

Par. 2

### The Story of Zakhak and his Father

One of the desert spear-armed Bedouins  
Of noble birth then lived - a virtuous king,  
Just, highborn, generous, and hight Mardas,  
Who sought his God with reverence and sighs,  
He kept a thousand head of all milch cattle,  
Goats, camels, sheep, and kine - a gentle breed -  
With Arab steeds, all timid beauties they,  
And grudged the milk to none. He had a son  
Whom much he loved - Zakhak, a gallant prince,  
But hasty. People called him Biwarasp.  
Ten thousand is " biwar " in ancient Persian,  
And he possessed ten thousand Arab steeds  
With golden equipage - a famous stud.  
Most of his days and nights he spent on horseback

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Engaged in superintendence not in war.  
One day Iblis approached him as a friend  
And led his wits astray. The youth gave ear  
With pleasure and all unsuspectingly  
Gave to Iblis heart, reason, and pure soul,  
And heaped the dust on his own head. Iblis  
Exulted seeing that the youth was snared  
And gulled the simpleton with specious words,  
Thus saying: "I could tell thee many things  
Known to myself alone."  
The youth made answer :-  
"Tell me at once, my worthy monitor! "  
Iblis replied: "First promise, then my story."  
The guileless youth swore as Iblis dictated  
"Thy secret shall be kept, thy bidding done."  
Then said Iblis: "Great prince? shall any rule  
Here but thyself? What profiteth a sire  
With such a son? Now hearken to my redo  
The lifetime of this ancient potentate  
Continueth, thou art shelved. Seize on his court  
And goods. His place will suit thee, thou shalt be  
King of the world if thou durst do my bidding."  
Zakhak looked grave; to shed his sire's blood grieved him.  
He said: "Not so, suggest some other course:

This cannot be."  
"Then thou," Iblis rejoined,  
"Art perjured and wilt still be despicable,  
Thy father honoured."  
Thus he snared the Arab,  
Who asked: "What must I do? I will obey."  
Iblis replied: "Leave me to scheme. Thy head  
Shall touch the sun. I only ask thy silence;  
No help need I, myself am competent,  
But keep the sword of speech within the scabbard."

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Now in the palace was a jocund garth,  
And thither used Mardas to go at dawn  
To bathe him ere he prayed, without a slave  
To light him on his way, The wicked Div,  
Intent on ill, dug in the garden-path  
A deep pit, masked and made it good with boughs.  
Ere dawn the Arab chieftain hied him thither  
And, as he reached the pit, his fortunes fell;  
That good man tumbled, broke his back, and died.  
He ne'er had breathed a cold breath on his son,  
But cherished him and lavished treasure on him,  
Yet that abandoned youth respected not  
His father, but conspired to shed his blood.  
I heard a sage once say: "Though fierce in strife  
No son will dare to take his father's life;  
If such a crime should seem to be implied,  
Seek for the reason on the mother's side."  
Vile and unjust Zakhak thus seized the throne,  
Assumed the Arabs' crown and governed them  
For good or ill.  
Iblis encouraged thus  
Began again and said: "Since thou hast turned  
To me, and gained thy heart's desire, come pledge me  
Thy word once more to do as I require;  
And then thy realm shall spread throughout the world,  
Birds, beasts, and fishes shall be all throe own."  
When this was said he set about to use,  
Most marvellous' another kind of ruse.

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Par. 3

## How Iblis turned Cook

Then as a youth well spoken, clean, and clever,  
Iblis went to Zahhak with fawning words,

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"Let me," he said, "who am a noted cook,  
Find favour with the king."  
By appetite  
Seduced, Zahhak received and welcomed him,  
So that the monarch's faithful minister  
Gave to Iblis the royal kitchen's key.  
Foods then were few, men did not kill to eat  
But lived on vegetals of all earth's produce;  
So evil-doing Ahriman designed  
To slaughter animals for food, and served  
Both bird and beast. He fed the king on blood  
To make him lion-fierce, and like a slave  
Obeyed him. First he fed his lord on yelk  
To make him strong; he liked the flavour much  
And praised Iblis, who said: "Illustrious monarch!  
For ever live! To-morrow I will serve thee  
So as to please thee well."  
All night he mused  
What strange repast to proffer on the morrow,  
And when the azure vault brought back again  
The golden Gem he hopefully presented  
A meal of partridges and silver pheasants.  
The Arab monarch ate and his small wits  
Were lost in admiration. On the third day  
Iblis served lamb and fowl, and on the fourth  
A chine of veal with saffron and rosewater,  
Musk and old wine. Zahhak when he had tasted,  
In wonder at his cook's ability,  
Said: "Worthy friend! ask thou my recompense."  
He answered? Live, O king! in wealth and power.  
My heart is throe, thy favour my soul's food;  
Yet would I ask one boon above my station  
'Tis leave to kiss and lay my face and eyes  
Upon thy shoulders."  
Off his guard Zahhak  
Replied? I grant it; it may do thee grace."

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Iblis received permission, kissed and vanished.

A marvel followed - from the monarch's shoulders  
Grew two black snakes. Distraught he sought a cure  
And in the end excised them, but they grew  
Again! oh strange! like branches from a tree.  
The ablest leeches gave advice in turn  
And used their curious arts but all in vain.  
At length Iblis himself came hurrying  
Dight as a leech. " This was thy destiny,"  
He said; " cut not the snakes but let them live.  
Give them men's brains and gorge them till they sleep.  
It is the only means, such food may kill them."  
The purpose of the foul Div shrewdly scan  
Had he conceived perchance a secret plan  
To rid the world of all the race of man?

