



The Creation according to Shamaran myth in Kurdish Regions: A Comparative Analysis of Mesopotamian Mythology and Hebrew Texts

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Abstract

The legend of Shamaran holds significant cultural significance in Kurdish mythology and serves as a prominent creation myth. Despite variations in traditions, this article undertakes a comparative analysis between the Shamaran legend and the narrative of the Garden of Eden, employing a structuralist approach and drawing upon mythological and biblical data. Through this research, it is revealed that these two narratives share a coherent and uniform structure, as well as common themes. The central focus of both narratives lies in the creation of existence and mankind. Key elements, such as the Garden of Eden and creation myths, serve as focal points for comparison. Utilizing textual analysis and comparative methodologies, this study aims to identify common motifs, theological perspectives, and historical contexts shared by these cultural narratives. By critically evaluating the primary sources of each tradition, we seek to shed light on the potential intersections and divergences within the mythologies under scrutiny.

Keywords: Legend of Shamaran, Kurdish myths, Garden of Eden, creation myths, snake symbolism, Sumerian poem Gilgamesh

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Introduction

Rostaminejadan (2012) extensively examines the cultural significance of the snake symbol within Kurdish culture, specifically exploring its connection with "Shamaran" as it relates to the concepts of agriculture and fertility. Furthermore, Ramezani (2017) has compiled a comprehensive collection of traditions and images associated with Shamaran, presenting them in the form of a book. This compilation includes translated excerpts from Latin sources that delve into the intricacies of this myth. In addition, Masrour (2017) offers a detailed analysis of the various narratives surrounding the Shamaran myth, providing an introduction to its origins and an exploration of the symbolic meaning attached to the image of Shamaran. Rajabi (2018) also delves into this myth in a similar work, enriching the academic discussion surrounding Shamaran. Furthermore, Ebrahim Samin's thesis (2019) delves into the symbolic representation of the snake and the myth of Shamaran. Despite the collective efforts of these researchers, the fundamental reason behind the key importance of the Shamaran myth and its enduring presence remains unexplored. Regrettably, the current body of research has yet to uncover the secrets and antiquity of this myth within the ancient mythology of the region. Hence, a simultaneous examination of the snake symbol and Shamaran is warranted to shed light on this mystical tale.

Methodology

To unravel the complexities of Shamaran's creation myth, a comprehensive examination of Mesopotamian mythology and Hebrew texts is undertaken. Key elements, such as the Garden of Eden and creation myths, serve as focal points for comparison. Utilizing textual analysis and comparative methodologies, this study aims to identify common motifs, theological perspectives, and historical contexts shared by these cultural narratives. By critically evaluating the primary sources of each tradition, we seek to shed light on the potential intersections and divergences within the mythologies under scrutiny.

The Shamaran myth holds a significant place within the rich cultural heritage of the Kurdish people inhabiting the Kurdish region spanning Iran, Türkiye, Iraq, and other Kurdish territories. Despite its prominence, an extensive and autonomous anthropological study dedicated to the Shamaran myth remains absent in the existing literature. Consequently, there exists a pressing need to conduct a methodical and anthropological investigation into this subject matter. This

research endeavor aims to bridge this knowledge gap by scrutinizing the following key dimensions, thereby distinguishing itself from previous studies:

- Analysis of various narrative forms and themes akin to those found in the Shamaran legend.
- Exploration of the semantic associations between the depiction of Shamaran and the related traditions, rituals, and the symbolic representation of the snake in Kurdish culture.
- Examination of the composite structure of Shamaran's portrayal, and its symbolic significance as supported by archaeological and mythological evidence.
- Investigation into the broader theme of the Shamaran symbol and its position within creation myths.

By undertaking this pioneering work, the study seeks to shed new light on the Shamaran myth, enhance our understanding of its intricacies, and contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the field of anthropology.

Shamaran is a revered and legendary being within Kurdish culture, with varying descriptions provided by different sources. Its name derives from "Sha" or "Shah," signifying royalty, and "Maran," denoting the king and queen of snakes. Shamaran is known by various appellations, including "Mirmaran" (referring to the grandmother of Maran), "Buk Maran" (denoting the bride of Maran), "Dyke Maran" (indicating the mother of Maran), and "Mazen Maran" (also referred to as Salar Maran). Shamaran is regarded as a female, ancient Kurdish deity... Shamaran embodies divine knowledge and the custodian of secrets. The manifestation of this knowledge is symbolized by the depiction of double eyes in the image of Shamaran. The portrait of Shamaran is prominently displayed in the chambers of young girls and women within the family, and it is also observed in various weavings and ancient motifs (Masrouf and Rahbar, 2018: 87 and 88). Furthermore, Shamaran is worshipped as the deity of fertility, fecundity, and physical attractiveness (ibid.: 82, 84; Ibrahim Samin, 2019: 87, 91).

