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DĪV

DĪV (demon, monster, fiend), often confused with *ḡūl* (orge, ghoul) and jinn in both folk and literary traditions (Massé, *Croyances*, pp. 352-53; Qazvīnī, pp. 383-95), expresses not only the idea of "demon," but also that of "ogre," "giant," and even "Satan." The translators of Ṭabarī's commentary render the Arabic *eblīs*, (Satan) as *dīv* (I, p. 32, II, pp. 307, 446, 461, 471, 543, III, p. 551), while at the same time translating Arabic *jinn* into Persian *dīv* or *parī*. This indicates a confusion between the notions of *jinn* and *ḡūl* on the one hand, and *dīv* and *parī* on the other (Ṭabarī, II, pp. 458, 543, III, p. 552). The same confusion is found in the *Šāh-nāma*, where not only every demon, but also *eblīs* is sometimes called *dīv* rather than *ahrīman* (II, ed. Khaleghi, pp. 50-51, 95).

The description of the demons in the Persian epic literature is echoed in later literature and other genres. Except for an instance where Ferdowsī uses the word *dīv* as a metaphor for "evil people" (Moscow, IV, p. 310, vv. 140-41), demons are generally portrayed as beings completely independent of, and different from humans. They are often black (*Šāh-nāma*, ed. Khaleghi, I, pp. 22 v. 33, 166. v. 64; Moscow, VII, p. 34 v. 498; Asadī, pp. 80, v. 16, 111, v. 1; *Farāmarz-nāma*, pp. 80, 241, 341, 349), with long teeth, black lips, blue eyes (*kabūd-čašm*), claws on their hands, and large bodies covered with thick hair. Often they eat people (*Šāh-nāma*, ed. Khaleghi, II, p. 36, v. 479; Moscow, IV, pp. 312-13; Asadī, pp. 273, 281, 283; *Farāmarz-nāma*, pp. 93, 241, 341). Some demons have several heads, while others have monstrous ears or teeth (Asadī, pp. 15-18, 92). The epics tell of demon lands, the most important of which in the *Šāh-nāma* is called Māzandarān (not to be confused with the modern

namesake province in Persia). There, they have a king, with all the trappings of kingship including armies, demon generals, cities, fortresses, farms, herds, etc. (ed. Khaleghi, I, pp. 223, v. 881, 10, vv. 115-18, 15, v. 188, 35-40, etc.; *Farāmarz-nāma*, pp. 335-38). Mention is made of an island of demons, the inhabitants of which had their own language and were so fond of iron that they would swim up to vessels passing by their island in order to exchange jewels for this metal. They fought with great stones, sticks, or other primitive tools of war (Asadī, pp. 15-18, 164, 242, 341-42). However sometimes they appear as warriors with armor, weapons, and retainers or armies (*Šāh-nāma*, ed. Khadeghi, II, pp. 42, v. 570, 54, v. 735, 466, v. 651; *Farāmarz-nāma*, pp. 350-51). Thus, they may not have always been perceived as supernatural "spirits."

One of their most curious characteristics is that they tend to be contrary in their behavior, doing the opposite of what they are asked to do. For this reason, they are often called *vārūna*, (backwards, inside out), or *vārūna-ḵūy* (contrary; *Šāh-nāma*, ed. Khaleghi, I, pp. 22, v. 33, 47, v. 108, 48, v. 112, 55, v. 38, Moscow, IV, pp. 272, v. 969, 305-06). Not unrelated to their contrariness is their tendency to sleep during the day and roam about at nights (*Šāh-nāma*, ed. Khaleghi, II, p. 41, v. 555). Demons are capable of transformation. They can change themselves into other beings such as people, dragons, lions, and more commonly onagers or horses (*Šāh-nāma*, ed. Khaleghi, I, pp. 46-51, II, pp. 4, 428, Moscow, IV, pp. 302-04, VIII, p. 405; *Farāmarz-nāma*, pp. 27, 338). Demons, being essentially supernatural beings, sometimes overcome their opponents by means of magic (*Šāh-nāma*, ed. Khaleghi, I, pp. 55, 57, 75, v. 325, II, p. 10, v. 115-18). In the story of Kāvūs' attack on Māzandarān, he and his army are captured easily, because they were made blind by the sorcery of the white demon (motif, D 2062.2). Rostam cures the nobles by applying the blood of the white demon to their eyes (motif D 1505.14, "animal liver cures blindness"; cf. D 1505.19, "giant's gall restores sight"; Coyajee, 1928, p. 184).