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Par. 4

How the Fortunes of Jamshid went to Wrack

Thereafter tumult, combating and strife  
Arose throughout Iran, the bright day Bloomed  
And men renounced Jamshid, who when his Grace  
Was darkened turned to folly and perverseness.  
Pretenders started up, on every march  
The disaffected nobles levied troops  
And strove. Some set forth for Arabia,  
For they had heard? There is a monarch there -  
An awe-insiring king of dragon-visage."  
Thus all the discontented cavaliers  
Went to Zahhak and offered fealty,  
Saluting him as monarch of Iran.  
The king of dragon-visage came like wind  
And donned the Iranian crown, collected troops -  
The bravest of Arabia and Iran -

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And having seized the throne of Shah Jamshid  
Slipped on the world as 'twere a finger-ring.  
Thus fell Jamshid. Pressed by the world's new lord  
He fled, surrendering crown, throne and treasure,  
Host, power and diadem. The world turned black  
To him, he disappeared and yielded all.  
He was in hiding for a century,  
But in the hundredth year the impious Shah

Appeared one day beside the sea of Chin.  
Zahhak clutched him forthwith, gave him small respite,  
And sawing him asunder freed the world  
From him and from the fear that he inspired.  
Long was he hidden from the Dragon's breath,  
But there was no escaping in the end,  
For fortune whirled him like a yellow straw  
And both his throne and greatness passed away.  
What better Shah was ever on the throne,  
And yet what profit could he call his own  
From all his toils? His seven centuries  
Brought him great blessings and calamities.  
What need hast thou then for a length of years?  
The world will keep its secrets though fur food  
It give thee sweets and honeycomb, and rude  
Ungentle voices banish from thine ears.  
Wilt thou then say? Its love is spent on me,  
In every look affection is expressed? "  
Wilt thou confide therein caressingly  
And tell it all the secrets of thy breast?  
'Twill play with thee a pretty game indeed  
Anon, and cause thy wretched heart to bleed.  
My heart is weary of this Wayside Inn:  
O God! release me soon from toil therein.'

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V

ZAHHAK

HE REIGNED A THOUSAND YEARS

Par. 1

The Evil Customs of Zahhak and the Device  
of Irma'il and Karma'il

Zahhak sat on the throne a thousand years  
Obeyed by all the world. Through that long time  
The customs of the wise were out of vogue,  
The lusts of madmen flourished everywhere,  
All virtue was despised, black art esteemed,  
Right lost to sight, disaster manifest;  
While divs accomplished their fell purposes  
And no man spake of good unless by stealth.

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Two sisters of Jamshid, their sex's crown,  
Were brought out trembling like a willow-leaf.  
Of those two ladies visaged like the moon  
The names were Shahrinaz and Arnawaz.  
Men bore them to the palace of Zahhak  
And gave them over to the dragon king,  
Who educated them in evil ways  
And taught them sorcery and necromancy.  
The only teaching that he knew was bad -  
To massacre, to pillage, and to burn.  
Each night two youths of high or lowly birth  
Were taken to the palace by the cook,  
Who having slaughtered them took out their brains  
To feed the snakes and ease the monarch's anguish.  
Now in the realm were two good high-born Persians -  
The pious Irma'il and Karma'il  
The prescient. Talking of the lawless Shah,  
Of his retainers and those hideous meals,  
One said: "By cookery we might approach  
The Shah, and by our wits devise a scheme  
To rescue one from each pair doomed to death."  
They went and learned that art. The clever twain  
Became the monarch's cooks and joyed in secret.  
The time for shedding blood and taking life  
Came, and some murderous minions of the Shah  
Dragged to the cooks with violence two youths  
And flung them prone. The livers of the cooks  
Ached, their eyes filled with blood, their hearts with wrath,  
And each glanced at the other as he thought  
Of such an outrage by the Shah. They slew  
One of the youths and thought it best to mingle  
His precious brains with sheep's and spare the other,  
To whom they said: "Make shift to hide thyself,  
Approach not any dwelling-place of man,  
Thine are the wastes and heights."

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A worthless head  
Thus fed the serpents, and in every month  
The cooks preserved from slaughter thirty youths.  
And when the number reached two hundred saved

Provided them, the donors all unknown,  
With sheep and goats, and sent them desertward.  
Thus sprang the Kurds, who know no settled home,  
But dwell in woollen tents and fear not God.  
Zahhak was wont, such was his evil nature,  
To choose him one among his warriors  
And slay him for consPirang with the divs.  
Moreover, all the lovely noble maidens  
Secluded in their bowers, not tanged of tongues,  
He took for handmaids. Not a jot had he  
Of faith, king's uses, or morality.

