

**Demonology & worship of Dives in Iranian local legend**  
(The study was conducted using credit Payame Noor University)

Reza Yousefvand

Assistant Professor, Payam Noor University, Department of history, Tehran. Iran

Correspondent author: [Yousefvand@pnu.ac.ir](mailto:Yousefvand@pnu.ac.ir)

**Abstract:** Studies show that local legends are composed with mythologies and it is hard to distinguished these but it is a superficial glance, so that some researchers defined myths as legends as unreal narrative and imaginary and invalid, another researchers know the duality and fundamental contradiction and dogmatic between these and they know myths related to prehistory era and legend belong to historical period. And the mentality and the question arise whether any of myths and legends has a gender? The mythologist tells legends are unreal, imaginary or false that they make credible and acceptable nature to myth. Another defines myths as history and they know the myth as historic and sacred narrative but legend is about half-historical and half-legendary character. Then the nature and Folk beliefs of the demon in local legend suggests that both of these are same although these are some different. This research has been written with descriptive and field data, documentation and library collection.

[Reza Yousefvand. **Demonology & worship of Dives in Iranian local legend.** *Life Sci J* 2019;16(2):5-9]. ISSN: 1097-8135 (Print) / ISSN: 2372-613X (Online). <http://www.lifesciencesite.com>. 2. doi:[10.7537/marslsj160219.02](https://doi.org/10.7537/marslsj160219.02).

**Keywords:** demonology, Iranian local legends, myths, demon. Folklore.

### Introduction

Demon and evil creatures have been born by human imagination. Although they have some common and uncommon features with human, the non-human characteristics reflect the impossibility aspirations of the human and are so strange and exotic that we so-called preternatural inevitable.

The main preternatural traits of supernatural beings are the non-soil nature of them; they have been created fire, air and water and by the nature of his transcendent they can go everywhere they would like and they configure as human, plant and animal. They are fast and have the ability of disappearance. They can talk any languages. They are aware of any secrets, fates, hidden treasure and the future of news. They have superhuman forces and can be scared and disturb or help anyone. Superior abilities of them cause to call preternatural.

Most east ideologies implies that the world belong to preternatural creatures before humans are created. When humans are created they go to below world and live in neighborhood of them. So they are hated of humans and they always conflict with them.

Today many of believes disappeared or changed in related to preternatural creatures, but in some religious but some rituals remain that have emerged due to the same ideas. Therefore, we hold that religion which we forgotten the origin of them. If beings be a relatively comprehensive and accurate understanding of the nature of supernatural can lead the world and knowledge of the myths that have emerged of it.

### Method and material

This research has been written with descriptive and field data, documentation and library collection.

### Myths and Legends

A myth is a story based on tradition or legend, which has a deep symbolic meaning. A myth 'conveys a truth' to those who tell it and hear it, rather than necessarily recording a true event. Although some myths can be accounts of actual events, they have become transformed by symbolic meaning or shifted in time or place. Myth is known as ((speaking patients)) until thought illnesses. Mythology studies in connection with linguistics were achieved by Saussure (Rastegar Fassai, 2004: 4).

A legend is a semi-true story, which has been passed on from person-to-person and has important meaning or symbolism for the culture in which it originates. A legend usually includes an element of truth, or is based on historic facts, but with 'mythical qualities'. Legends usually involve heroic characters or fantastic places and often encompass the spiritual beliefs of the culture in which they originate. Myths, legends and folktales are hard to classify and often overlap. Imagine a line (or continuum) as illustrated below, with an historical account based on facts at one end and myths or cultural folktales at the other; as you progress towards the mythical/folktales end of the line, what an event symbolizes to people, or what they feel about it, becomes of greater historical significance than the facts, which become less important. By the time you reach the far end of the spectrum, the story has taken on a life of its own and the facts of the

original event, if there ever were any, have become almost irrelevant. It is the message that is important. It seems that some of the elements and details of myth definition is cause to we think it is same with legend and it is the most important factor that could not allowed use of mythical criticism for folks literature especially the legend. In last centuries, tells the definition that introduces myth as legend, unreal and imagine narrative and wrong in some definitions there are dual conflict and contrast between legend and myth, so in existence of myth destroyed the legend. Some experts believe that the myth is not a legend but it is history, real history not unreal history (Shaygan, 2002: 105).

