

Investigating the manifestations of greed in the epical and mythical characters of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh

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ABSTRACT

Based on Iranian myths, there has always been a confrontation between two Ahurai and Ahrimani forces in progress. This issue has caused the human nature to be inflicted with such a situation. One of the works wherein the manifestation of myth, epic and history can be seen in the form of the confrontation between the good and evil is Ferdowsi's Shahnameh which is an identity-bestowing book that besides this characteristic, contains many ethical and instructional concepts, as well. One of these concepts is avarice that creeps into the ego of the ideal and honorable characters in Shahnameh and adversely influences them and makes them encounter many ethical challenges. In this work, avarice has been depicted in the form of an ogre that is unequaled amongst the evils and deemed to be the most harmful. The investigation of the embodiments of this immorality in Shahnameh shows that Afrasiab Turani is the greediest person whose greedy behaviors cause the people from Iran and Turan to be repeatedly afflicted with financial and life problems and the blood of many innocent persons has been shed on the ground from the two sides. The greedy presence of Afrasiab is so evident that it can be stated that he is a symbol of the ogre of avarice in Shahnameh. In addition to the king of Turan, characters like Sudabeh, Kaikavus, Esfandiyar and Sohrab are also present with all of them being converted from ideal characters to antagonists.

Keywords: Avesta, Shahnameh, Ogre, Avarice.

Introduction

In the beginning of the universe's emergence, two forces, evil and good, started confronting one another. The first force was called Ahriman [devil] that is supported by its own fans and proponents, who uses them to advance his plans. Although Ahriman is the waster of the people's thoughts under all circumstances, the second force which is called Ahura possesses its own creatures and uses them to spread goodness on earth. Ahura and Ahriman always try to counteract each other's forces and become the final victor in the end of the universe. On the other hand, the mankind's good or bad destiny depends on his

support of one of these two forces. In the Ahriman's army, we are faced with a devastative element that is, in a sense, the strongest assistor of Ahriman. This ugly ogre is called avarice and greed that according to various narrations, becomes greedier the more things of life and properties it acquires and looks for more victims. This ugly ogre not only causes the destruction of the human beings, but also paves the way for other depravities like hatred, blood-shedding, revenge, envy and so forth. Therefore, dealing with the various angles of the physical and psychological damages caused by this ugly ogre in the human nature can be useful and effective in preventing the occurrence of yesterday, today and tomorrow entanglements of the mankind and prepare the human beings for fighting avarice and the outcomes resulting thereof.

Statement of the Problem

The thing that is considerably contributory in the investigation of the literary texts, is the exploration of the theme and content of an artwork because it is effective in figuring out the intentions of the creator of an artwork and qualities of his or her penmanship.

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Thus, "one of the most important discussions regarding a literary work and in addition to stylistics and literary criticism is the investigation of the contents of various literary kinds for the versatile and able poets and writers express their feelings and imaginations as well as their sublime ethical and instructional thoughts by the assistance of their inborn talent and their capable pen within the format of eloquent words and fluid expressions"^[1]. In between, one of the works that substantially and indirectly deals with ethical and instructional topics is Ferdowsi's Shahnameh. In almost all of the cases, the poet digs into the instructional concepts between his various epical and mythical stories and uses them as the themes of his masterpiece. The sage of Tus is not looking for directly advising his audience because he is well aware that it would have a little effect and that the arrow of his advice would miss the target. When Shahnameh's stories are explored in mythical and epical sections, it is seen that many of the primary and non-primary characters are inflicted with avarice and cupidity and this causes the emergence of countless challenges, concerns and adverse effects in such a way that it results in the ethical downfall and deviation of the story characters from the indicators of an ideal human being in some of the cases. The present article's main issue was the pathological investigation of the characters present in Shahnameh with an approach to such a trait as avarice.

Necessity and Importance of the Research

Avarice occasionally harms the greedy person and others in his or her periphery and it sometimes causes a nation to be entangled and faced with challenge. One of the methods helping us gain immunity against this feature is the analysis and exploration of outstanding texts that have directly and indirectly dealt with it. The investigation of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh shows that the poet's approach to greed is worth contemplating and recognition of this approach would be followed by useful ethical findings for enhancing the level of the individual and social ethics. Resultantly, the exploration of the greedy characters in Shahnameh and their fate is envisaged to be necessary.

Study Method and Questions

In the present study, use has been made of a descriptive research method and content analysis technique and the study data have been collected through research in library sources and credible articles. The most important questions that the present study intended to find answers for them were the followings: Who are the greediest characters in Shahnameh's myths and epics? And, what outcomes is this immorality followed by in their social and individual lives?