Par. 2

How Zahhak saw Faridun in a Dream

Observe God's dealings with Zahhak when he  
Had forty years to live. One longsome night  
He slumbered in the arms of Arnawaz,  
And saw a vision of three warriors -  
Boughs of the tree of kings. The youngest one,  
Who held the middle place, was cypress tall,  
In face, in armour, and in mien a king.  
He rushed with ox-head mace to fight Zahhak,  
Smote him upon the head, stripped off his skin,  
And used it as a rope to bind his hands  
Firm as a rock,' placed on his neck a yoke,  
Then casting earth and dust upon his head

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Dragged him before the crowd in shame and anguish  
Toward Mount Damawand.  
The tyrant writhed  
Thou wouldst have said: "His liver split with fright."  
He yelled. The palace of the hundred columns  
Shook, and the sun-faced ladies left their couches,  
While Arnawaz said to him? Shah! what was it?  
Confide in me; thou vast asleep in peace  
At home! What saw'st thou? Say what came to thee?  
The world is at thy will, beast, divr and man  
Watch o'er thee and the seven climes are thine -  
All 'twixt the moon and Fish.' What made thee start?  
O roaster of the world! Oh! answer me."  
The chief replied? I may not tell, or else  
Ye will despair my life."  
Then Arnawaz :-

"Be pleased to tell us; we perchance may find  
A cure, no ill is irremediable."  
He told them every whit, then said the Fair:-  
"Neglect it not but seek a remedy.  
Thy throne's seat is the signet of the age,  
Thy famous fortune brighteneth the world,  
Beneath thy finger-ring thou hast the earth  
With all its fairies, divs, beasts, fowls, and men.  
Call both the archmages and astrologers -  
The wisest of each realm - and tell them all.  
See if the hand that threateneth thy life  
Is that of fairy, div, or man. This known  
Act vigorously; quail not before thy foes."  
The lady's counsel pleased the Shah.  
Night then  
Was dark as raven's plumes, but when at length  
The Lamp showed o'er the hills, and thou hadst said,  
"Strewed yellow gems upon the azure vault,"

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Zahhak brought archimages shrewd of heart  
And told to them the dream that pierced his liver.  
He said: "Expound this dream without delay,  
And make my soul a pathway toward the light."  
He asked them privily about the future,  
Demanding? What will be my latter end,  
And who succeed me? Tell or hide your heads  
In shame."  
They talked together sad at heart,  
With parched lips and with sallow countenances  
They said: "If we till truly what is fated  
We shall be tortured, haply lose our lives;  
And if we do not act straightforwardly  
As well wash hands of life."  
None dared to speak  
Their fortune was in jeopardy three days.  
Upon the fourth the Shah was wroth, exclaiming:-  
"Foretell the future or be hung alive."  
They drooped their heads, their hearts were rent,  
their eyes  
Wept tears of blood. Among them was a man,  
Wise, honest, prescient, by name Zirak -  
The chief of all the band of archimages.  
Concerned but fearless he addressed Zahhak  
"Indulge no vapouring for none is born  
Except to die. There have been kings ere thee



Fit for the throne of power. Both griefs and joys  
Enough they reckoned up yet their time came.  
If thou wert standing there - an iron wall -  
Yon heaven would grind thee, thou wouldst not endure.  
One will hereafter take thy throne and fling  
Thy fortune to the ground. His name is Faridun,  
And he will be a royal heaven to earth.  
As yet he is not born, thy time of woe  
Hath not arrived, but when his honoured mother  
Hath borne him he will be a fruitful tree.

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At man's estate his head will reach the moon  
And he will seek thy belt, crown, throne, and casque.  
In stature a tall cypress, he will shoulder  
A mace of steel, will smite thy head therewith  
And drag thee from the palace to the street  
In bonds.'  
In vengeance  
"Why bind me," said the impious king,  
Then Zirak: "Wert thou but wise . . .  
But all make pretexts for injurious acts.  
Thy hand will slay his father and that wrong  
Will fill the son's brains with revengeful thoughts  
Besides the nurse of this young atheling -  
The cow, Birmaya hight - will perish too  
By thy hand; so in vengeance he will brandish  
An ox-head mace."  
Zahhak heard anxiously,  
And swooned upon his throne. The noble archmagc;  
Turned him and fled away in dread of ill.  
The Shah recovered and resumed his seat.  
He diligently sought throughout the world  
For traces faint or clear of Faridun;  
No food, no slumber, or repose took he,  
His daylight turned to lapislazuli.

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Par. 3

The Birth of Faridun

Years passed away, calamity approached  
The dragon-king, the blessed Faridun

Was born, the fashion of the world was changed.  
Of cypress height he shone forth with the Grace  
Of kings of kings which crst Jamshid possessed,

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Was like the sun, as needful as the rain  
To earth and fit as knowledge to the mind  
Revolving heaven loved him tenderly.  
Then lived the cow Birmaya, chief of kine,  
Born with a coat all bright and peacock-hued.  
The wise, the archmages, and astrologers  
Collected round her; none had seen or heard  
Of such a cow before.  
Meanwhile Zakhak  
Was searching everywhere, and filling earth  
With hue and cry, till Faridun became  
A source of danger to his sire Abtin,  
Who fled for life but to the Lion's toils,  
For certain of the followers of Zakhak,  
That impious monarch, met Abtin one day,  
Seized him and bore him, like a cheetah bound,  
Before the Shah, who had him put to death.  
When Faridun's wise mother Faranak,  
A glorious dame devoted to her child,  
Perceived her husband's evil fate she fled;  
And came heart-broken weeping to the field  
Wherein the beautiful Birmaya was.  
Sill shedding drops of blood she bade the hind:-  
"Protect this suckling for me, be a father  
To him, and give him milk of yon fair cow.  
Ask what thou wilt, e'en to my soul 'tis throe."  
The hind replied? I will perform thy bidding  
And be as 'twere a slave before thy child."  
Then Faranak resigned the babe to him,  
With all instructions that were requisite,  
And that wise guardian like a father fed  
The child for three years with Birmaya's milk;  
But as Zakhak ne'er wearied of the search,  
And as the cow was tallied of everywhere,  
The mother hastened to the field again

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And spake thus to the guardian of her child:" A prudent  
thought - a thought inspired by GodHath risen in my heart.  
What we must do Is this - there is no remedy, my son And

my dear life are one - I must abandon This land of sorcerers,  
depart unmarked To Hindustan and bear him to Alburz."

