evil caused Jamshid's annihilation. The symbols of evil cannot be denied and their power cannot be overlooked but one should stand against them and overcome them as Jamshid had subjugated the ogres. Jamshid's smart inventions and interventions caused social coherence and they can be considered as benevolent goals that set the ground for the comfort, tranquility and persistence of Urmazd's creation. The power of the internal evil's symbols is more dangerous than that of the external evil's symbols in such a way that Jamshid had subjugated the ogres to the extent that they carried his throne to the skies and could accomplish his objectives by their assistance and he was the victor of the arena in the fight against them but he failed in overcoming insanity, haughtiness, snobbishness and insurgence before the God and these same internal filthy monsters finally dragged him to destruction. The mankind's progress and success can be facilitated by the God's confirmation and the human beings' ineptness is revealed when the God decides to treat them sparingly. The human beings' popularity and agreeability is dependent on the God's mercy in such a way that Jamshid was adored by everyone as long as he

enjoyed the divine glory and it was with the separation of divine glory from him that the people started running away from him and resorting to Zahhak.

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