Background of the Study

Considering the multidimensionality of Shahnameh, many researches have dealt with its ethical aspects and instructional functions and cues about avarice can be seen in some of them. Ajalli and Mehraki (2015) have compared in their article the reflections of avarice and need in Shahnameh and Mazdayasna

rituals and concluded that Ferdowsi has been influenced by the aforementioned rituals in redefining of these two concepts^[2]. Taheri and Asmand (2015) investigated in an article the way in which justice and avarice of the kinds have been reflected in Shahnameh and presented a stylistic analysis of them and came to the conclusion that, meanwhile accepting the principle and essence of sultanate, Ferdowsi believes in such harms for it as the decline in the divine glory and deviation from the path of justice and that both of them revolve about avarice and covetousness^[3]. In the aforesaid articles, the analyses have been carried out to a limited level and no independent and separate references have been made to the reflections of avarice in the stories of Jamshid and Zahhak, Fereydun, kingship of Kaikavus, Siavash, Bijan and Manijeh and the negative outcomes of it and this has added to the innovative aspect of the current research paper.

Main Discussion

Avarice in the Religious Texts of Ancient Iran

Avarice has shown itself in all the life levels because it is enumerated amongst the negative properties in the mankind's ego and it is evidently present wherever talks are made about the human beings. This ogre is usually used along with another ogre named "Peni" which is the ogre of stinginess. It is stated in indicating the devilishness of the ogre of avarice that "it is in control of the person who is not happy with his wife and wants to have another person's wife"^[4]. It has to be asserted in retelling the role of this ogre in the human beings' path of life that avarice has been born with the human beings since the very early stages of creation and that it has repeatedly deceived them with different excuses and caused the emergence of sorrowful tragedies. According to the Zarvani's myths, Zarvan had two children named Ahura and Ahriman. He made a promise to himself to grant the kingship of the world to any of them who is born earlier. Getting aware of this issue, Ahriman became dominated by greed and avarice and came out faster from his mother's womb. Therefore, avarice and greed showed up since the first minutes of creation. Ahriman is the inherent enemy of Ormuzd. They will never see the color of reconciliation and they will be always in contention and battle. Based thereon, a sage asks in the book "Minuy-e-Kherad" about the relationship and bond between Zarvan's two children, Ormuzd and Ahriman, and he answers in reply that "they can never be in peace and have friends for the fact that Ahriman is liar and malicious and his job is anger, hatred and rage and Ormuzd is truthful and benevolent and his job is doing good deeds and exhibiting nobility. Everything but the good and bad essence can be transformed (changed)"^[5]. Therefore, this contention and inconsistency has been there from the first day and it will be persistent forever. In this battle, Ahriman has his own specific army and uses their assistance and help to fight with the troopers of Ormuzd. One of the most prominent members of Ahriman's army is the ogre of avarice (=greed, covetousness, lust for wealth). In a sense, avarice is the commander of the malicious army of the filth and vulgar. Thus, it is evident that the

religious texts have said a lot about it. Of course, it has to be also noted that the reflection of the ogre of avarice in the preliminary religious texts is a lot lower and a lot more intangible than the subsequent texts and this "helps gaining insight over the growing influence of Zarvani mindset in Mazdayasna's culture" [6].

In the book "the Minuy-e-Kherad", there are made important and valuable discussions regarding the ethical and educational concepts. Amongst these subjects, the heftiest sins a human being can perpetrate have been mentioned such as breach of trust, heresy, stealing, breaking of promises, exercising hatred, suppression, accusation of the others, adultery, ingratitude, lying, grieving for the things that are lost and so forth. The root of all these transgressions is realized as the ogre called avarice [5]. Avarice is amongst the first ogres created by Ahriman for fighting Ahura and destroying his first creature, Kyumarth. It is stated in this regard that "avarice and need and Sij (the ogre that brings destruction) brought pain and disease, capriciousness and Bushasp (the ogre of laziness and sleepiness) upon the [body of] cow and Kiyumarth" [7]. In another section of this book, it is stated in the description of the ogre that it draws everything in and does not show mercy to anything. This ogre attacks the body of the mankind and gradually makes it wasted and it will be continuously greedy to do so without being satiated: "avarice is the ogre that swallows [every] things; it starts eating from the body when it finds its needs not satisfied. [He is] the fast and sharp wind that will not be filled and satiated even if it is presented with all the things that can be wanted in the world. It is said that the body of the greedy persons is like a river that cannot settle down" [7]. In religious texts, avarice is recounted amongst the most influential arrow of Ahriman because it does its best to get the mankind distance away from the good deeds amongst which, the tendency towards Mazdai rituals can be pointed out. Due to the same reason, the Zoroastrian magi remind it in their writings to the entire social layers that they should practice resistance to the avaricious temptations of this ogre and make their minds through fastening the holy belt round their waist to expand goodness and virtue: "get up O the landlord [and the savior], fasten your belt, wash your hands, bring firewood for the fire temple and me and light up the clean luster of the firewood in me. This is the avarice created by an ogre that wants me to leave the world" [8].