Then like a roe or one who rideth post She took the  
young child to that lofty mountain Where dwelt a  
devotee dead to the world, To whom she said: "I am,  
O holy one! A woeful woman from Iran. Know thou  
That this my noble son will be hereafter  
The loader of his people, will discrown Zakhak and  
tread his girdle in the dust. Take thou this child and  
father him with care."

The good man took her child and never breathed One  
cold breath on him.

When the rumour reached  
Zakhak about the cow and field he went,  
Like some mad elephant, and slew Birmaya,  
With all the other cattle that, he saw  
Within the field, and harried all the land.  
He went next to the home of Faridun,  
Searched it, but all in vain, for none was found,  
And burned the lofty palace to the ground.

Par. 4

How Faridun questioned his Mother about his Origin

Now Faridun, when twice eight years had passed,  
Sought out his mother on the plain and said:  
"Disclose thy secret, say who is my father,

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What is my lineage, whom shall I declare  
Myself in public? Let me have the truth."  
She said: "I will tell all, my noble boy!  
Within Iran erewhile lived one Abtin,  
Of royal race, discerning mind, wise, brave,  
And inoffensive, sprung from Tahmuras;  
Abtin knew all the pedigree. Thy sire  
And my dear spouse was he; my days were dark  
When we were parted. Now Zakhak the warlock  
stretched from Iran his hand against thy life,  
But I concealed thee. Oh! what woeful days  
I passed while that brave youth - thy father - forfeited  
His own sweet life for thee! Now on Zakhak  
The warlock's shoulders grew two snakes which sucked  
The life-breath of Iran, and thy sire's brains  
Were taken from his head to feed them. I

In course of time came on an open pasture,  
As yet unknown to fame, and there beheld  
A cow like jocund spring, well shaped and coloured  
From head to foot: before her sat her herd  
Upon his heels as one before a king.  
I put thee in his charge. For long he nursed thee  
Upon his breast, the cow of peacock-hues  
Supplying thee with milk that made thee thrive  
Like some bold crocodile, until the tidings  
Of cow and meadow reached the Shah, and then  
I bare thee from the pasture in all haste  
And fled Iran and home and family.  
He came and slew the noble, tender nurse  
That could not speak to thee, then sent the dust,  
Up from our home and turned it to ditch."  
The prince, enraged thereat, mused on revenge,  
And said with aching heart and knitted brows:-  
"The lion groweth brave by venturing,

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And since the sorcerer hath done his part  
Mine is to take my scimitar and lay  
His palace in the dust; such is God's will."  
She said: "This is not well; thou canst not stand  
Alone against the world. He bath the crown  
And throne, and troops at his command, who come  
From all the realm to battle when he willeth,  
A hundred thousand strong. View not the world  
With boyish eyes; the laws of blood-revenge  
Demand it not. Drunk with the wine of youth  
Men think themselves the only ones on earth  
And vapour, but be thy days mirth and joy.  
Do thou, my son! bear this advice in mind,  
Give all words save thy mother's to the wind."

Par. 5

The Story of Zakhak and Kawa the Smith

Zakhak had " Faridun " upon his lips  
Both day and night, his lofty stature bent  
Beneath the terrors of his heart until  
One day, when sitting on the ivory throne  
And wearing on his head the turquoise crown,  
He called the notables from every province

To firm the bases of his sovereignty,  
And said to them? Good, wise, illustrious men!  
I have, as sages wot, an enemy  
Concealed, and I through fear of ill to come  
Despise not such though weak. I therefore need  
A larger host - men, divs, and fairies too -  
And ask your aid, for rumours trouble me;  
So sign me now a scroll to this effect:-  
'Our monarch soweth naught but seeds of good,  
He ever speaketh truth, and wrongeth none.'".

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Those upright men both young and old subscribed  
Their names upon the Dragon's document,  
Against their wills, because they feared the Shah.  
Just then was heard outside the palace-gate  
The voice of one that clamoured for redress.  
They called him in before the Shah and set him  
Among the paladins. Zakhak in dudgeon  
Said: "Tell us who hath wronged thee."  
Then the man  
Smote on his head before the Shah and cried:-  
"O Shah! my name is Kawa and I sue  
For justice. Do me right. I come in haste  
Accusing thee in bitterness of soul;  
An act of justice will enhance thy greatness.  
I have had many an outrage at thy hands,  
For thou hast stabbed my heart unceasingly,  
And if the outrages had not thy sanction  
Why hath my son been taken? I had once  
In this world eighteen sons: but one is left!  
Have mercy! Look on me this once! My liver  
Is ever burning' What is mine offence,  
O Shah? Oh, say ' If I have not offended  
Seek not occasion 'gainst the innocent,  
Regard my plight and save thyself from woe.  
My back is bent with length of years, despair  
Hath seized my heart, my head is all distraught,  
My youth is gone, my children are no more,  
And children are the nearest kin on earth.  
Oppression hath a middle and an end,  
And pretext ever. Tell me what is throe  
For wronging me and ruining my life.  
A smith am I, an inoffensive man,  
Upon whose head the Shah is pouring fire,  
And thou art he, and, though of dragon-form,

Must still do justice in this cause of mine.

