

# A Comparative Look at the Ethics of Gods and Paladins in *Iliad* and *Shahnameh*

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** *Iliad* and *Shahnameh* are two transnational works which are precious treasures for studying the customs and culture of two ancient nations of Iran and Greece. In this research some of the ethical specifications of the mythological gods and paladins of Iran in *Shahnameh* and Olympus gods and paladins of *Iliad* have been studied and the basic differences between two nations which stem from the differences of their culture and beliefs have been shown. The essay plans to show the Iran ancient cultural highlights and a closer look at the immensity of this ancient land.

**Material and Methods:** The method of this research is analytical descriptive and based upon comparison of two ancient culture from the views of beliefs and ceremonies.

**Results:** The studies show that there are some differences between the human and divinely behaviors of *Iliad* and *Shahnameh*. In *Iliad* we see that the unethical conducts, discrimination, inclination to the front of oppression and promise breaking towards the devoted people by the Achaeans on the one hand and on the other corruption, lying and rivalries between the Olympus gods terminated to the vast carnage of Achaeans and Trojan tribes. The paladins and the heroes of *Iliad* in compare with the Olympus gods are more noble and are more promise leal. The Iranian gods are the symbol of ethics and the punisher of promise breakers and those who violates the others' right. Such ethical solidarity and stability make the heroes of *Shahnameh* incline to cavalier.

**Conclusions:** The Iranian gods hatred towards war and violation. But seriously believe in revenge and defense of their lands while the Olympus gods support the violators and they themselves are the main factor of war and massacre.

**Keywords:** *Iliad*, *Shahnameh*, Ethics, Gods, Paladins

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## INTRODUCTION

In the present essay under the title of “*Contradiction of gods' ethics and paladins' ethic in Iliad and Ferdowsi's Shahnameh*” a mythological and cultural comparison has been done between the ideological foundations between two ancient nations. *Shahnameh* the precious work of Ferdowsi, the celebrated great Iranian poet and epic composer is a treasure of mythological and epic heritage of ancient Iran and the mirror of old Iran culture and civilization. Along with the legendry books of *Iliad* and *Odyssey* which are the narration of Hellenistic culture of ancient era, both of them are thoroughly narrate the events full of topsy-turvies of ancient history. The main sources in this comparison are Avesta – the primary collection of religious texts of Zoroastrianism composed in the Avesta language – *Shahnameh* and the epic of *Iliad* translated by the late Saeed Nafisi. The main goal of this

essay is to study the differences and similarities between the depth of cultural and ethical and customs of these two ancient lands. The present research, studies some of the ethical factors in two ancient epic texts of Iran and Greece and also some of the ethical mythological points have been studied. Since these two books are the main sources of the present research if there is any older information would be placed out of the scope of the essay. At the following some of the researches are mentioned which possess similar titles but their contents are different:

Zarrinkoob, Abdol Hossein (2002) in the book of “*Naamvar*” has allocated a chapter under the title of “*Iliad and Shahnameh*” in this chapter he has studied the characters of both books and shortly points to the ethics of the paladins too.

Qobadi, Hossein Ali and Bozorg Bigdeli, Saeed (2010) in an article under the title of “*A comparative study of the style of epic compiling in Iliad and Shahnameh from the view of literary commitment*” this article has been published in Research Journal of Mystical and Mythological Literature. The writers have tried to compare the manifestations and epic factors of *Iliad* and *Shahnameh*.

The Article of Shaahverdi, Elham and Sepahvandi Masoud (2018) under the title of “*Comparative study of education and training in Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh and Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey*”. The article has been published in the Research Journal of Pedagogical Literature. The writers of the article have compared the manifestations of education and training in these books which is not irrelevant with the discourse of ethics, but it does not merely study the ethical issues for this reason it is different with the present essay.

An article under the title of “*A comparative – analytical comparison between the epics of Iliad and Odyssey and Shahnameh*”. In this article these two epics has been studied from the view of ideology, epistemology and artistic creations.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

To compile the present research, the aforementioned sources have been studied and the related points have been extracted and transferred to the body of the article appropriately. The method of research like other researches of theoretical arena and human literature based upon analysis, interpretation, description and comparison of the two cultures.