It is stated in the ethical recommendations of the Zoroastrian rituals to the puritanical persons that they should always stay away from the ogre of avarice because it is in this way that they can unravel the strips of belongings and attachments that weaved all around their existence and body so as to set the ground for their release. Based thereon, it is stated in Javidan Kherad that the avaricious person is naked because s/he is stripped of the clean garment of spirituality in his or her ego due to his or her avarice and greed and s/he is now nude and absurd [9]. In the ancient religious texts, the human offspring has been divided into four sets amongst which the worst and the filthiest ones are the human beings who love their own bodies and follow the instructions of the bad creed. In this classification, the importance of avoiding the ogre of avarice is clearer because

when the human beings' are more craving for avarice, they will be unconsciously attracted and inclined towards the body and physique (material affairs) and become willing to do anything and obey anyone for satisfying this fascination. On the contrary, the individuals have been recounted as the best human beings who take care of their ego and the inner self and have a religion ordering them to do good things. These individuals have unprecedented power in distinguishing the good from the bad because they have freed themselves of the corporeal attachments and know whom to follow to achieve a good fate and felicity [10]. Considering the abovementioned descriptions of avarice, it can be stated that "avarice is the same ogre that is envisioned as the most important commander of Ahriman's army for disrupting the cosmic order and depleting the land of the human beings, animals and plants and, in the meanwhile, setting the ground for destroying the Ahriman. It means that they are double-sided swords that can both make way forward and destroy" [6]. This is a phenomenon that does not recognize friend from enemy and places everyone in its striking range. It is evident that one should not yield to such a dangerous phenomenon, the only goal of which, is downgrading of the mankind and giving up to its demands.

Avarice in Shahname's Mythical and Epical Stories

Shahnameh is a combination of myth, epic and history with its mythical and epical parts being replete with the events and incidents that have been more frequently recognized. It possess twice as much attractiveness and fascination for the readers and audience. One of the most prominent factors giving rise to the incidents in these two parts is the avariciousness of the characters in such a way that this negative attribute can be observed in nearly all stories from the mutinies by Jamshid-e-Jam to the murdering of Sohrab and Esfandiyar by Rostam and to Bahman's revenging of Zal's family and greediness of Sudabeh and Afrasiab and Garsivaz and others. One of the points drawing the attention in this section is that the readers are faced in the aforementioned stories with two substantial approaches of Ferdowsi: 1) avarice as an ugly and independent ogre and 2) avarice as a factor contributing to the emergence of other filths like war, blood-shedding, hatred, envy, extravagance and etc. Therefore, in the present study and in the analysis of the avaricious characteristics, both of these approaches were applied.

• The Story of Jamshid and Zahhak:

This mythical king possesses a lofty stance in the Iranian culture. Jamshid is "the very Yameh, son of the Indian myth Vayvasvanet, the story of whom originally dates back to Indo-Iranian period" [11]. Amongst the ancient kinds and mythical heroes, talks have been only made about Jam in Gahan, the oldest part of Avesta [12]. There are two visages left from Jamshid amongst Iranians: one is from the early years of his establishment of government that could bring about golden and bright times. It is the time that the

human beings' utopia had been manifested within the format of Varejankard and there was no death and nothingness therein. The second image belongs to the time that Jamshid was afflicted with boastfulness and claimed divinity and it was due to this avarice and greed in him that the divine glory was taken away from him and subsequently he and the Iranian people's dark times began to show up. Finally, Jamshid was split into two halves by Zahhak's saw and his crimes started increasing gradually with the kingship of the Tazi king. Ferdowsi, as well, realizes Jamshid's selfishness as the cause of his wastage and downfall.

"He talked in this way to the elder intellects that he does not know the world as belonging to anyone else but he himself"

"As soon as he said so, the divine glory was taken away from him and this was being spoken in the whole world"

"When selfishness crawled into the king, defeat came about and the situation was reversed"^[13]

One of the most distinct avaricious figures in the mythical section of Shahnameh is Azhidehag or Zahhak who had darkness governing Iran for a thousand years. Of course, many believed that Ferdowsi introduced Zahhak as a symbol of Tazi culture and that he entered Iran by the power of sword and let the magnificence and splendor of Iran go with the wind. Anyway, various manifestations of avarice can be observed in the personality of Zahhak. In the beginning of the story, he decides as tempted by Satan to remove his father for getting his hands on the throne and crown. Avarice for power and position made Zahhak sacrifice his father in an inhuman action. To get his goal accomplished, Satan dug a hole and Mardas, Zahhak's father, died upon falling into it.