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Since thou dost rule the seven provinces  
Why should the toil and hardship all be ours?  
We have accounts to settle - thou and I -  
And all will be aghast if they shall show  
That this my son hath perished in his turn  
With all the rest to feed those snakes of throe."  
The monarch listened and was sore amazed.  
They set the young man free and strove to win  
The father by fair words, but when Zahhak  
Bade him subscribe the scroll he read it through  
And shouted to the ancients of the realm:-  
"Confederates of the Div with impious hearts!  
Ye set your faces hellward and have yielded  
To that man's bidding. I will not subscribe,  
Or ever give the Shah another thought."  
He shouted, rose in fury, rent the scroll  
And trampled it; then with his noble son  
In front of him went raving to the street.  
But all the courtiers blessed the Shah and said:-  
"Illustrious king of earth! may no cold blast  
From heaven pass o'er thee on the day of battle.  
Why was this insolent Kawa countenanced  
As though a friend of throe? He tore the scroll,  
Refusing to obey thee, and is gone  
Bent on revenge and leagued, as thou wouldst say,  
With Faridun! A viler deed than this  
We never saw and marvel such should be."  
He answered quickly? I will tell you wonders.  
When Kawa entered and I heard his cries,  
A mount of iron seemed to rise betwixt us;  
And when he beat his head a strange sensation  
Convulsed me. How 'twill end I cannot tell;  
The secrets of the sky are known to none."  
When Kawa left the presence of the Shah,  
A crowd assembled in the market-place.

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And still he shouted, crying out for aid  
And urging all to stand upon their rights.  
He took a leathern apron, such as smiths  
Wear to protect their legs while at the forge,  
Stuck it upon a spear's point and forthwith

Throughout the market dust began to rise.  
He passed along with spear in hand exclaiming:-  
"Ye men of name! Ye worshippers of God!  
Whoe'er would 'scape the fetters of Zahhak  
Let him resort with me to Faridun  
And shadow in his Grace. Come ye to him;  
The ruler here is Ahriman - God's foe."  
So that poor leather, worthless as it was,  
Discriminated friends and enemies.  
He took the lead, and many valiant men  
Resorted to him; he rebelled and went  
To Faridun. When he arrived shouts rose.  
He entered the new prince's court, who marked  
The apron on the spear and hailed the omen.  
He decked the apron with brocade of Rum  
Of jewelled patterns on a golden ground,  
Placed on the spearpoint a full moon - a token  
Portending gloriously - and having draped it  
With yellow, red, and violet, he named it  
The Kawian flag. Thenceforth when any Shah  
Acceded to the throne, and donned the crown,  
He hung the worthless apron of the smith  
With still more jewels, sumptuous brocade,  
And painted silk of Chin. It thus fell out  
That Kawa's standard grew to be a sun  
Amid the gloom of night, and cheered all hearts.  
Time passed and still the world maintained its secret.  
When Faridun saw matters thus, and all men  
Submiss to vile Zahhak, he came to Faranak  
With girded loins, crowned with a royal casque,

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And said: "I go to battle, but do thou  
Devote thyself to prayer. The Maker ruleth.  
In weal and woe alike clasp hands to Him."  
With tears and bleeding heart she cried: "O God!  
My trust hath been in Thee. Turn from my son  
The onslaughts of the wicked on his life,  
And rid the world of these infatuates."  
Then Faridun gat ready with despatch  
And secrecy. He had two brothers, both  
Of noble birth and older than himself,  
Hight Kaianush and prosperous Purmaya.  
He said to them: "Live, gallant hearts! in joy.

Revolving heaven bringeth naught but good;  
 The crown of power is coming back to us.  
 Provide me cunning smiths and let them make me  
 A massive mace."  
 They sought the smiths' bazar  
 In haste, whence all the aspiring craftsmen went  
 To Faridun, who taking compasses  
 Showed to the smiths the pattern, tracing it  
 Upon the ground. It had a buffalo's head.  
 They took the work in hand, and having wrought  
 A massive mace they bore it to the hero.  
 It shone as brightly as the noonday sun,  
 And Faridun, approving of the work,  
 Bestowed upon the makers raiment, gold,  
 And silver, holding out to them beside  
 Bright hopes and promise of advancement, saying :-  
 "If I shall lay the Dragon in the dust  
 I will not leave the dust upon your heads,  
 But justify the entire world, since I  
 Have Him in mind who judgeth righteously.

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Par. 6

How Faridun went to Battle evith Zahhak;

With head raised o'er the sun he girt his loins  
 For vengeance for his father, and set forth  
 Upon the day Khurdad right joyfully  
 With favouring stars and splendid auguries.  
 The troops assembled at his gate, his throne  
 Was lifted to the clouds. The first to go  
 Were baggage and provisions for the army  
 On buffaloes and high-necked elephants.  
 Purmaya rode with Kaianush beside  
 The Shah, like younger brothers and true friends.  
 He went like wind from stage to stage; revenge  
 Was in his head and justice in his heart.  
 The warriors on their Arab chargers reached  
 A spot where people dwelt who worshipped God,  
 And Faridun dismounting greeted them.  
 When night was darkening one in friendly guise  
 Approached him, walking with a measured tread,  
 With musky hair descending to the feet  
 And favoured like a maid of Paradise.  
 It was Surush, who came thence to advise



The king of good and ill, came like a fairy  
And taught him privily the magic art,  
That he might know the key of every lock  
And by his spells bring hidden things to light;  
While Faridun, erceiving that the work  
Was God's not Ahriman's or come of evil,  
Flushed like a cercis-bloom and joyed to see  
How lusty he and his young fortune were.  
The cooks prepared a feast - a noble banquet,  
One fit for mighty men. Now Faridun,  
The drinking done, being heavy sought repose.