## DISCUSSION

Ethics are a collection of principles that oversee all the processes of life that lead man towards exaltation which in a definite time stem from the individual and tribal conscience beliefs [1].

Man, intrinsically seeks tranquility and enjoyment and avoids from pain and suffering. On this basis as long as he is living in the society to attain tranquility, he has no choice but to the laws and regulations which secure the tranquility and security of the society. There are some relations between the intrinsic, individual and natural ethics from one hand and the social ethics on the other. The man of knowledge has employed this word in various meanings. The most popular definition for the ethics among the Muslim savants is as follows: “The stable attributions and specifications in the soul that make man to conduct spontaneously according to those attributions without thinking and contemplating” [2].

On this basis the conducts which rooted in philanthropy and observing the others’ welfare far from selfishness are regarded as the ethical behaviors. These conducts are supported by the rational powers and enriched by the conscience and spiritual inspirations. Only when all these conducts are accepted as the ethics that help man to move towards final exaltation and perfection. Now the differences of ethics in various societies originate from the same points which define the final exaltation according to their own beliefs and epistemology. Therefore, the conducts could be called virtue which pave the path for attaining the exalted humanistic goal and the ultimate perfection.

In Iran from the ancient epochs up to now, the ultimate perfection has been defined as the rate of attaining similarity to the God’s attributions. The conducts which make God content and happy are regarded valid. Benevolence is a principle based upon this fact that any one should behave in such a way that helps virtue could overcome the viciousness throughout the world [3].

From the era of ancient Iran heretofore, the divinely and paladin ethics have survived along with each other. The paladin is the one who tries to secure others’ tranquility to gain God’s content. In Ferdowsi’s *Shahnameh* the origins of heroism and chivalry stem from the essence of Creator and His decrees. These ethics may contradict with the personal interests of the paladin and sometimes he sacrifices himself to realize that principles. On the other hand, the divinely ethics (the god of Olympus) and the heroism ethics in *Iliad* are the subject of the present research. The *Iliad* paladins and heroes are in some cases much better and much benevolent than the Olympus gods. It is true that some of them taken some steps to gain personal profit have, but they have waged war to punish the one who has violated the ethical principles and they have tried to return the Menelaus’ wife and also to defend of their fame and name.

There is no hesitation that in the events of *Iliad*, the gods play various roles

and interfere in the formation of the scenes, because no issue is out of their godly power. But in *Shahnameh* the conducts and the choices of the heroes amaze us and make us to praise them, because those conducts are done by the people who are human beings like us and are suffering from our weaknesses and deficiencies [4].

### The Vicious Attribution of Anger

Anger is a phenomenon relates to emotional aspect of man’s character which due to its physiological ground and its relation to rational and social affairs is a complicated issue. Anger is one of the most powerful

man's emotions which separates man from his human position if he could not control it by the power of reason which consequently terminates to unpleasant events. "the man's history is fraught with the events which he has created under the influence of the violation of instincts and emotions" [5].

Anger, in ancient Persian literature and to their people's belief is one of agents of *Ahriamn* and is called *Aishmeh Khoonin Darafsh*. *Aishmeh* means anger and is the name of a vicious demon who is the rival of a god, named *Soroosh* and those who choose the path of maliciousness and separate themselves from benevolence would be placed under the banner of the demon of anger like other demons. This demon blocks the path of benevolence and the other demons choose to join it and become its friends [6]. It is worthy to mention that in *Avesta*, *Soroosh* is the god of peace and friendship and its duty is to fight against the demon of anger which possesses a bloody banner. This point shows that anger is necessarily the enemy of peace and friendship. We praise the great devoted victorious *Soroosh*, the god that the holy *Ahoramazda* assigned her to suppress the anger of bloody banner. We praise the guardians of treaty of peace and victory who suppress the wars and hostility [7].

In *Shahnameh* we witness some examples of anger in relation to the conducts of Rustam. It should be mentioned that to the people of Iran only the time, anger is not regarded unpleasant which relates to the exalted goals and originates from motivations such as defending the homeland, salvation of people and exercising the divinely ceremonies.