"Then, the Satan covered that deep well with bush-wood and made it look like a road"

"That believer man fell into the well and broke his back and died"^[13].

One of the other methods of Ahriman's infiltration into Zahhak has been through food and nourishment. The avarice of lust and enjoyment was well visible in Zahhak and Ahriman, as well, knew this very well. Due to the same reason, he made himself look like a cook so as to get close to the kitchen of the Tazi king. "The dining hall is a place wherein a psychological and internal process is taken. So, the Satan started cooking for Zahhak and nourished him well with colorful and various food so as to take control and dominate the process inside his soul and psyche. Zahhak's giving of the kitchen's key to the Satan meant granting him the authorization for taking control of all his soul and psyche and body to Satan and becoming unconditionally submitted to him"^[14]. It was so for a while and Satan asked Zahhak to sooth the impatience of the two snakes that had grown on his shoulders by killing two young persons every day and feed the snakes on their brains. Undoubtedly, Zahhak's avarice made him reach this degree of brutality that he sacrificed everyone and everything for his own comfort. Of course, the Tazi king was punished for this greedy behavior of him and he was arrested and deposed by Kaveh and Fereydun after the people's raid on his palace.

• The Story of Fereydun

After dominating over Azhidehag by the assistance of Kaveh, Fereydun became the king of Iran and divided his territory between his three sons after a while. In between, Iraj became the ruler of Iran and this incited envy in Salm. The ogre of avarice let the fire of hatred glowing in the ego of his brother. He motivated Tur to inhumanly shed the blood of Iraj. Of course, both of them were punished and killed by Manuchehr: "Sam, the ancestor of Rostam says that 'you have avenged the two sinful brother-killers, Salm and Tur, for the shedding of Iraj's innocent blood by the command of your ancestor, Fereydun and cleared the world of the enemies'". Thus, the avaricious human beings waste not only their own selves but also those of the others.

"Salm's heart started palpitating in its place and he changed his mind about the rites and verdicts"

"His heart became filled with avarice from the innermost part and entered consultation with the guider"

"He did not like his father's dividing of the territory for he had given his elder son the golden throne"^[13]

Upon being clawed by the two brothers' hatred, Iraj makes a lot of efforts to make them withdraw from this heinous action but the greed for position and envy did their jobs and his head was cut off innocently. The young king used to say:

"Nothing but moderation is my ritual; avarice and tyranny are not my religion"^[13].

Meanwhile scorning Salm and Tur after the occurrence of this tragedy, Fereydun, as well, addresses them in the following words that "why did you allow avarice dominate over your wisdom and let such a catastrophe happen?" Therefore, it can be concluded from this story that one of the negative outcomes of the Avarice's domination on the mankind is the wastage of the power of wisdom. This is the force enumerated amongst the most important Ahurai powers for fighting Ahriman.

"Your avarice sat on the throne of your wisdom; why did you let such an ogre become your partner"

"I am afraid that your soul might get separated from your body in the claws of this dragon"^[13].

• Kingship of Kaikavus

Kaikavus is enumerated amongst one of the most wishful kings in Shahnameh in such a way that his adventurous behaviors repeatedly brought troubles upon Iranians including the time he went to Mazandaran and was captivated and Rostam attempted to free him from the claws of the ogres. "There is no trace of his deployment of troops towards Mazandaran in the Pre-Islamic texts and the credible books from post-Islamic era till Ferdowsi's time; however, Shahnameh gives a detailed account of this dispatching of the army"^[15]. Kavus's acceptance of no advice that had emerged in him as a result of the infiltration of the lust for ambitiousness again made the Iranian king face numerous problems and caused him to be trapped in the claws of Mazandaran's ogres. Due to the same reason, he sent a message to Rostam and asked his assistance.

"Cold sigh rises up from the bottom of my heart when I remember your advices"

"I did not do as such a smart person as you told me and I am now afflicted with such a great harm due to my lack of knowledge" ^[13].