Marcel Mau's also separate myth of legend basically, and he says the legend cannot be away in myth (Basted, 1991: 42). Romantic beliefs and immortal has been called legend. The legend is linked with the history and events have historical origin but myth is the story of prehistory and it events are in the heavens and the heroes are gods (Esmailpoor, 2003: 14). Saber Emami also points to the same between myth and legend although his completely separate myth from legend (Emamy, 2001: 21) is really different between myth and legend and has myth different natures? From the perspective of anthropologists and folklorist, myth is not defined in contrast with legend. Although they tell the collection of features between them, they recognize myth and legend as a one category. There is one matter and substance for myth and legend and the second character of them is different. Therefore all of the anthropologists and folklorist are believe that the myth and legend is the same with each other. So these words have same means however in one culture there are different means. Storyteller or narrator plays an important role in defining myths as anthropologists defined it as real and true narrative about the birth of the universe that is quoted from the perspective of narrators (Barfield, 1977: 334). From the perspective of anthropologists and folklorist, legend or myth is same with psychology technique that is known as ((free association)) that by analyzing and classify its content can be restored even the collective memory of a nation.

### **Praises of demon themes in Iran**

Demon's place in Iranian culture could be found in three parts:

The ancient texts are texts and documents related to the medieval and Dari texts that is primarily post-Islamic literature. The ancient texts are including amazing statuettes of Mad era, ancient Avesta Gatha, inscriptions of the Achaemenid and Parthian. Medieval texts include late Avesta and other Pahlavi texts in addition, literature and Manu and Mithraism

and Zurvanism. Of the Party texts which is in east of Iran do not have a lot of documents and they just tell devil as "Prince of Darkness" (Ismailpoor, 2002: 123). In mad era in 705 B.C we observe amazing statuettes which are semi human and winged giant that later called div. In all west of Iran and Zagros we see that there are Mesopotamian beliefs about good and evil forces (Bahar, 1997: 146). After mad, we have Avesta text in the North East and around Balkh and Achaemenid inscriptions are in South and South West, what is common between Gahan in the East in Achaemenid inscriptions is the name of Ahura Mazda and arte as he principles of trust and lie. But in Gahan the god is Ahura Mazda however in Achaemenid inscriptions in addition the Ahura Mazda not the gods or Bogha and although Ahura Mazda is God Almighty but is not single god (Ismailpoor, 1997: 161) So we see dualism in Zoroaster religious that they worship both of the Ahura Mazda and devil.

Demon worship never disappeared in Iran, in Zoroastrianism worshipers called Div. (demon) as Daevayasna. According to Vandidad, worshipers met each other in Cemeteries and cryptand where to spend their disgusting ritual meal that was dead bodies (Vandidad, Fargard, 53-58 articles and Fargard 16, 17). Demon worship continued after Islam in Iran Zarinkoob believe Divdad name in Sajian family of Azerbaijanwho has relationship with Afshin Eshrosene, indicate that some people praises div in early period of Abbasid caliphate (Zarinkoob, 1964: 216). These worships apparently were due to fear of Div. and try to serve and satisfying them. We can see the worship tradition of Div in Arian society of India (Rig Veda, Preface: 40).