In the epic of *Iliad*, the gods of Olympus are too wrathful that the heroes and paladins of the epic in their own human position could not find any justification for such improper divinely conducts which are based upon irrational wrath. In comparing between the divinely conducts and paladin conducts we see that the heroes of the epic are much wiser, more self-denier and more reasonable than gods and avoids from improper anger "the god of gods who decided to make Hara angry said: "...Hera and Athena had chosen reticence and was trembling out of wrath... Zeus said if I wish out of wrath to destroy one of the towns which are the birth place of the offspring who are dear for you, do not try to stop me by resorting to retribution... the selfish Hera replied... Argos and Sparta and the wide spread Mycenae, when are exposed at the fire of your wrath, destroy all of them [8].

The wrath of the Olympus gods is baseless and irrational and they do not hesitate to practice unwisely conducts when they are angry. In contrast the Iranian gods like

*Mehr Izad* and *Bahram Izad* which are famous for being angry easily, never become angry without a legitimate plausible reason, when *Mehr Izad* gets angry that a treaty is violated or the boundaries of Arian land are exposed to the danger of aggression "If *Mehr* the guardian of the widespread pastures gets angry and offended and no one has tried to make her calm, she would frighten them... *Mehr* of the widespread pastures would cast them [*Droojan* and *Droondan*] on the ground, fifty-fifty and hundreds-hundreds... those promise leal of the most true covenants..." [7].

Also in *Shahnameh* Ferdowsi, Rustam to defend of his name and fame tries to convince Esfandiyar against his irrational demand, he pleaded him to let pay visit Goshtasb unchained, Esfandiyar does not accept and at length Rustam gets angry and this angry is not a malicious type. Simorgh advices him that any time your heart filled with anger, the sphere would take your revenge from Esfandiyar. In this couplet there is an emphasize upon the word of anger.

*The sphere would have aimed his eyes accurately*

*When your heart becomes filled with anger* [9]

Any time a covenant is broken and *Daroondan* and *Mehr Daroojan* swear to lie, *Izad Mehr* would appear and deprives the liar from the power of seeing. Both *Mehr Izad* and Rustam, deprive the covenant breakers from their eyes. Zeus and Hera and Athena for their angers possess childish incentives which based upon envy and jealousy which is popular among the Olympus families and people of their towns become the victims of their irrational emotions. The heroes of *Iliad* like Achelous are wiser than their own gods and their angers are more rational and more justified "Achelous replied: O Ajax, the son of Telamon, O the master of warriors, now you talked about my anger is acceptable; but any time I remember the one who disgraced me before the troops, my heart filled with anger" [8].

### **The Ethical Value of Revenge Taking**

There are sharp differences between the validity of some of the behaviors in various religions, faiths, school of thoughts and social views. Any school with regard to its epistemology and world viewing, admits some issues and refuses some others. Consequently, whatever it admits, is regarded good and ethical and whatever it refuses, calls bad and unethical. In Islamic decrees ethical instructions based upon the individual and social interests and they are the criteria for goodness or viciousness. The affairs are regarded valid that their contributions in invigorating and developing the human relations and their connection to the source of revelation and



inspiration, “With regard to this fact the ultimate perfection of man is closeness to God consequently any conduct or any attribution that help man to attain this status and lead him towards exaltation and closeness to God is regarded as virtue [10].

In relation to the subject of taking revenge and retaliation, there are some decrees which specified them among the affairs of divinity and sanctity. In such a way that retaliation has been called the new life. To Iran ancient the belief of retaliation and taking revenge for the ones who have been killed innocently is regarded a divinely issue and in contrast ignoring this decree is a sin. The old Iranian people believed if no one of the relations or friends of the man who has been killed innocently, does not take revenge, at length God would do it. Taking revenge of the noble people from ignoble people was so important for the people of ancient Iran that the singers have chanted many stories and have narrated them musically. The chants of the revenge of Siavash and Iraj are very popular [11]. *Shahnameh* emphasized upon taking revenge in the shortest time as a divinely decree. The first direct divinely order for taking revenge was issued for the blood of Siamak by his father Kiomarth. From this view taking revenge and retaliating is an ethical – divinely value and it is regarded as an obligation.

