

## The Story of "Gāvṗāy Demon and the Religious Wise" in *Marzbannameh*

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### Extended Abstract

#### 1. Introduction

*Marzbannameh* is one of the masterpieces of Persian literature both in terms of form and content and one of the precious jewels of the crown of Persian literature. This book contains the wise anecdotes, allegories, and myths, which have been prepared in the manner of *Kelileh and Demneh* from the language of human beings, beasts, birds, demons, and fairies. *Marzbannameh* is one of the valuable works of Persian literature that was written in the fourth century by Espahbod Marzban Ibn Rostam Ibn Shervin in Tabaristani language. He converted it into the technical language in 622-617 (Safa, 1990). In addition, this book is a successful example that has a high and significant literary value in Persian literature. It also has great content and stories with precious missions. Being familiar with Iranian culture, stories and myths, Marzban Ibn Rostam has used them artistically in thematic, characterization and symbolism, he has used them for the good effect of his words. With a general look at the text of this work, we will realize that the depth of many of his stories and the theme of this book originate from the worldview of ancient Iran, especially the culture of Mazdisna. In this regard, Mohammad Moein links many post-Islamic Iranian poems and the books of prose, including *Marzbannameh*, with pre-Islamic narratives and legends, and he believes that many of the contents of *Marzbannameh* can be traced to culture and literature. Found before Islam (Moein, 1945), some consider it a relic of Sassanid Iran (Ripka, 2002; Rezaei, 2010). From this point of view of the mythological approach, the most controversial and famous story of this book is the story of "Gāvṗāy Demon and the Religious Wise" (دیو گاوپای و دانای دینی) about which different opinions have been expressed.

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The story of the "Gāvpāy Demon and the Religious Wise" is one of the most famous and controversial long story in *Marzbannameh* that covers the entire of fourth chapter. The theme of this story has a mythical color and smell and its narration can be considered in connection with Iranian narrative-mythological patterns. These cases have attracted the attention of researchers and they have risen different opinions to be expressed and presented about this story. In this article, we seek to answer the question of whether the previously suggested sources could be the source of this story, or whether this story has another source? and can we see a specific text in the structure of this story? The result of the research shows that the theme of the story of "Gāvpāy Demon and the Religious Wise" of *Marzbannameh* is the debate of Zarathustra and the devil, which is taken from Avesta and Pahlavi sources and the structure of this story is based on the book of *Minoan Wisdom*.

## 2. Review of Literature and Theoretical Framework

One of the first people who has paid attention to "Gāvpāy Demon and the Religious Wise" as well as the deep structure of the story is Mohammad Moein in *Yosht Farian and Marzbannameh* (1945). After that, Sirus Shamisa in the article entitled "Marzbannameh and the Memory of the Defeat of the Demons" (1982) and Mohsen Farzaneh in the *Book of Sufi: The Transformed Manichaeism* (1988) should be mentioned. The recent works that deal with this story are Ahmad Tafazli's (2014) *the History of Pre-Islamic Iranian Literature*, the article of "Mythological Criticism of "Gāvpāy Demon and the Religious Wise" of *Marzbannameh*" (2011) by Shirin Razmjoo Bakhtiari and Elham Khalili Jahromi and the article of "Analysis of the Manichaeian Aspects of the Story of the "Gāvpāy Demon and the Religious Wise in *Marzbannameh*" by Masoumeh Hosseini (2017). The difference between this research and the introduced works is that we have briefly reviewed all of the previous studies and criticism, then some possible hypotheses will be presented; we have expressed our opinion about the deep structure of this story.

Regarding the origin of the story of the "Gāvpāy Demon and the Religious Wise", we have found some evidence in Pahlavi books according to which the authors take the "religious sage" as "Zarathustra". The defeat of the demons by Zarathustra and their hiding in the underground is one of the topics that has been mentioned in the myths of ancient Iran, Avesta and Pahlavi texts. The evidence which was found in *Avesta* and Pahlavi texts about the confrontation between Zoroastrianism and the demons and their defeat is exactly the same theme that we see in *Marzbannameh* in the form

of the discussion of "Gāvpāy Demon and the Religious Wise". According to these concordances, it can be clearly seen that the fourth chapter of *Marzbannameh* is the same story of Zoroaster and Demons, which has been frequently mentioned in Mazdisna religion and Pahlavi texts, and it is one of the important Zoroastrian stories. This issue has appeared here in a symbolic way; but there are signs in the story that lead us to Zarathustra: 1) In both stories, there is a confrontation between a wise person and a fool, which ultimately leads to the victory of the wise; 2) In Avesta, the adjective "religious" is assigned to Zoroaster, in *Marzbannameh*, religion is the adjective of wise; 3) In both narrations, both Avesta and Pahlavi texts and *Marzbannameh*, the person opposite to Zoroaster and religious scholar are "demons" and "devils"; 4) The actions and deeds of the demons, such as harassing people, marrying women, etc. are the same; 5) In both narrations, the demons hide in the underground after they are defeated (they go to hell in Minoan wisdom, besides, it was believed that Zoroastrians believe that hell is underground), and 6) in the frontier of this, opposition to the face of the debate is seen; The menu of wisdom (one of the sources of the story of Zoroaster and the devil) is also in the form of questions and answers between wisdom and the wise. The point to be added is that *Marzbannameh* is called Babylonian, the religious man. Explaining this fusion of personalities, SPIEGEL says: "the more influence of Islam in Iran increased, the less the Iranians were able to use the ancient sources, so they were able to complete their national narrations from Sami narrations that Islam had brought it with him. As a result of this fusion of narrations, personalities such as Kiomars and Adam, Zarathustra and Ibrahim and others matched each other" (Gheibi, 2017). For this reason, he considers the religious scholar (Zoroastrian) from Babylon in *Marzbannameh*.

One of the indications is that the story of "Gāvpāy Demon and the Religious Wise" is taken from the story of Zoroaster and the demon / devil in the texts of the Mazdis, especially under the influence of the Minoan wisdom; the structural and content similarity of this story is with the wisdom Minoan. We see this similarity in four ways with this book: The first is that both texts are organized in the form of a debate. Secondly, the concepts of the questions and their method are the same in the frontier and the Wisdom Minoan. Thirdly, this story is like Wisdom Minoan of philosophical fiction and the fourth aspect is the similarity of the questions and answers of both books.

### 3. Method

In this article, with a look at the criticism and opinions related to the story of "Gāvpāy Demon and the Religious Wise", we considered these opinions.

With a historical-mythological analysis in the method of libraries and documents, we have examined the suggested sources of this story, then we presented our suggested opinion.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on what has been said about *Avesta* and *Pahlavi texts*, the framework of the story of "Gāvpāy Demon and the Religious Wise" in *Marzbannameh* is the debate of Zoroaster and the defeat of the demon/devil, which is adapted from Avesta and Pahlavi sources; but in *Marzbannameh*, this story is mixed with the philosophical concepts in such a way that philosophical language is used in the design of questions and answers. In general, the comparison between the fourth chapter of *Marzbannameh* and Minoo wisdom shows a great structural, verbal and conceptual similarity which can be seen between them. Probably, the author of the story "Gāvpāy Demon and the Religious Wise" took the original core of the story from Avesta and Pahlavi sources and made it according to the Minoo wisdom.

**Keywords:** Gāvpāy Demon and the Religious Wise, *Marzbannameh*, Pahlavi Texts, *Kelileh and Demneh*

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