In general we can said that in the late second millennium and early first millennium A.D that Iranian tribes were still not separated, Ahura Mazda name shaped between them. After then Ahura Mazda many of the India and Iranian gods consider as angel and another group as div consider as devil, then in advance process of religious, Ahura Mazda convert to single god in east Avesta and removed other gods, and demon is the depiction of evil and mater of Dives while in other parts of Iran, including Fars Iranian religion remains on the basis of ancient (Bahar, 1997: 161- 162, 416-417). After Zoroaster get back pervious believes to ancient thought of Iranian and for example Sepand Mino previously has low level in Gahanemerged to Ahura Mazda and against the Devil. Avesta and Pahlavi texts are prominent ongoing battle scenes God's and evil forces. In the world there is evil against any good and there is a demon against a god. Creation of demons and evil creatures has been not described in Avesta and Pahlavi's book as clearly was describing Ahura Mazda and Minooei creations. In such a system devils is not more important as angels.

This lack of discipline is not unintentionally because of the significant features of evil is chaos, and inconsistent (Hinnels, 2000: 80) in top of evil pyramid put demon.

### **Demonssupernatural beings**

According to legend and Iranian narratives especially what is observed in folklore dive is supernatural beings that imagine with special shape and face. In the Persian epic of Shahnameh Div-e Sepid, or Div-e Sefidis the chieftain of the Dives(demons) of Mazandaran. He is a huge being. He possesses great physical strength and is skilled in sorcery and necromancy. He destroys the army of Kay Kavus by conjuring a dark storm of hail, boulders, and tree trunks using his magical skills. He then captures Kay Kavus, his commanders, and paladins; blinds them, and imprisons them in a dungeon. The greatest Persian mythical hero Rostam undertakes his "Seven Labors" to free his sovereign. Sodives are evils and unnatural existence that have basically difference with humans. They usually describe black with long teeth such as boar teeth, thick lips and black and sometimes blue eyes (Masse, 1933: 360). Dives usually are man – eater and moron (Khandan and Darvishian, 2003: 233-234/2) and sometimes they are nimble and agile. Tartosi said in Darabnameh (Tartosi, 1977, 1) that when the heroes of Tartosy story killed the black snake between two black and white snakes, white Snake comes to him and says: we are little people but its black snake that you killed was div, their place is in the mountains and the huge dragon that emerged from the mountain and have water is not dragon but also it div. The Lak people of Lorestan have a legend called (Zarp-e Zang) is as Daran Name Tartosy, the heroes of legend that introduces as Zarp-e Zang and is one of the forty childe of king in a long journey killed three multi-head dives and when they are return with guide of Simorgh they killed the dragon who prevent water supply to governor of that region (Yousefvand, 2016: 36). One the main characteristic of them is invers traits (Homauni, 1992: 329). Dives usually tends to worked perverse as others told to him. Sometimes legend heroes are out to conquer Div and they service to his master all lifetime. Human hang up a ring to their ear in so doing, they are restrained and always be at the service of man. Wit getting benefits of dives we could call them anytime we need. As if we pledge a hair or feather of them and, if necessary, burnet and div will be our service, if the div is not appearing or disappearing happen wind and dust storms. This is seen as subjective demons in most of legends and popular narratives that often div disappeared in the sky as smoke (Moin, 1959: 248).

AKVĀN-E DĪV, the demon Akavan, who was killed by Rostam. According to the Sah-nama. Akvan first confronts Rostam in the shape of a wild ass, large, powerful, with a yellow hide and a black stripe from mane to tail. Rostam chases him on horseback for three days and three nights, but whenever Akavan is in danger, he conceals himself by magic. In the end, Rostam tires and falls asleep, whereupon Akavan, who has been watching him from a distance, approaches and, cutting away the earth around him, lifts him up to the sky. He then asks Rostam whether he should throw him upon a mountain or into the sea. Rostam prefers the sea but, realizing that the div.'s mind is perverse, asks to be thrown onto the mountain. As Rostam surmised, the div throws him into the sea. Having rescued him from the water and found his horse (Raksh) Rostam again confronts Akavān; this time, he snares him with his lasso and beheads him. Akvan is described as having a head like an elephant, long hair, a mouth filled with tusks, blue eyes, black lips, and an extremely ugly body (Akrami, 2003: 182).