*They remain same years in mourning*

*A message was sent from God*

*The messenger sends him greeting*

*That mourning is enough be wakeful*

*Arrange troops and by my order*

*Make black the life of this group*

*From that vicious demon of the earth*

*Take revenge and evacuate your heart from hostility*

*Then he rushed to take revenge on Siamak*

*He struggled night and day [9]*

It is true that *Iliad* is a narration of a ten years of war which circulate around the issue of the love of a woman, but we should remember that before the interference of Achelous in Trojan war, actually no glory of epic could be seen and only when Achelous steps in the scene to take revenge on Patrakol and Fight Against Hector the foundation of *Iliad* becomes invigorated. On this basis one could see the determinant role of taking revenge not only in the epic of Iran, but in *Iliad* too. “When Patrakol, Achelous friend is killed by Hector, the paladin, Achelous accepts to take part in the war to take revenge on Patrakol. Then Achelous put on his armor which Hefetus - one of the gods - has made for him due to the request of Hector’s mother and step in the scene of war. Agamemnon returns the girl and by Achelous contribution the troops of enemy is demolished

thoroughly” [4]. *Shahnameh* which is based upon the sacred revenge taking, starts with the taking revenge on Siamak’s blood and reach to the revenge on Siavash blood. The final words that Keykhosrow says at the time of killing Afrasiab, indicates the sanctity of this conduct.

*Now it is the day of God’s revenge*

*The award of viciousness from God is viciousness*

*Moobad advised Bahram in this way*

*Never shed the blood of innocent people [9]*

In *Iliad*, Zeus supports Menelaus and Akhilleus not for this reason to help them to take revenge and to punish the vicious conduct, but his motivation is to gain more alms and donations and presumably envying with the Olympus gods. However, taking revenge for the paladins is more ethical and to them is regarded as a subject of value and virtue, but for the Olympus gods is not in this way. It seems that anyone who offers more donations is dearer for them. For these gods the goals of the people, bad or good, vicious or virtue do not different, what is important is donation. If he donates enough he would attain his aspiration and would be supported. In ancient times, when the Iranian people were worshipping a group of gods, it is true that gods support anyone who donates, but only they support the donators who seek benevolent goals. In Avesta repeatedly we see that gods deny to support Afrasiab despite the fact that he sacrifices one thousand and ten thousand of life at the foot of Anahita, but since his goals were not benevolence all were refused.

The sanctity and holiness of taking revenge is so great that Keykhosrow believes this conduct is a guarantee for entering into paradise.

*At the time of taking revenge when any blood is shed*

*The sinful one is responsible*

*If anyone is killed in the path of taking revenge*

*The lofty paradise would be his place [9]*

The Iranian people not only regards taking revenge as a divinely conduct, but also believe it is an old tradition and violation of it was considered shameful.

*Whoever is pure by water*

*Places not the gem of thought in the abyss*

*He would be like Fereydoon Shah*

*Since he is in this way he would be saved*

*He took revenge from Zahhak on Jam’s blood*

*He removed him from the known people of the world*

*Manoochehr with the help of Salm and Toor, the great*

*Dispatched great troops from Amol*

*He went to China and took revenge of his ancestor*

*He made a mountain of the killed bodies*

*When Kaykhosrow set out to take Siavash’s revenge on Afrasiab*

*He made the world like the sea out of blood  
My father came to take revenge for Lohrasb's blood  
Whatever I narrate is free from exaggeration  
When Keykhosrow returned from Afrasiab  
He made the world like the sea of blood  
My father stepped forward and sought the Lohrasb's blood  
He made a mountain of the killed bodies  
He went Kabul and took revenge's Esfandiar from Rustam  
He destroyed all the town levelled with earth*

### **Vicious Ethic: Promise Breaking**

Keeping promise is a value which has been intrinsically exists in the man's nature and promise breaking is blamed by all the people. The value of covenant is so high that in the beliefs of ancient Iran there was a god who was called the "god of covenant" who emphasize upon keeping the promise and warns seriously to a harsh agony those who are not promise keeper. When Mitra wants to swear, she swears to the god of covenant. To Mitra the punishment of those who break their promise is losing the powers of vision, hearing and talking as well as paralyzing their hands and feet: "O Sepitman lest commit the sin of promise breaking, neither the covenant that you have concluded with Darvand and nor with Ashoon, because both covenants are correct either with Darvand or with Ashoon" [7].