Demons who were overcome by a king or a hero, would often serve him as his slave. The primordial kings, Ṭahmūraṯ and Jamšēd could control the demons. Ṭahmūraṯ received the title *dīvband* (binder of demons) because of his victory over them (*Šāh-nāma*, ed. Khaleghi, I, pp. 35-37). This title in the *Šāh-nāma* has been also used of Rostam (ed. Moscow, pp. 252, v. 675, 282, v. 1137, 292, v. 1283). Jamšēd, however, was more of a Solomonic figure, ruling all living beings including the demons. When the demons served a ruler, they either taught him something such as writing, or they served him as great builders

(*Šāh-nāma*, ed. Khaleghi, I, pp. 6, v. 50, 37, vv. 39-45, 43, vv. 35-38, II, pp. 93-94). This characteristic of the demons (motif F531.6.6. “giants as builders”) is not limited to Iranian tradition (cf. Höttges, pp. 49-65). The demons often organize themselves in great armies and fight a primordial king whose forces are made up of animals (e.g., *Šāh-nāma*, ed. Khaleghi, I, pp. 24-25, 50-66). This is reminiscent of the war of Rāma and his army of animals with the Rakṣasa king Rāvaṇa and his demon army (Buck, pp. 239f).

In the short epic tale *Rostam o babr-e bayān*, which is incorporated into the *Farāmarz-nāma*, Rostam fights and overcomes a demon called *Galīmīna-gūš*, who goes into Rostam’s service (p. 18). When Farāmarz defeats a black demon, he pierces his ears placing therein two horse shoes as the mark of the latter’s servitude. The demon goes on to serve Farāmarz so faithfully that he is even dispatched to ask for the hand of a princess on behalf of the hero (pp. 351, 364). This willingness of a vanquished demon to serve the victor is explicitly stated in the Persian folktales, where often demons offer to wrestle a hero saying: “If you win, I will be your slave” (e.g., Enjavī, 1979, I, p. 133). There may be a connection between this motif with the story of Garšāsp, who is offered rulership by Żaḥḥāk, as he overcomes the three-headed monster in the final days of the world (Unvala, pp. 95, 108).

A list of ten demons is provided in the *Šāh-nāma*. These are, in order of importance, *āz* (greed), *nīāz* (need), *kòašm* (wrath), *rašk* (envy), *nang* (dishonor), *kīn* (vengeance), *nammām* (tell-tale), *do-rūy* (two-faced), *nāpāk-dīn* (heretic), and, although not explicitly named, ungratefulness (*Šāh-nāma*, Moscow, VIII, pp. 195-96).

Dīv in the oral epics. A greater variety of demons than those found in the *Šāh-nāma* reside in the oral tradition. They typically have more colorful names associated with their physical characteristics, or activities. For instance we find two and twelve headed demons (Enjavī, 1976a, pp. 213, 220). There is a seven-headed demon, who like the Hydra of the Greek myth grows a new head every time one of its heads is cut off (Enjavī, 1975, p. 88). We meet a demon called *Hūsang-e čehel dast-e dīv* (Hūsang the forty-armed demon; Enjavī, 1976a, p. 138) and another with only one eye (Enjavī, 1979, p. 97). The “white demon” is prominent, as is the *dīb-e sar safīd* (the white headed demon; ibid, pp. 73-77). There is even one demon named for his association with water (*dīv-e ḡawwāṣ*, the diving demon; Enjavī, 1976a, p. 221). The oral epics further clarify the family relationships of a number of demons. We find out that Akvān-e Dīv had a brother called Owrang-e Dīv, and a son, who was put in

charge of the well in which Bīžan was imprisoned. Both of these demons were killed by Rostam (Enjavī, 1976a, pp. 152, 258-59). Sometimes the narrative of the oral epics drastically deviates from that of the *Šāh-nāma*. Demons are introduced into scenes where the literary epics make no mention of them. For instance according to one tale, it is Zāl's mother aided by a demon, who tries to kill the hero shortly after his birth. The reason given in the tale is that the child was born "blonde," whereas in the *Šāh-nāma* it was the hero's father Sām who attempted to destroy him because he was born an albino (Enjavī, 1976a, pp. 186-88). Key Kāvūs is captured by the demon Akvān after his misguided Nimrodian adventure. One tale suggests that the bow was invented to fight the demons (Enjavī, 1979, pp. 38, 70). Mention is made of demons who serve heroes. Notable among them is the servant of the hero Sām, who is called Farhang-e Dīv. The form of this demon's name, meaning also culture and civility, may be influenced by his civilized behavior in Sām's service (Enjavī, 1976a, p. 67).