### **Demon appearance**

We read in Eskandarnameh of Manochehr Khan Hakim that is a knighthood story and Safavid period, Dives actively fighting and they always defeat by knighthood heroes. Dives always have horn and tail and in the story we read that a div grows up Sadan, the sun of Sasan and Eskandar tries to realize him he is not div son. He is a div and has tail and horn and you are human if he is your father then you should have tail and horn (Hakim, 2009: 42). Another physical aspect of dives tar resin is the color of them. They sometimes are black as tar resin. Saadan receive to tree and spring, and saw div as tar resin. It sometimes is with; Div. eSepid is in Shahname. There is white dive in seven girls story of folk culture (Darvishian, 191: 2003).

### **Demonplaces**

Demons live hidden of human, they live in mountain and cave. In folklores stories dives live in Gaff Mountain (Golin Khanom, 2009: 43). In the ((Crow headstrong)) story from the tales of the Sobhi Mohtadi also div living in the mountain peaks. Indeed, it took place in myths, sacred place where the gods. The house of seven head div is in the cave in the mountain. (Darvishian, 2008: 76). We read in Shamse and Ghahghahe story that Henkal Div emerges of water (Farahy, 1954, 449). And Zarintan in Eskandarname lives in Fezbakhsh Island.

### **Demon and witchcraft**

Magic is a force that comes from the words influence which reading aloud or sung in song and man can act as the spiritual beings then he has impact on

nature by speeches and motions and to establish the fundamental influence that called it magic (Shale, 1965: 134). Magic is a force of evil in Zoroastrianism and as has in Vandidad creature is devil (Avesta, 1996: 662). Dives also are sorcerer in Iranian myths, one of the act of him is figure management which is the features of wizards.

In kavus story of Shahname, Div – Sepid emerged the black cloud and all of them become blind with sounded the tar and smoke. Ferdowsi the Great epic of Iran this regard, he says:

SHAB AMAD YEKE ABR SHOD  
SEAHJEHAN KARD CHUN ROY ZANGY SEAH.

YEKE KHEMEH ZAD BAR SAR AZ DUD  
GHERSEAH SHOD JEHAN CHESHMHA KHEREH  
KHEREH.

CHU BOGZASHT SHAB RUZ NAZDEK  
SHODJEHAN JOY RA CHASM TAREK SHOD.

The night come and the cloud coalesce with the guard, the world was black as a Negro.

Such as bitumen smoke rose into the sky, the world completely was black.

After night closes day, The kaus's eyes was blind (Ferdusi, 1965: 86).

Rostam in fourth courses faced with a witch as a beauty woman.

Not knowing that she was a wicked witch,  
An Ahriman beneath her bravery,  
He handed her a cup of wine, invoking.  
The Giver of all good. Now when he named'.  
The Lord of love her favour changed; no soul.  
Had she for gratitude, no tongue for praise,  
But blackened at God's name, while Rustam,  
flinging.

His lasso quicker than the wind, ensnared,  
And questioned her: "What art thou? Speak and show.

Thy proper favour.

### Demon attributes and trappings

Demonis the symbol and losses in legend and folk that has different features and any of them are dependence creature as Jen, Doalpa, Tava and so on (Yousefvand, 2008:275). For example in legends and folks, Tave is div that family enemies with him will destroy children of them. Jen is different with div but after Islam in Iran it use as synonym but the nature of Jin belong to fire but Demon is devil (Christensen,1941:71). The etymological meaning of Jin also implies that. (Gesenius, 1955: 170) With entrances Arab to Iran demon and Jin was equal meaning and consider as an overall meaning to all supernatural existence. In parallel some of stories in early age pre Islamic in Iran get this meaning therefore the Iranian and Arab definition mix together after Islam in Tossi's Ajaybolmakhloght, giant is category

of Div. that is tricky, and people eating (Toosi, 1967: 385) Giant is known as devil. As the pre-Zoroastrian myths was so. Dives walking on the ground as a human but after emerged Zartosht, they rejected from the ground and go to the underground (Zand-e Bahman, 1991: Ninth Yasan, paragraph 15: 22). Dives in addition are the symbol of the natural disasters such as earthquakes, storms and suffering and oppression they are also the epitome of a bad mood and bad traits such as envy and greed and lust.