In contrast among the Olympus gods the promises are broken easily especially by the famous gods like Zeus. In epic of *Iliad* the heroes announce that gods have deceived them and have broken their covenant. While the paladins of *Iliad* firmly stick to their promise and they believe in faithfulness to promise more than their gods. Before the hand to hand war of Achelous and Menelaus, they made a firm pact. Agamemnon at the time of sacrificing made a pact in this way: "If anyone breaks this peace which is a sacred pact, may his brain be splashed on the earth from his broken skull... O the gods! O Zeus! You are the ones who punish the sinful people and the promise breakers, in the lowest sections of inferno, testify to the firmness of our pacts" [8].

In contrast not only Zeus did not observe the pact but also made victorious a covenant breaker like Paris and involved himself in the war for the benefit of the covenant breaker. Menelaus cried out: "O Zeus no god is oppressor like you! I promised myself to punish Paris for his unethical behavior, but..." Aphrodite picked Paris up from the ground and wrapped a mass of dark cloud around him and flew towards the palace of the prince [8]. *Mehr Izad* is very strict with the promise and pact breakers. If he witnesses any promise breaking, casts on the earth hundreds and even thousands of promise

breakers and demolish many households. "You know when you get angry, you withdraw the power from the arms, foot, eyes and ears of *Mehr Daroojan* and covenant breakers, O the one who is most faithful to the promises" [7].

The meaning of chivalry relates to covenant. The paladin is not known only for the power of his arms, but first and foremost for his chivalry and merely this specification grants him the dignity of being paladin.

Siavash in *Shahnameh* is the symbol of chivalry and promise keeping. He accepts to renounce his position as a prince but he did not accept to break his promise with Tooran. The disposition of chivalry made him to ignore his father's order and released the Toorani captured. When Kavoos commanded that the hostages should be killed, Rustam replied in this way:

*Another point; no Noble Man accepts from Shah to break his covenant*

*If Afrasiab plans to deny whatever he has said*

*His promise breaking would not be hidden*

*We are not satiated from wagging war*

*Our blade and the lion's claws are ready*

*Ask not from your son to break his covenant*

*Follow not the way which is inappropriate with crown*

*Why I should not say the truth*

*Siavash would never renounce whatever he has promised* [9]

The covenant has been made by the chivalry depends not to the character, belief or the race of the contracting party. Saam, the father of Zaal when made an agreement with Sindokht the mother of Roodabeh never break his promise under the cover that he possesses a higher position and his contracting party is a woman.

*Sindokht addressed him: O the paladin*

*You are the head of all the paladins and the support of the heroes*

*First I seek a firm covenant*

*That from it all the lands and people would tremble*

*That you neither harm me*

*Nor the one who is dear for me*

*Then Saam took her hand in her own hand*

*And cherishes her compassionately and made promise* [9]

To the Iranian the glory, sanctity and dignity of covenant is so lofty that they believe in the case they break their covenant, their houses, their villages and their people would be demolished. "He [*Izad Mehr*] is the one who activates the covenants, he destroys the households horribly and emptied from residents of the houses of the promise breakers and the followers of deceit are living there..." [12] when Sindokht says that she needs a covenant that tremble the land and its people refers to the

same ancient Iranian belief. What is surprising is that we hear some words like it from Agamemnon in *Iliad*, he says: "Zeus does not like breaking covenant. The belly of those who break our promise would be rent by the claws of the vultures. Then we would turn their cities to ash and capture their beloved wives and children. The people of Troy have broken our covenants, because against their oaths have behaved us ignobly. The pains of death have lurked for them" [8].

### Anti-Value: Deception and Seditious

Anybody possesses vicious ethics is blamed, but those who are in a higher social positions, in the case of ignoring the principles of ethic would be blamed more and they are exposed to the sharper criticism and would be rejected. The different between the paladins and the ordinary people, besides their physical power, lays in their ethical behaviors. They are evaluated by their ethics. In ancient Iran, the paladin was the one who possessed the spirit of sacrificing and self-denying as well as he was honest and helpful. The one who was attributed to viciousness, falsehood, deception, sedition oppression, unjustness and unhealthy social communications was never placed in the row of paladins, even though possess strong body. "Chivalry not only is a historical phenomenon and a rooted tradition, but also is a form of ethical discipline which its influence is perceptible in our present life and could meet some of the ethical and social needs." [13]

Deception and sedition are accepted provided that they are used for defending the homeland and somehow regarded from view of the political issues and is considered as a popular method in the wars. But if someone employs these anti value issues for his personal intentions, such approach has no justification.

