

A Comparative Study of the Story of the “Black-Clothed King” in Nezami’s *Haft Peykar* and the Story of Prophet Adam (PBUH) in Religious and Literary Narratives

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Sacred stories subconsciously affect the way people tell stories. Among these stories is the story of Prophet Adam (PBUH), which is described in detail in Abrahamic religions, especially Islam. This story had an impact on Nizami's mind, in such a way that he wrote the story of the black-clad king from the Haftpeykar under its influence. In this research, we decided to investigate and compare the common themes and similar characters of the two stories of the black-clad king in the Haftpeykar Nizami and the story of Adam (PBUH) in the religious and literary narratives with a descriptive-analytical method. After examining these two narratives, we came to the conclusion that the same place, pleasure or sin, tree and fate are the common themes of the two stories. Similar characters are also among these: 1- the Master and Turktaz: those two have brought the hero close to them without prior acquaintance. 2- Butcher and Azrael: These are the two people who cut the hero's connection with the material world and introduced him to a world full of pleasure for a while. 3- The king and Adam: these two have eight common characteristics: falling away from their own land, following their passion and whimsy, ascension, etc.

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Introduction

Sacred narratives function as fundamental psychological and artistic archetypes, unconsciously influencing human storytelling throughout history. The narrative of Prophet Adam (PBUH), detailed extensively within Abrahamic religious traditions, particularly Islam, serves as a cornerstone of these mythological patterns. Nezami Ganjavi, one of the most sophisticated masters of the Persian *mathnavi*, frequently integrates these religious motifs into his poetry, both explicitly and implicitly. The story of the “Black-Clothed King” (*Shah-e Siah-push*) in Nezami’s *Haft Peykar* exhibits clear structural and thematic parallels to the narrative of Adam (PBUH). This research aims to analyze these shared foundations, specifically focusing on the common themes (*ben-maye*) and character archetypes that connect the King’s journey with the Quranic and literary accounts of Adam’s fall and exile.

Method

This study employs a descriptive-analytical methodology to compare and contrast the “Black-Clothed King” episode with the traditional narratives of Adam (PBUH). By examining foundational religious texts—specifically the Quran—alongside classical literary and mystical commentaries, the research identifies structural similarities in narrative development. The analysis focuses on extracting parallel motifs, such as the setting of the “paradisiacal garden,” the role of temptation, and the ontological significance of the “forbidden” act. Character roles are also scrutinized to determine how specific figures in Nezami’s narrative function as allegorical echoes of theological counterparts.

Results

The comparative analysis reveals profound structural and thematic commonalities between the two narratives, categorized into shared motifs and character archetypes:

١. Common Motifs:

- **The Garden/Location:** Both narratives are set in a paradisiacal, abundant environment (the garden of the “Turktaz” for the King; Paradise for Adam) where the protagonist enjoys unrestricted freedom, save for a singular, definitive prohibition.
- **Pleasure and Sin:** In both stories, the protagonist’s desire for pleasure or knowledge leads to a violation of boundaries. Just as Adam’s consumption of the forbidden fruit leads to his expulsion, the King’s inability to restrain his desire for the Lady results in his permanent estrangement from her.
- **The Tree:** The tree serves as a symbol of knowledge and awareness. In both cases, it acts as a pivot point that shifts the protagonist from a state of innocence to a state of complex, often painful, consciousness.
- **Fate:** Both protagonists are governed by an inevitable destiny that forces them through a cycle of departure, trial, and eventual exile.

٢. Parallel Characters:

- **God and the Lady (Turktaz):** Both figures elevate the protagonist to a position of proximity and honor without prior acquaintance, testing their worthiness.
- **The Butcher and Azrael:** Both characters act as agents of transition. The Butcher leads the King into a reality beyond the material world, mirroring Azrael’s role in delivering Adam to the divine presence and subsequently facilitating his transition to the earthly realm.
- **The King and Adam:** Both share a journey characterized by displacement from their “homeland,” succumbing to the desires of the lower self (*nafs*), experiencing an “ascension” into a higher state of consciousness, and a subsequent “fall” or exile.

Conclusion

The comparison demonstrates that the story of the “Black-Clothed King” is not merely an independent fable but a symbolic reflection of the Adam (PBUH) narrative. The King’s journey—his rise to favor, his transgression

due to impulse, and his eventual black-clad state of mourning—mirrors the theological archetype of the Fall. Nezami Ganjavi utilizes these shared elements to explore deep existential questions regarding human fallibility, the nature of desire, and the painful path from innocence to the disillusionment of the material world. The “black” clothing worn by the King serves as an aesthetic manifestation of the universal human regret for the lost “Paradise,” aligning perfectly with the mystical interpretations of Adam’s remorse after his descent to Earth.