One of the other avaricious behaviors of Kavus is his decision for taking a trip to the sky. "In Denkard, the deceitfulness of the ogre of wrath and the other of his coworker ogres make him find the kingship over seven countries inferior and he begins craving for the kingship of the sky and ruling Amesha Spenta and starts thinking for flying to the sky to fight against the God and it is in this flight that he loses his divine glory and falls down along with his army from the sky" ^[16]. In this section, Ferdowsi takes the position of an all-knowing omniscient storyteller and speaks of the fate of the greedy individuals. In his opinion, a person who has his intention mixed with avarice may seminally fly up but s/he will eventually fall down that might be also accompanied by abjectness and humiliation and happiness of the enemies and troubling of the friends as the same thing also happened in the aforesaid story.

"I heard that Kavus went up to the sky so as to reach the God"

"They flew very high but they fell down eventually and this is the fate of the person captured by avarice"

"They were thrown down from the black cloud; the king fell down from the throne onto the ground" ^[13].

• The Story of Rostam and Sohrab

The combat between Rostam and Sohrab is enumerated amongst the most sensitive epical stories and a similar example of it can be barely found in terms of sophistication and robustness. A glance at the depth of the story shows that the ogre of avarice is the source and main factor giving rise to such a tragedy. The main characters of the story are Rostam, Sohrab and Afrasiab with the influence of the ogre of avarice being clearly visible in Sohrab and Turani king. Upon getting aware of the lineage and race of Sohrab, Afrasiab decides to remove his most original enemy through this son. The Turani king crookedly uses unskillful Sohrab to achieve his ominous goals. In other words, "in fact, this is exactly the same devilish plan ... Afrasiab who is another countenance of Ahriman realizes Sohrab as the only means for dominating Rostam and getting darkness rule light" ^[17]. Ferdowsi portrays the issue in another form:

"When Afrasiab heard those words, he became happy and laughed and began cheering"

"The army commander told the troopers that they have to keep it as a secret"

"The father should not be allowed to recognize his son for he might tie his heart to the kindness of him"

"It is quite likely that this lion-hearted man can kill that bull-bodied cavalier" ^[13].

Sohrab avariciously seeks conquering Iran so as to help Rostam sit in the throne and make his mother the queen of Iran and he himself wants to become the commander of the army. Thus, he engages many heroes upon entry into Iran ^[13]. In the end, he

enters a fight with Rostam that leads to his death. Therefore, Sohrab becomes the victim of his own avarice and extravagance. Another part of Kavus's avaricious visage can be seen in this story when Sohrab is injured and finds oneself in need of panacea to be healed. Kavus avoids giving the drug to Gudarz because he thinks with himself that the father and the son would make plans for seizing his throne and crown if Sohrab lives and resultantly the foundation of his government will become shakier. To put it another way, "Kavus is not a person who easily gets down off the high horse. Kavus is a calculating man. He thinks to himself that what would become of his kingship if one day the son and the father hold each other's hands and do not obey his order?" ^[18] Therefore, the ogre of ambitiousness caused Kaikavus to prefer the protection of his government to the saving of a human being's life.

"Kavus told him that if such an elephant-bodied person goes out of the battlefield alive, he would become a supporter of Rostam and they will surely make you perish" ^[13].

• The Story of Siavash and Sudabeh

Siavash is one of the most severely wronged characters in Shahnameh who is also recounted as the martyred prince. He is one of the victims of the avarice in the individuals in his periphery because the avarice of Sudabeh's fame and lust, on the one hand, and the avarice of Garsivaz's envy, on the other hand, and still the avarice of Afrasiab's hatred, from another side, caused the champion Siavash to be handed inhumanly to the blade of vengeance. Sudabeh sees Siavash and her heart begins shivering and a huge love starts glowing inside her. The instigation of the avarice of lust and capriciousness in Sudabeh makes her think of illegitimate relationship ^[13] and give up herself to the young Siavash ^[13]. The Iranian prince who has become ashamed of his stepmother's suggestion gives her a negative reply and "became the myth of chastity in the myths" by suppressing the avarice of lust ^[19]. Based on the heroic instructions he had been provided by Rostam, he was a strong and moral champion. Siavash's resistance to Sudabeh's avaricious wants sets the ground for the stepmother's hatred. Therefore, she made devilish conspiracies to accuse Siavash of sexual assault thereby to retaliate her cold behavior. Avarice and greed had rendered Sudabeh impatient. She did her best through all the ways she knew to revenge Siavash ^[13].

After Siavash passed through fire to prove his innocence, he decided to seek refuge in the enemy's territory, Turan, so as to stay immune of Sudabeh and her avarice. In the beginning, he was warmly welcomed by Afrasiab and married therein with the daughter of Piran Viseh, Jarireh, and later on with Afrasiab's daughter, Farangis; Forud was his child from his first wife and Kaikhosrow was his son from his second wife. The popularity of the Iranian prince was increasing every day before Afrasiab and this issue provoked the avarice of envy in many of his companions, including Garsivaz. Seeing his position being jeopardized, he started slandering Siavash and stimulating

Afrasiab in such a way that he succeeded in making him pessimistic about the Iranian prince.