In *Iliad* epic, the Satanic deceptions and the conducts which are far from the support of wisdom are seen in the Olympus god's behaviors. For the sake of gods' rivalry which terminates to death of Achaean and Trojan Troops, one can see the devilish role of Satan in the conducts of Olympus gods that Iranian people regard it as the conduct of Ahriman. Aphrodite disguises herself to an old woman to deceive Helen. She recognizes her and addresses her in this way: "Do you plan to cheat me again and submit me to one of the human beings?" Aphrodite warns her: "Be careful not to stir the fire of my wrath, otherwise I would leave you to yourself and would show you my loathsome, the same way that I showed you my sympathy, in the old time. I can make a story of myself and place two groups in front of each other and inevitably you would be the victim of this war" [8]. In

*Iliad* whenever the two adversary groups stepped towards peace, one of the Olympus gods stirred a sedition and ignited the fire of war. This is the specification of Ahriman to the belief of ancient Iranian. Sedition, deception, war and blood shedding are the special attributions of Ahriman. But among the Olympus gods such specifications are very popular. In contrast in *Shahnameh*, Hormozd, the creator only allows war and blood shedding that the goal of them is to take revenge or to defend against the aggressors. *Soroosh* addressed Kiomarth: Be ready for war.

*Arrange the troops and dispatch with my command  
By attacking on them raise dust with your heroes' Hooves  
Remove that vicious demon from the earth  
And empty your heart from disgust* [9]

*Mitra the god of peace and friendship:* Mitra is a god who supports hand shaking, making promise and popularizing reconciliation. When she gets angry to the covenant breakers, no one could resist against her anger and at the time of peace and stability she is the guardian of peace and security in the barriers of friendship, but at the time of defending of Arian land, she resorts to deception and stratagem and in this specification is like the Hebrews god. Mitra is known for her dual nature and dual feature which in Pahlavi language is called *Akemena* and *Ake Vahishta*, namely the one who is a blended of virtue and viciousness. Her goodness paves the path for peace, tranquility security and world reconciliation and her viciousness are resorting to deception and employing tricky for defending the homeland and supporting the righteous person.

Mitra is the god of war and by employing wars' tactics take off guard from the enemy. This specification stems from her duality of nature for this reason the enemies of *Mehr Izad* call her deceptive. This deception guarantees the security of homeland against any aggression. *Shahnameh* has alluded to her duality as the sun's feature (equal to *Mehr Izad*):

*The two cypresses, the arms of the lofty sphere  
That come from her half compassion her half  
maliciousness  
Regards her, the flying bird as the Sun  
Regards her the source of fear and hope in the world* [9]

### The Deceptive Mitra and the Interpretation of Her Deception

One of the differences between the Iranian gods and Olympus gods is the stability of their wisdom in their beliefs. No one could deceive them by the power of sacrificing; they explore into the men's intentions and desires and are not deceived by the appearance of the



devotees. In Avesta we read when two persons seek justice, Mitra shows attention to the request of the one who is honest and righteous.

The mythological paladins of *Shahnameh* wage war not for plundering the possessions of enemy but for defense of their own ethical principles and their beliefs. Despite the fact that the Iranian people liked PiranViseh, the close councilor of Afrasiab, offered him great advantages in the case he and his household join Iran, he rejected their invitation and at length he lost his life for his faithfulness to Afrasiab.

### Discrimination and Injustice of Olympus Gods

The rate of the support of the Olympus gods, depends upon the quality and the quantity of the gifts they are offered. They also deny all their commitments to their servants with the least anger. In the war between two persons they support the one who has offered more gift regardless that he is righteous or not. By their interference and physical involvement in the wars they cause dispersion and division in the troops and through a stark injustice make victories the protected warrior and raise him to the skies and save him from being killed, regardless he is righteous or not. Aras, Zeus' son is wounded in the battle field and when he meets his father [Zeus], he confesses to his injustice behavior: "O father! Are you not getting angry with witnessing these malicious conducts? We are as the offspring of gods whenever we have tried to help human beings out of jealousy toward each other, we have remained unrequited. But these dualities between us stems from you, you are the one who has created this ominous imbecile god who loves tyranny" [8].