Dīv in the folktales. Many demons figure in Iranian folktales (Marzolph, s.v. *daemon*). They may act as villains, sorcerers, ogres, fools, or helpers of the protagonist (Ṣobḥī, I, pp. 103-05, II, pp. 28, 35-36; Dehqānī, I, pp. 140-43; Amīnī, pp. 4, 45). They may be summoned for help when a bit of their hair, which has been left with the hero for this purpose, is put into the fire (Enjavī, 1978, I, p. 141; cf. summoning the Sīmorḡ by putting her feathers in fire). Demons of the folktales may be many headed, or they may have only heads and no body. When thus handicapped, they roll rather than walk (ibid., I, pp. 180, 188-89). They come in different colors: white, yellow, and black (Dehqānī, I, pp. 46-49; Ṣobḥī, II, p. 16). They have a tendency to alternate long periods of wakefulness and sleep, each lasting several days, and to become sleepy in sunlight. Typically this unfortunate habit proves to be their undoing (e.g., Ṣobḥī, II, p. 10; cf. Enjavī, 1975, p. 89; idem, 1979, p. 77; idem, 1976a, p. 228). They are capable of magic and transformation (Enjavī, 1978, I, pp. 115, 142; cf. Ṣobḥī, II, p. 143; Amīnī, p. 17). Sometimes their approach may be deduced from changes in temperature, or by a fowl smell in the air. They are quite fond of human women, whom they steal or forcibly marry (Enjavī, 1978, p. 113-14, III, pp. 113-14; Ṣobḥī, II, pp. 7, 16; Dehqānī, I, p. 46). Although usually the human mate of the demon is an unwilling bride, sometimes a woman wooed by a demon, grows so amorous of her demon husband as to agree to harm her own kin at his bidding (Faqīrī, pp. 103-07; Dehqānī, I, pp. 46-49). Some demons give away a sister in marriage to a human male (Enjavī, 1978, I, p. 134), however, they generally prefer to steal human maidens, whom they take to their home,

which is usually at the bottom of a well, place their heads upon her lap, and sleep for several days at a time (e.g., Dehqānī, I, p. 99). Many demons have an external soul (motif E711), the destruction of which is the sole way to kill them. This they may keep hidden in a box (motif E712.4), in a live fish (motif E715.2), or in the body of some other animal (motif E715; Enjavī, 1978, I, pp. 138-39; Ṣobḥī, II, pp. 12-13, 18; Dehqānī, I, pp. 100-02; cf. Penzer, I, pp. 129-32, VIII, pp. 106-07).

A curious folktale which normally has animals for its protagonists, has found itself a home in the Rostam saga of the classical epics. Tale Type 1310, "Drowning the crayfish as punishment; eel, crab, turtle, etc. express fear of water and are thrown in," and the related Type 1634E* "throwing the thief over the fence. Thief caught red-handed says: do your worst only don't throw me over the fence. When thrown over, he escapes" (motifs K584, K581-K581.4). The story of Rostam and the trick which he plays on the demon Akvān is clearly based on this tale type.

Before a demon-slayer fights a demon, he typically comes upon his opponent while the latter is asleep. He always wakes the demon up by piercing him in the foot by his sword or dagger. Then he proceeds to fight his adversary, often cutting a limb off of the demon in the course of the combat (cf. Rostam and the White Demon). The demon is finally killed either by weapons, or by means of breaking the container in which he keeps his external soul. In the latter case, he turns into smoke and disappears into thin air (Enjavī, 1978, I, pp. 115, 139, 145, 155; Ṣobḥī, II, p. 13; Behrangī, I, p. 100; Faqīrī, p. 67; Massé, *Croyances*, p. 352). Sometimes the hero does not kill the demon after overcoming him in battle. In exchange for his life, the demon agrees to serve the hero as his slave, and to indicate his servitude, the hero places an iron ring or a nail from his shoe in the demon's ear lobe (Enjavī, 1979, I, p. 133).

Folk tradition makes demons responsible for a number of mental and physical maladies. The very Persian word *dīvānagī* (insanity) betrays the association of all mental illness with demonic possession. Other such minor conditions as fever blisters *tab-ḵāl*, also called *āfat-e dīv* (the demon's malady) are attributed to demons. There is a variety of demon who causes nightmares or deceptive dreams (Qomī, II, pp. 355-56; *Šāh-nāma*, ed. Khaleghi, II, p. 422; cf. Massé, *Croyances*, p. 354). According to folk tradition, *dīv*s and *jenn*s are said to fear the sound of the dog and the white rooster (Eʿtemad-al-Salṭana, p. 37; Dhabhar, p. 25; Balʿamī, ed. Bahār, I, p. 118; Soyūtī, pp. 9-11).

See also *DAIVA; DEW.

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