"The revengeful Garsivaz looked at that fresh-faced sovereign"

"As soon as the sun started setting, he went away with his heart being wholly filled with pain and agony"

"The revengeful man's head was awakened and he went to the vicinity of Afrasiab" ^[13].

As a symbol of the avarice of anger and hatred, Afrasiab ordered the murdering of Siavash without any hesitation and without even thinking (methods of resisting avarice) ^[13]. This avaricious behavior by Afrasiab and Garsivaz was followed by bad consequences for Turanian because a setting of vengeance and revengefulness started reverberating in the entire parts of Iran when the news of Siavash's murder was brought to the Iranians and a full-scale war commenced between the two countries in the end. The commander of Iran's army, Rostam Dastan, was the spiritual father and instructor of the martyred Siavash. In his first step, he split Sudabeh into two halves ^[13] and subsequently brought hell upon Afrasiab and Turanian in a dreadful fight ^[13]. The fate of such characters as Sudabeh and Afrasiab is indicative of the idea that although the avaricious human beings ride the horse of aspirations for a while, they will have an ominous destiny in the end.

• The Story of Bijan and Manijeh

The story of Bijan and Manijeh is enumerated amongst the fables recited by Ferdowsi before Shahnameh during his youth. It can be seen in a glance at the story that the ogre of avarice shows up in several occasions and challenges the story characters. Of course, these challenges are not solely limited and specific to one or two persons and they are occasionally found entangling a nation. One of the first embodiments of avarice is at the time that Gorgin became jealous of Bijan for his seek for fame and abundance.

Kavus dispatches Bijan to assist peasants repel the danger of the warthogs. He succeeds to do so with utmost chivalry. Gorgin knew that Bijan would be adorned by Kavus and royal court's attendants on return and this threatened his position. Thus:

"For the sake of abundance and fame, he spread a trap on the youngster's path" ^[13].

This was the trap that caused the imprisonment of Bijan in the outset and took him to the verge of death but it also impacted Gorgin and caused his humiliation. Therefore, it can be stated that the avarice of jealousy not only harms the individuals in the periphery of the greedy person but also paves the way for the destruction of that person ^[13]. Bijan's personality also seems to be avaricious in parts of the story. Influenced by the avarice of lust and capriciousness and with the intention of taking pleasure, he is deceived by Gorgin's temptations and gets close to Turanian's camp ^[13]. This causes him to be captivated and imprisoned. "Based on Ferdowsi's narration, Bijan is imprisoned in the bottom of a well by the order of Afrasiab. Imprisonment in well is indeed a symbolic form of return to the mother's uterus as one of the important stages of individuality" ^[20]. That is because well

"is the symbol of the place wherein an individual can associate with his or her own self, to wit it is a sign of a process in the course of which the psyche is internalized and it is in this way that an individual finds oneself and reaches maturity and sophistication" ^[21]. It seems that Ferdowsi finds Bijan's fall into the well as a symbol of avaricious human being's captivation and forlornness. This is the captivation that leads to thinking and contemplation and eventually sophistication. In this section, as well, the confrontation between wisdom and avarice is observed. In the story of Bijan and Manijeh, we are faced with another part of Afrasiab's avaricious personality. He seeks giving Iranians a blow and, stimulated by the avarice of hatred, anger and revenge, orders the execution of Bijan and, of course, he withdraws from doing so by the intermediation of Piran Viseh ^[13]. Piran Viseh is a positive character in Shahnameh. Although he is one of the Turanians, the sage of Tus has repeatedly recounted him as a great man. "His story is amongst the saddest parts of Shahnameh. On the one hand, he feels love for Iran and respectfully treats Iranians and, on the other hand, his heart is filled with the love of his homeland. He spends life between these two struggles" ^[22]. In the story of Bijan's execution, the event is resolved for good by the intermediation of Viseh. In justifying his intermediation, Piran addresses Afrasiab and reminds him of his greed and says that killing Siavash and poisoning Noush caused the instigation of bloody battles between the armies of the two parties and that the same disaster would happen again if he follows the avarice of hatred and revenge. In the continuation, Viseh speaks of the relationship between avarice and wisdom and adds that the avaricious human being would have his wisdom wasted and cannot come to a correct conclusion.