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His brothers, seeing that God sped his cause,  
And that his fortune slumbered not, departed  
Without delay to compass his destruction.  
There was above their heads a lofty cliff  
And underneath the Shah slept peacefully.  
His two abandoned brothers scaled the height  
That night unseen, and scrupling at no crime  
Set loose a mighty crag upon the brow  
To fall directly on their brother's head,  
And kill him in his sleep. The crashing crag,  
For God so ordered, roused the slumberer,  
Who by his magic art arrested it  
In mid career: it stopped dead. Faridun  
Went on his way but kept the matter secret.  
In front marched Kawa with the Kawian standard,  
Soon to become the ensign of the realm.  
Thus Faridun advanced, as one who sought  
A diadem, toward the Arwand, or call it,  
As Arabs do, the Dijla, if thou knowest not  
The ancient tongue. He marched another stage  
And came upon the Dijla, at Baghdad.  
On drawing near he sent to greet the guard  
And said: "Despatch to this side instantly  
Your boats and vessels, bear me across with all  
Mine army and let none be left behind."  
The river-guard sent not his boats nor came  
At Faridun's behest, but made reply:-  
"The Shah gave privy orders: 'Launch no boat  
Without a passport under mine own seal.'"  
The prince, enraged and fearless of the stream,  
Girt like a king and bent upon revenge,  
Plunged with his rose-red charger in the flood.  
With one accord his comrades girt themselves,

Turned toward the stream, and on their brave, fleet steeds

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Plunged over saddle-back. The warriors' heads  
Reeled while their swift steeds struggled with the tide,  
And with their necks emerging seemed to be  
The phantom cohort of a dream. The warriors  
Reached the dry land undamped in their revenge  
And set their faces toward Bait al Mukaddas.  
This men called when they used the ancient tongue  
Gang-i-Dizhukht; to-day 'tis known among  
The Arabs as " The Holy Place." The fair  
Tall palace of Zahhak was budded there.  
When they approached the city that they sought,  
And Faridun beheld it a mile off,  
He saw a pile whose building towered o'er Saturn,  
So that thou wouldst have said: "'Twill catch the stars!"  
It shone like Jupiter in heaven; the place  
Appeared all peace and love and happiness.  
The hero recognised that seat of power  
And springlike beauty as the Dragon's dwelling,  
And said: "The man who reared a pile like that  
From dust I fear me cottoneth with the world,  
But still 'tis better to press on than tarry."  
This said he grasped his massive mace and gave  
His fleet steed rein, and thou hadst said: "A flame  
Shot up before the guards."  
He entered riding -  
An inexperienced but valiant youth,  
Who called upon the name of God - while they  
That were on guard fled from him in dismay.

Par. 7

How Faridun saw the Sisters of Jamshid

Then Faridun o'erthrew the talisman,  
Raised heaven-high by Zahhak, because he saw  
That it was not of God, with massive mace

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Laid low the sorcerers within the palace -  
All fierce and notable divs - and set himself  
Upon the enchanter's throne. This done he took  
Possession of the royal crown and palace,

But though he searched he failed to find Zakhak.  
 Then from the women's bower he brought two Idols  
 Sun-faced, dark-eyed; he had them bathed, he purged  
 The darkness of their minds by teaching them  
 The way of God and made them wholly clean;  
 For idol-worshippers had brought them up  
 And they were dazed in mind like drunken folk.  
 Then while the tears from their bright eyes bedewed  
 Their rosy cheeks those sisters of Jamshid  
 Said thus to Faridun: "Mayst thou be young  
 Till earth is old! What star was this of thine,  
 O favoured one! What tree bore thee as fruit,  
 Who ventur'ed inside the Lion's lair  
 So hardily, thou mighty man of valour?  
 What anguish and what bale have we endured  
 All through this dragon-shouldered Ahriman!  
 Oh! what a miserable world for us  
 Did this infatuated sorcerer make!  
 Yet saw we never here a man so hardy,  
 Bold, and ambitious as to think that he  
 Could take the throne."  
 He answered? Throne and fortune  
 Abide with none. My sire was fortune's favourite,  
 But still Zakhak seized on him in Iran  
 And slew him cruelly, so I have set  
 My face against Zakhak's throne in revenge.  
 He slew the cow Birmaya too - my nurse,  
 A very gem of beauty. What could he,  
 That villain, gain by slaughtering that dumb beast?  
 Now I am ready and I purpose war;  
 I came not from Iran to bring him pardon,

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Or good will, but to brain him in revenge  
 With this ox-headed mace."  
 When Arnawaz  
 Heard this she guessed the secret, and replied:-  
 "Then thou art Faridun the Shah and wilt  
 Abolish necromancy and black art,  
 For thou art fated to destroy Zakhak  
 The binding of thy loins will loose the world.  
 We twain, pure, modest, and of royal seed,  
 Submitted only through the fear of death,  
 Else would we ever sleep or wake, O king  
 Beside a serpent-spouse? "  
 Then Faridun :-

