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**The Kingdom of Goshtasp, Divine Glory (Farrah Izadi), and Ritual Wisdom
A Study of Religion, Politics, and Culture at the Dawn of Zoroastrian Expansion**

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Abstract

Goshtasp, a Kayanid king and a central figure in the epic and historical tradition of ancient Iran, plays a unique role in linking politics and religion, marking the cultural transition of the Aryan world from legendary-historical monarchism to philosophical-religious governance. This article, through a historical-analytical approach, examines the era of Goshtasp's reign, the concepts of *Farrah Izadi* (divine glory), *Kherad Aini* (ritual wisdom), and the place of Zoroastrianism within the political structure. Goshtasp's life — from exile to embracing Zoroaster's teachings and the military victories of his son Esfandiar — exemplifies the interplay of politics, religion, and culture in ancient Iran.

Keywords:

Goshtasp, Zoroaster, Farrah Izadi, Kherad Aini, Kayanids, Esfandiar, Zoroastrianism, Shahnameh, Avesta

Introduction

The reign of Goshtasp can be seen as a turning point in the religious and cultural history of ancient Iran. With the emergence of Zoroaster, the first coherent theological and philosophical framework was formed within Iranian governance. This article, based on epic sources like the *Shahnameh*, religious texts such as the *Avesta*, and historical Pahlavi documents, analyzes the various dimensions of this kingship.

I. Goshtasp's Coronation: Between Legacy and Love

Goshtasp, son of Lohrasp, was disqualified from succession by the counsel of Kay Khosrow. This led him to leave his homeland and travel to Rome. There, without political backing, he regained his social status through personal virtues and noble conduct. This episode embodies the Zoroastrian doctrine of *Vohu Manah* (Good Mind).

II. Trial of Exile and Divine Glory

His marriage to Katayun, his valorous acts in Rome, and earning the trust of the Caesar all point to the presence of *Farrah Izadi* (divine glory) within his character. This divine glory was not inherited through royal lineage, but earned through wisdom and righteous conduct. This experience exemplifies the model of personal royal ethics in Iranian traditions among Tajiks, Persians, and Kurds.

III. Return to Balkh and Embrace of Zoroastrianism

Upon returning to Iran, Goshtasp encountered Zoroaster and accepted his message. He supported the new religion, which helped shape a new political and cultural system. The establishment of fire temples such as Azar Goshnasp symbolized this emerging order.

IV. Confrontation with Arjasp: The Battle of Faith and Fury

Arjasp, king of Turan, was hostile to the new faith. In the war against him, Goshtasp and his brother Zarir were defeated. However, Esfandiar, Goshtasp's son, ultimately triumphed through his bravery and invincibility. Esfandiar, in both epic and religious literature, stands as the ideal heroic manifestation of divine glory and unwavering faith.

V. The End of the Kayanid Kingdom

Following Goshtasp, figures such as Bahman, Hoday, and the two Darabs are named in epic literature as successors of the Kayanid dynasty. However, from a historical perspective, the Kayanid era coincides with Zoroaster's lifetime (approximately 1000–1200 BCE) and cannot be extended historically to the era of Alexander the Great. The *Shahnameh* thus reflects a mythic reinterpretation rooted in the historical consciousness of its compilers.

VI. Religious Culture and Spiritual Wisdom

During Goshtasp's reign, the *Avesta* and the *Gathas* were compiled or recorded as sacred texts. These writings remain an eternal legacy in ethical thought and human cosmology. Their teachings — Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds — formed a virtue-based, wisdom-oriented social structure.

Conclusion

Goshtasp was not merely a political ruler but an initiator of fundamental transformations in Iranian religion and culture. He serves as the link between myth, religion, and wisdom in Iranian-Zoroastrian civilization. His era represents a unique model of the fusion of political authority and religious commitment, whose influence endured for generations.

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