"You headstrongly murdered Siavash and poisoned Noush"

"You saw what bad things Iranians did to Turanians"

"You are stealthily still seeking for avenge; you are still smelling the flower of poisoning"

"If you shed the blood of the heavenly Bijan, the dust of vengeance will once again rise up in Turan" ^[13]

Afrasiab's anger is an example closely interrelated with avarice. "[The Turani king] is more than anything else a representative of evil in numerous territories. He should be also recognized as the representative of the two forces of wrath ... and lust ...; because he lacks the speaking faculty ... that is unique to the benevolent persons and all his thoughts, words and deeds are devilish due to the expedencies of his nature. So, he is one of the most mischievous Aniran who uses his devilish power against Iranians" ^[23]. In this story, Afrasiab who has become angrily boiling upon hearing the freeing of Bijan by Rostam issues a command for attacking Iran's army ^[13]. This was an unwise action carried out as a result of his being dominated by anger and led to the shedding of the blood of thousands of the army troopers from Turan and Iran without satisfying Afrasiab's wants. This subject is the same thing the ogre of avarice intends to actualize. It might be due to such interventions that Ferdowsi realizes Afrasiab as being always in pain.

"The heart of the king of Turks was scarcely listened and he was always in pain due to his avarice" ^[13].

• The Story of Rostam and Esfandiyar

In Shahnameh, Esfandiyar has a dual personality from the perspective of avarice. On the one hand, he exhibits proper behaviors and goes to combat Turanians for defending the homeland and, on the other hand, sacrifices his own dear life for achieving the crown and the throne; "for the fact that Esfandiyar demands and looks for kingship, he is envisioned as a rival and recalcitrant personality" ^[24]. When Esfandiyar is presented by his father, Goshtasp, with the suggestion of freeing his sister from the chains of the Turani Arjasp, he accepts it by all his heart so that he might in this way be able to grasp the crown and the throne ^[13]. Esfandiyar fulfills his promise but his father breaks his promise and this makes Esfandiyar rise up. His mother's advices do not work in this regard. Ferdowsi has the following words concerning the foresaid issue:

"She told him that O my pained son, what does the heart of the crowned prince want from the universe"

"Do you not have treasure, command, vote and army in this territory; what else do you want?" ^[13]

The notable point in the confrontation between the father and the son is that both of them perform improper actions due to the fact that they both have the ogre of avarice in their personalities to the extent that Goshtasp consciously sends Esfandiyar to the mouth of death to get rid of his demand. This part of the story is somehow indicative of the downfall of the ethical and human values that comes about in the mankind due to the avarice and covetousness. Esfandiyar knew it well that "without defeating Rostam, he cannot sit in the throne after his father as his real right ... so, he was inevitably to enter a battle with an unprecedented hero" Zarrinkoub, 2010, p.80) ^[25]. After Esfandiyar was killed by Rostam, his mother, Katayun, mournfully and forlornly goes to Goshtasp and asserts that his avarice has caused the death of her son.

"You let the blood of your son be shed to keep the throne for the fact that O possessor of fortune your eyes only see the throne as more important"

"There is a world full of enemies and bad persons and you will not have your crown forever" ^[13].

Besides the abovementioned cases, there are other stories in the mythical and epical parts giving examples of avarice. In the story of Kiumarsh, his lucky son, Siamak, who was unexampled in prodigy and fortune, was assassinated due to the flaming of the fire of Ahriamn's avarice of jealousy ^[13]. "Kiyumarth did not have any enemy during his kingship except the wrongdoing malevolent Ahriman who was burning in the fire and hatred" ^[26]. In the story of Nowzar's kingship, he caused a lot of chaos in the country due to his avarice and craze for power and broke through his forefathers' rituals and rites in such a way that Iran was again afflicted with an extensive disruption during his time and after Jamshid's period ^[13]. In the story of Garshasp's kingship, a battle happened between Iranians and Turanians that was followed by