### Conclusion

We can recognize some the ancient legend in any society and nation by the supernatural beings and we can identify the legend of nation. In Iran myth and legend is synonym with a few different, but some of the researcher distinguished between them and believe that they cannot be synonym and tell about their different. Therefore with the studies have been conducted with the Iranian culture and legends can be said is one source of legends and myths and both of them though are minor differences are fed from a root and branch.

The study was conducted using credit Payame Noor University

### References

1. Asadi Tosi, A. (1975). Garshasbname, with try H. Yaghmai, Tehran: Tahori.
2. Alon, S. (2009) Golin Khanom, Ghesehhay Mashdy Golin Khanom, Tehran, Markaz.
3. Akrami, M (2003). Smart set, Mashhad: Ivar.
4. Avesta, (1996). Translate by J. Dostkhah, Tehran: Morvarid.
5. Bastid, R. (2001). Knowledge of mythology, Translate by J. Satari, Tehran: Tos, Third edition.
6. Bahar, M (1996), Asian religions, First edition, Tehran: Cheshme.
7. Bahar, M (1999), Bondhahshen, Tehran: Toss.
8. Barfield, Thomas (1997), the dictionary of Anthropology, London: Black well.
9. Prap. V (1989), Morphology of the Fairy Tales, Translate by F. Badrei, Tehran, Tos.
10. Darvishian, A. Khandan, R, (2003), the legendary culture of the people of Iran, Tehran: Books and Culture.
11. Emami, S (2001). Myths in Persian commentary texts, Tehran: Gangin-e Farhang.
12. Farahy, M (1957) Mahbub Al- Gholub, Tehran: Amirkabir.
13. Ferdusi. A (1965) Shahnameh, Tehran: center of encyclopedia of Islam.
14. Prop, V (1968), Morphology of the folktale, Texas: university of Texas, press.

15. Poordavood, E (1967), Yashatha, Bahram Farahvashi, Tehran University Press.
16. Rastegar Fasai, M. (2004) Switching configuration in Iranian myth, Tehran, Eteleat.
17. Razi, H. Vandidad, (2006) Tehran, press. Fekr-eruz.
18. Gesenius, A, (1995) Hebrew and English Lexicon of The old Testament. London oxford.
19. Hinnels, john R. (1985) Persian mythology. Tehran press Asater.
20. Homyuni, S. (1992) culture Sarvestn Nation, Mashhad, Beh Nashr.
21. Ismail Poor, A (1997). The development of myth to Mehrdad Bahar history, First Edition, Tehran: Cheshme Publishing.
22. Massé, H. (1933), Paris, Library oriental ET American.
23. Moin, M. (1959), Mazd-e Yasna Vandidad Farsi, Tehran university.
24. Hakeem, M. (2009) Eskandar Nameh, Tehran.
25. Shale. (1965) short history in big religion, translated by Moheby M. Tehran.
26. Shaigan. D. Bothay Farhang & Khatereh Azaly. (2002) Tehran, Amirkaber.
27. Tarsusy, M. Darab Nameh (1977), Tehran, Bongah Tarjomeh & Nashr Ketab.
28. Yousefvand, R. (2016) The study of historical foundation in Laki myths Big research project in Payam Noor university, Iran, Tehran.
29. Yousefvand, R. (2008) Iran and the Caucasus. Brill some Laki demons pp.275-279, Vol 12/2.
30. Yousefvand, R. (2014) folklore of Laki Nation, by introduction Prof Garnik A.
31. Zarinkob, A, (1964). Post-Islamic history of Iran, Tehran: Publications Office of the Ministry of Education writing.

1/22/2019