To Iranian people the phenomenon of war was an ominous event which is the desire of Ahriman but in *Iliad* the gods themselves are stirring the fire of war like Ahriman. "Dione, the great, said: we have seen the impudence of human beings, while we ourselves have incited them against each other and we have pushed them to these atrocities" [8].

Athena talks of vicious nature of Ares: "Do not respect the god [Ares] which is enthralled by anger and as much as he is abnormal is unstable too. At first he promised us to be a firm support for the Achaean people and now he is the savior of the people of troy" [8]. Zeus before the beginning of war, promised Hector to support and invigorated him. It is a sign of his fight stirring nature and tyranny temper. Zeus out of jealousy and emulation towards other gods ordered to demolish the wall that Achaean people have erected by thousand victims. The conducts of Olympus gods are irrational and are not

deserved to be called the divinely behaviors. In Iran, in the word of Ahooramazda the conception of wisdom (*Hervisp*) has been inserted.

### The Manner of Approach to the Adversary Troops

The behavior of men is a measure to evaluate their culture, civilization and nature, because the beautiful conducts is the result of beautiful thought. The epics that narrate the behavior of our ancestors in the war, mirror our culture, beliefs and our world viewing in that era. In their thoughts, chivalry and social laws and conventions stem from chivalry were not something should be added to the principles of life, but their manner of life was the separating line between humanistic behavior and the conducts of beasts. The manner of behavior with the captives, those who have run from the battle fields, and the defeated troops and as well as the manner of approach to the defeated paladins and the children and women even the corpse of the heroes all and all, show the level of wisdom, insight and tribal – national culture of people.

### Ethics in War

The differences between the epic ethics of *Shahnameh* and *Iliad* stem from the principal beliefs of the two lands. These disparities essentially relate to the ethics of Iranian gods and the Olympus gods. The Iranian gods are the mythological characters of the Avesta and they themselves are legislators and they themselves observe the edicts of legislations and ceaselessly empathically ask of their followers to obey these divinely laws and regulations. The devotees place the behaviors of their gods as an example for their own conducts and they are asked seriously to avoid from any type of heresy in religion. The obvious differences between the conducts of an Olympus gods and the heroes of *Iliad* raises this question why the human characters like Achelous Menelaus, Agamemnon are different from the gods such as Athena and Zeus and these heroes are more ethical than their gods? These gods and at the head of them, Zeus, the son of Kronos, easily ignore the ethical principles and choose a different position, they resort to satanic deceptions, irrational decisions, trample the rights of people and emphatically insist upon his wrong doings. The Olympus gods are covetous to receive more alms, more donations and more victims. They unreasonably keep on the war that they themselves know clearly which one has denied and trampled the right of the other one and support the Paris who is the main cause of the war.

The soldiers who are present in the troop of Agamemnon scarcely fight with the divinely incentives. In fact, their

greatest desire is to plunder the wealth of the captured towns. To them the laws of distribution of spoil of war is not on the basis of ethics. In Iran some laws and regulations are defining the manner of distribution of spoil of war and mostly this wealth is distributed under the surveillance of the commanders are granted to the ordinary people who are damaged due to war. But as if in the troops of Agamemnon any soldier is free to own whatever he plunders. The motivation of the 10 years of war even though it was a national or divinely one was covered under the covetous desires. In *Shahnameh* the light of godly ethics shined upon the paladins' ethics. The paladins are fighting seriously for their beliefs, Esfandiar is killed to respect the religious decrees and ceremonial beliefs. To Esfandiar the price of crown and throne is much lower than the price of beliefs for this reason he rejects the Rustam offers.

*Esfandiar replied him frankly*

*Why do you talk so much in vain?*

*Never such behavior is my creed*

*In my religion this approach is not deserved*

*To make victim the Iranian people*

*Then in this world I adorn myself with crown*

*The gods are my companions in the war*

*My reliance is my smiling fortune [9]*

To Esfandiar the ethics and observing the ceremonial beliefs are so deeply rooted that he looks at the two worlds with contempt. Esfandiar believes to this slogan that says: "There is no difference between the decree of God and the decree of Shah and says his brother Pashootan: "I would not sell the two worlds to Rustam". How is it possible to compare a devoted man like Esfandiar with Hector, Achilles, Diomed and Paris? Although even today Esfandiar is accused of being ambitious and seeks something more than his right. "From a universal look one can say that the main motivation of Esfandiar in this travel is his ambitiousness; he wishes to possess the thrown and the crown..." [14].