the defeat of the enemy ^[13]. The analysis of these defeats and retreats showed that avarice and greed in such characters as Afrasiab and Turanian Arjasp caused the area to become restricted to their own selves and sustain heavy strokes on the body of their armies and subsequently the Turanian society. In the story of Kaiqobad's kingship, there is portrayed an ideal king because a new treaty is endorsed under his command between Iranians and Turanians and the road was closed to vengeance at least for a short period of time. Furthermore, Kaiqobad expresses in several parts of the story that he is clean of any avarice and hatred as the two elements that add to the mankind's suffering and intensify the enmities. In the last moments of his life, Kaiqobad recommends it to his companions that they should stay away from avarice because, if it succeeds in trapping the mankind, it will be like a cutting sword and lethal ^[13]. In the story of the huge war between Kaikhosrow and Afrasiab, a hard battle occurred between Iranian and Turanian armies that led to the shedding of the blood of hundreds of innocent human beings who had been perished due to the avarice in Afrasiab and Garsivaz ^[13]. In the story of Lohrasp's kingship, it is seen that the avarice of ambitiousness encompasses the entire personality of Goshtasp who demands crown and throne from his father, Lohrasp, while he is still leaning back on the kingship majesty. In this story, Ferdowsi seeks to show how the ogre of avarice causes the human beings' impudence and shamelessness and makes them ask more than they deserve beyond their right ^[13]. In the story of Rostam and Shogad, the epical hero of Iran is killed due to the avarice of his stepbrother. "Based on the report and description by Ferdowsi, the grounds of the emergence of such a feeling as inferiority in Shogad before Rostam and its transformation into an inferiority complex can be sought in [these] factors: having a bondswoman as a mother without any clear-cut and noble origin, ominous birth, banishment from the territory and family during adolescence and Rostam's world-inclusive fame" ^[27]. Of course, it is worth mentioning that Shogad, as well, gained no share and gift other than death and had his life wasted by the arrow of Rostam due to his following of the ogre of avarice" ^[13]. In the story of Bahman and Esfandiyar, one of the interventions performed by Bahman under the influence of the avarice of hatred and revenge after his power takeover was dispatching troops to Zabul and captivating the Rostam's family and murdering of many of them. He encaged Zal and killed Faramarz after a lot of pursuance and chases and, in sum, caused his own scandal in the history ^[13].

Conclusion

One of the most important properties of Shahnameh is its instructional and ethical themes manifested in various stories. Due to the same reason, paying attention to such topics as avarice and making emphasis on its avoidance is frequently repeated in this artwork. In the epical and mythical parts of Shahnameh, it is seen that although these myths and epic-creators exhibit superhuman behaviors and have powers beyond the abilities and

competencies of the mankind, they are to the same extent weak and inferior and can be trampled by their internal and external enemies. The most important mythical and epical stories wherein the presence and emergence of the ogre of avarice is more distinct are the followings:

The story of Jamshid who underwent spiritual downfall due to his boastfulness stems from his greed and loses the political and religious government; he was finally murdered by Zahhak through his use of a saw. Zahhak killed his father out of his avarice and sat in the throne and began killing the human beings and exercising injustice due to his huge covetousness. But, in the end, he was arrested and imprisoned with the people's up-rise. In the story of Fereydun, avarice and love for wealth in Iraj's brothers, i.e. Tur and Salm, caused his death.

Kaikavus has been depicted as an adventurous and avaricious king in Shahnameh and he troubled Iranians repeatedly for his unwise doings from taking a trip to the sky to a journey to Mazandaran. The peak of Shahnameh's stories was summarized in the battle between Rostam and Sohrab. To take possession of the crown and throne, Sohrab accompanied his army to Iran. On this path, the avaricious Afrasiab also supported him. Anyway, in the epical combat between the avarice (Sohrab) and sufficiency and abstinence (Rostam), the father defeated the son and a heartrending tragedy was formed based on avarice. In between, Kavus's avarice should not be neglected for he avoided giving panacea for protecting and conserving his own government. In the story of Siavash, Sudabeh was the main factor of spreading evil. The avarice of lust and capriciousness compelled her to be seeking for establishing an illicit relationship with Siavash. The result of Sudabeh's behavior was Siavash's seeking of refuge in Turan and eventually his murder by the command of Afrasiab as a result of Garsivaz's envy. In another part, Bijan's craze for pleasure and Gorgin's envy shook hands to throw Bijan into the well of their stupidity and nearly died. In the story of Lohrasp, his son who was named Goshtasp avariciously demanded crown and throne from him. This same incident happened to Goshtasp who had become the king and Esfandiyar asked him the throne of kingship. To conserve his government, Goshtasp consciously sent his son to the mouth of death. After a while, Rostam, as well, fell in the well of Shogad's envy and hatred and got killed along with Rakhsh.

It can be stated in the end that Ferdowsi believes that the two topics of avarice and wisdom are inversely associated meaning that the more the faculty of wisdom is wasted in the human being's existence, the more the ogre of avarice takes control thereof. More importantly, almost all the avaricious personalities in Shahnameh have had an identical fate. As it is seen, Afrasiab, Sohrab, Esfandiyar, Sudabeh, Jamshid, Zahhak, Shogad and others get killed in the end. In between, Afrasiab is the most prominent avaricious character in Shahnameh. In addition, it is seen that the avarice is the factor and the cause of such other depravities as hatred and vengeance, war and blood-shedding, envy and jealousy that drag the mankind to the utmost downfall and wastage. Therefore, they should be avoided and evaded.

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