"If heaven over us shall do me right  
I will cut off this Dragon from the earth,  
And purge the world of its impurity.  
Now speak the truth at once and tell me where  
That vile one is."  
Those fair dames told him all;  
They thought? The Dragon's head will meet the shears,"  
And said: "He went to Hindustan to practise  
Some spell-work in that land of sorcerers.  
He will cut off a thousand innocent heads,  
For he is terror-struck at evil fortune,  
Because a seer hath said: ' Earth will be void  
Of thee, for Faridun will seize thy throne  
And thy prosperity wither in a moment:  
Struck by the words his heart is all aflame,  
And life affordeth him no happiness.  
Now is he slaughtering beasts and men and women  
To make a bath of blood and thus defeat  
That prophecy. Those serpents on his shoulders  
Keep him in long and sore disquietude.

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From clime to clime he roveh, for the snakes  
Give him no rest. 'Tis time for his return,  
But place there is not."  
Stricken to the heart  
That lovely pair revealed the mystery  
The exalted chieftain listened eagerly.

Par. 8

The Story of Faridun and the Minister of Zahhak

Zahhak while absent left in charge of all  
A man of wealth, who served him like a slave,  
So that his master marvelled at his zeal,  
One named Kundrav, because he used to limp  
Before the unjust king. He came in haste  
And saw within the hall a stranger crowned,  
Reposing on the throne, in person like  
A cypress over which the full moon shineth,  
On one side Shahrinaz the cypress-slim,  
Upon the other moon-faced Arnawaz.  
The city swarmed with soldiers, and a guard  
Stood ready armed before the palace-gate.  
All undismayed, not asking what it meant,

Kundrav approached with lowly reverence,  
Then offered homage, saying? Live, O king  
While time shall last. Blest be thy sitting here  
In Grace, for thou deservest sovereignty.  
The seven climes be throe and be thy head  
Above the rain-clouds."  
Being bid approach  
He told the Shah the secrets of his office  
And was commanded? Serve a royal feast,  
Let wine be brought, call minstrels fit to hear,

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To cheer me at the banquet, fill the goblet,  
Spread out the board, and summon worthy guests."  
Kundrav obeyed and brought bright wine and minstrels,  
And noble guests whose birth entitled them.  
So Faridun quaffed wine and chose the lays  
And held that night a worthy festival.  
Kundrav at dawn left the new prince in haste  
Arid on a swift steed sought Zahhak. Arrived  
He told the things that he had seen and heard :-  
"O king of chiefs! the token of thy fall  
Hath come, three men of noble mien arrived  
With troops; the youngest of the three, in height  
A cypress and a king in face, is placed  
Between the other two and bath precedence.  
His mace is like a mountain-crag and shineth  
Amid the host. He entered thine abode  
On horseback, and the others rode with him -  
A noble pair. He went and sat upon  
The royal throne and broke thy charms and spells.  
As for the divs and warriors in thy palace  
He struck their heads off as he rode along  
And mingled brains and blood!"  
Zahhak replied :-  
"'Tis well, guests should enjoy themselves."  
Retorted: "One that hath an ox-head mace  
Beware of such in coming and in going;  
Besides, he sitteth boldly on thy couch,  
Eraseth from the crown and belt thy name,  
And maheth throe ungrateful folk his own  
If such a guest thou knowest know him such.  
Zahhak said: "Trouble not, it bodeth well  
When guests are at their ease."  
Kundrav replied:-

Yea, I have heard so; hear thou my rejoinder

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If this great man be any guest of throe  
What business hath he in thy women's bower?  
He sitteth with the sisters of Jamshid  
The worldlord, taking counsel, while this hand  
Is toying with the cheek of Shahrinaz  
And that with Arnavaz' carnelian lip.  
At night he Both still worse and pilloweth  
His head on musk! What musk? The locks of Moons  
Who ever were the idols of thy heart."  
Zahhak, wolf-savage, wished that he were dead.  
With foul abuse he sternly hoarsely threatened  
That luckless one? No more shah thou have charge  
Of any house of mine:'  
Kundrav replied :-  
"Henceforth, O king! I deem thy fortune sheet.  
How shouldst thou make me ruler in the city,  
Or give me even minstrels' work, when thou  
Hast lost the throne of power? For like a hair  
From dough hast thou departed from the throne  
Of sovereignty. Think, sire! what thou wilt do.  
Have thine own interests no concern for thee?  
They ne'er before were in such jeopardy."

Par. 9

How Faridun bound Zahhak

Roused by that talk Zahhak resolved to act,  
And bade his keen-eyed roadsters to be saddled.  
Now as he neared the city by a byway  
With valiant divs and warriors, and saw  
His palace-roofs and gate he vowed revenge.  
The troops of Faridun received the tidings  
And flocked to meet him. Leaping from their steeds  
They struggled hand to hand. The citizens,

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Such as were warlike, manned the roofs and gates  
For Faridun; Zahhak had maddened them.  
Bricks from the walls, stones from the roofs, with swords  
And poplar arrows in the street, were plied  
As thick as hail; no place was left to stand.