The other aspects of being faithful to ethics could be seen in the conducts of Aghrirath (Afrasiab brother) and Siavash when both of them return the war hostages to their home. Both of them freed the hostages despite the fact that the kings had ordered them to decapitate them and with this ethical decision they placed themselves at the risk of death. Siavash who was obliged to submit the hostages, said himself:

*He said one hundred man all are warriors*

*All are of the household of the Tooran king*

*All are benevolent, all are innocent*

*If I send them to my father, Kaykavos*

*Neither ask them nor be worry for their life*

*In a fraction of seconds, he would order to hang them alive*

*At the presence of God, what excuse could I offer*

*From my father's demand, my other world would be horrible*

The answer of Aghrirath to Afrasiab about the Iranian hostages is narrated in *Shahnameh* as follows:

*When Aghrirath, the man of knowledge observed the condition*

*Fire blows to his heart in his chest*

*He said to himself many innocent head*

*By the order of the king would be decapitated*

*He referred pleading and wailing to the Shah*

*Stood in front of him and asked him to judge correctly*

*That killing the people is not plausible*

*Wherever there is a height there is a steep too*

*It deserves that no danger threatens them*

*Entrust them to me while they are chained*

"In *Shahnameh* the will of man is the main cause of wars, but in *Iliad* only the passing fads of Olympus gods creates all these scenes." [4]

Even in the battle fields, the manner of Iranian troops is chivalry filled with the spirit of heroism. "The approach of Iranian people to the captives is along with fairness, clemency and sympathy. They never kill the innocent captures and the defeated people who were surrendered. The kings advised their warriors never shed the blood of the innocent people [15].

## CONCLUSION

according to the present research in the throes of the battles both in *Iliad* the masterpiece epic of Homer and in *Shahnameh* the greatest epic of the world, some ethical principles have been denied.

In this research the subjects of taking revenge, keeping promise, peace and friendship, political stratagem and war technics and some anti-values like discriminating, unjustness, wrath, covenant breaking, deception, stirring sedition and igniting the flames of war as well as unfairly behavior with the enemy in these two sources have been compared.

According to the mythologies which their origin is beliefs and epic conducts, in the era of multi gods before the appearance of Avesta, in special chapters (*Yashts*) we met the gods like Bahram and Mitra who are famous warriors and serious revengers the gods who are suitable examples for the epic heroes of *Shahnameh*. At the time of defense and revenge they deprive not to offer their lives and are very strict and unforgiving against covenant brokers and violators. But there is no sign of aggression and violation in their records and they never issue any edict that shows



they support aggression and violation the rights of innocent people; in contrast they regard the aggressors as the inhabitants of inferno and encourage the innocent people to defend their own life and the life of those who depend on them and help them. But in *Iliad* the Olympus gods like Zeus anon involve against the innocents, anon supports them. They personally step in the battle field and stirs the warriors to atrocities. From the view of character and ethics they are very similar to the Ahriman who has been introduced in Iranian myths. The attributions like warlording, grudging jealousy, stirring sedition, hypocrisy are all of the specifications of Ahriman and all the Olympus gods possess these attributions.

The heroes of *Iliad* with the nature of human beings, namely partly bright partly dark in comparing with their gods, possess higher position though Agamemnon, Menelaus, Hector Achilles and Alice are not god in the ten years of war, gain better grade than their gods from ethical view. Hector sacrifices himself and Achaeans

offer their live to save their fame and name. Though Achilles apparently leaves the battel field under the cover of her slave girl, but if we judge fairly, he was offended of being ignored and his hero's position was denied by Agamemnon.

Nevertheless, the paladins of *Shahnameh* while are following *Mehr Izad* and Bahram Izad and possessing the chivalry ethics, are not completely free from weaknesses.

### Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues (such as plagiarism, conscious satisfaction, misleading, making and or forging data, publishing or sending to two places, redundancy and etc.) have been fully considered by the writers.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests.

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