The mountains echoed with the chieftains' shouts,  
Earth trembled neath the chargers' tramping hoofs,  
A cloud of black dust gathered, and the flints  
Were pierced by javelins. From the Fane of Fire  
One shouted? If some wild beast had been Shah,  
We - young and old - had served him loyally,  
But not that foul Zahhak with dragon-shoulders."  
The warriors and citizens were blent  
Together as they fought - a mass of men.  
O'er that bright city rose a cloud of dust  
That turned the sun to lapislazuli.  
Anon Zahhak alone in jealous fear  
Approached the palace, mailed, that none might know him.  
Armed with a lasso sixty cubits long  
He scaled the lofty edifice in haste  
And saw beneath him dark-eyed Shahrinaz,  
Who toyed bewitchingly with Faridun.  
Her cheeks were like the day, her locks like night,  
Her lips were opened to revile Zahhak,  
Who recognised therein the act of God -  
A clutch of evil not to be evaded -  
And with his brain inflamed by jealousy  
Dropped one end of the lasso to the court  
And so slid down from that high roof, regardless  
Of throne and precious life. As he descended  
He drew a keen-edged poniard from its sheath,  
Told not his purpose or his name, but clutched  
The steel-blue dagger in his hand, athirst  
For blood - the blood of those two beauteous dames.

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His feet no sooner rested on the ground  
Than Faridun rushed on him like the wind  
And beat his helm in with the ox-head mace.  
"Strike not," cried blest Surush, who hurried thither,  
"His time hath not yet come, but bind him vanquished  
Firm as a rock and bear him to some gorge,  
Where friends and kinsmen will not come to him."  
When Faridun heard that he tarried not,  
But gat a lasso made of lion's hide  
And bound Zahhak around the arms and waist  
With bonds that no huge elephant could snap,  
Then sitting on Zahhak's own golden throne  
Determined all the evil usages  
And made a proclamation at the gate:-  
"Ye citizens possessed of Grace and wisdom!

Disarm and follow but one path to fame,  
For citizens and soldiers may not seek  
A common excellence; this hath his craft  
And that his mace; their spheres are evident  
And, if confounded, earth will be so too.  
Depart rejoicing, each one to his work,  
And live and prosper long, because the foul one,  
Whose acts brought terror on the world, is bound."  
Men hearkened to the great redoubted Shah.  
Then all the leading, wealthy citizens  
Drew near with gladness bringing offerings  
And heartily accepted Faridun,  
Who graciously received them and discreetly  
Gave each his rank's due, counselled them at large,  
And offered up his prayers and thanks to God,  
Then said: "The realm is mine, your fortune's star  
Is bright, for me alone did God send forth  
From Mount Alburz by Grace, and for your sakes,  
To set the world free from the Dragon's bane.

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Blest as we are by Him who giveth good  
We ought to walk toward good upon His paths.  
As king I may not tarry in one place,  
Else would I pass with you a length of days."  
The nobles kissed the ground. Anon the din  
Of drums rose from the gate whereon all eyes  
Were fixed, the people yelled against the man,  
Whose days were almost sped? Bring forth the Dragon  
Bound in the lasso's coils as he deserveth."  
The troops withdrew no wealthier than they came,  
And took Zahhak, bound shamefully and flung  
In wretched plight upon a camel's back  
On this wise to Shirkhan. Call this world old  
Or ever thou shah hear this story told.  
What changes numberless have passed and still  
Must pass hereafter over plain and hill  
Thus fortune's favourite bore Zahhak toward  
Shirkhan, and driving him among the mountains  
Was purposing to cast him headlong down,  
When carne the blest Surush and whispered thus  
The prince in friendly wise? Convey the captive  
Thus to Mount Damawand with speed, and tape  
No escort, or but what thy safety needeth."  
He bore Zahhak as one that rideth post  
And fettered him upon Mount Damawand;



So when new bonds were added to the old,  
And fate had not another ill in store,  
The glory of Zahhak became like dust  
And earth was cleansed from his abominations,  
He was removed from kindred and from friends,  
And bonds alone were left him in the mountains,  
Where Faridun chose out a narrow gorge -  
A chasm which he had marked of viewless depth -

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And having studded it with heavy nails,  
Whereon the brain might chafe, secured Zahhak,  
Bound by the hands upon a crag, that so  
His anguish might endure. Thus was he left  
To hang : his heart's blood trickled to the ground.  
Come let us, lest we tread the world for ill,  
Be on attaining every good intent;  
No good or evil will endure but still  
Good furnisheth the better monument.  
A lofty palace, wealth of every kind,  
Will not avail; thy monument on earth  
Will be the reputation left behind  
And therefore deem it not of little worth.  
No angel was the glorious Faridun,  
Not musk and ambergris; he strove to win  
By justice and beneficence the boon  
Of greatness : be a Faridun therein.  
By godlike travail undertaken he  
First cleansed the world from its iniquity.  
The binding of Zahhak, that loathly one  
Devoid of justice, was the chief deed done.  
He next avenged the murder of Abtin,  
Caused all the world to recognise his sway,  
And lastly purged the surface of earth clean  
Of madmen, and took miscreants' power away.  
O world! how loveless and malign art thou  
To breed the quarry and then hunt it down  
Lo! where is Faridun the valiant now,  
Who took away from old Zahhak the crown?  
Upon this earth five hundred years he reigned  
And then departing left an empty throne;  
Bequeathing earth to others, he retained  
Of all that he possessed regret alone.  
So is it with us whether great or small  
And sheep or shepherd, 'tis the same with all.