Narratives of Shamaran

The Shamaran myth holds numerous traditions in various regions such as the Kurdish regions of Türkiye, Iran, and Iraq, as well as other Kurdish territories. A concise summary of the overarching narrative portrays the accidental descent or falling of Tamasab into a subterranean

location, often depicted as a well or cave. It is within this setting that Tamasab encounters Shamaran, who assumes the guise of an exquisite maiden with a serpent-like body (Masrouf and Rahbar, 2018: 84). In order to secure a union with Shamaran, Tamasab is tasked with answering a series of inquiries posed by her (Ibrahim Semin, 2019: 88). Some variations of the narrative portray Shamaran residing within a splendid orchard laden with fruits, concealed beyond a honey-filled well, donning a crown as she rests (Ibrahim Semin, 2019: 87). Tamasab earns the privilege to meet Shamaran as a result of his valiant efforts in safeguarding Shamaran's daughter, embodied by a white serpent, during a confrontation with a black serpent (Sisil, 1386: 116 and 117). Upon Tamasab's return, Shamaran rewards him by bestowing her ring, thereby enabling Tamasab to ascend to kingship and amass immense wealth. Furthermore, he acquires the ability to communicate effortlessly with nature and serpents (Ibrahim Semin, 2019: 87, 86). Shamaran imparts knowledge of human creation, nature's mysteries, and herbal remedies (Ibrahim Samin, 2019: 88). However, upon Tamasab's return to his realm, the world of illumination, he discloses Shamaran's secret to Mullah in an act of treachery. Consequently, Shamaran experiences desolation, uttering the disheartened sentiment: "Placing trust in a human is impossibility" (Ramazani, 1402: 39). Analogous to Adam's expulsion from paradise, this event unfolds as Tamasab inadvertently causes the demise of Shamaran's son. A serpent addresses humans, decreeing an eternal enmity: "Until the end of time, animosity will persist between us; you shall suffer my venomous bite, and I shall endure the strike upon my head."

Additional customs prevalent in Erbil, northern Iraq present Shamaran gifting Tamasab with a gem concealed beneath his tongue, thus endowing him with wisdom and vast riches. In a different account, Shamaran anoints a fisherman's tongue with her saliva, thereby bestowing upon him profound awareness of botanical secrets, the language of plants, and medical expertise (Amini, 2019: 373-374).

In the majority of versions, Shamaran is subjected to sacrifice, with her blood divided into three cups symbolizing mortality, healing, and revelation (cf. Ebrahim Samin, 2019: 89). In alternative narrations, the sacrifice of Shamaran entails the dissection of her body into three distinct components: "Tail of Shamaran," "Raz Amoz" (Body of Shamaran), and "Safabakhsh" (Head of Shamaran) (cf. Mansouri Moghadam, 1398: 19). Another depiction of Shamaran's sacrifice and subsequent creation elucidates how a hunter interments Shamaran's tail, giving rise to an extraordinary tree blossoming with emerald seeds (Sefari, 1381: 130-132).

The structure and themes of the Shamaran myth exhibit distinct characteristics when analyzed from an academic perspective. Morphologically, the legend commences with a state of deficiency or malevolence, often depicted through the king's illness or the killing of Shamaran's daughter. Following a series of intermediate adventures, the narrative progresses towards eventual outcomes such as marriage, prosperity, and healing (Propp, 1386: 183). According to Propp's examination, stories frequently commence with a lack or evil that necessitates resolution, progressing through intermediary stages before culminating in marriage or other forms of resolution that serve as the story's terminus (Propp, 1386: 183).

One can find numerous legends, such as the "Fatili legend" (Seven Brothers) in Kurdish folklore, which present a similar tripartite structure and themes akin to the Shamaran myth through different narrative variations (see Rostaminejadan, 1401). These legends often feature the slaying of a peculiar creature (representing evil), followed by a sequence of adventures that culminate in the seizure of its treasures, which are subsequently bestowed upon humans as a reward (see Lisko, 1370: 177-169; Rudenko, 2019: 253). Overall, a prevalent theme within these narratives involves encountering and combating a snake or demon. The conflict between darkness and light forms a central opposition within this overarching narrative structure. The historical narrative of conquering the serpent-like monster, resulting in the acquisition of human potentialities such as knowledge and treasures, can be traced back to the Neolithic period and serves as a prominent exemplification (Baring and Cashford, 1991: 324-333). This reveals the conflict between Marduk and Tiamat, constituting a significant foundation for the Shamaran myth's classification as a dragon-fighting mythology.

Beyond narrative structure, the themes and elements found within the Shamaran myth are dispersed and intertwined with numerous other legends and myths. For instance, in the tale of "Beit Brymuk," Brymuk suffers from illness for a duration of seven years. One day, a snake enters her milk, and upon drinking it, she is miraculously cured (Oscarman, 2006: 300-299). Subsequently, the story takes a different trajectory. Such mythologies lack a cohesive narrative structure, with Shamaran's contrasting themes borrowed and intertwined within them. Consequently, it becomes imperative to identify and analyze these oppositions through a systematic structural approach. According to this method, the structure of a myth mirrors the structure and rules of language, extending beyond its apparent narrative level (Lévi-Strauss, 1955: 431-434). This approach yields reciprocal pairs of oppositions (Ibd: 440-442).

Within the Shamaran myth, the overarching oppositions revolve around the tail (representing death) versus the head of the snake (representing life-giving forces), disease (symbolizing death) versus medicine and healing, the woman versus the snake (as represented by the figure of Shamaran), black snake versus white snake, darkness (symbolic of the underground and cave) versus light (representing a kingdom) (Saunders, 1383: 166-167). The legend of Shamaran delves into the conflict between illness and healing, with the latter being a requisite for immortality. The snake, as an immortal creature, indirectly alludes to the shedding of Shamaran's skin within the myth (see Masrour and Rahbar, 2018: 77). This motif of immortality finds resonance in the Sumerian poem "Gilgamesh," wherein a snake steals the plant of life from Gilgamesh, leading to its eventual shedding (Saunders, 1383: 166-167). The image of Shamaran encompasses the confrontation between the head (depicted as a woman adorned with a gem-studded crown and double eyes symbolizing light) and the serpent, representing darkness and the abyss. The existence of two pairs of eyes holds significant symbolism within the history of the Kurdish region (ancient Mesopotamia), representing the divine, brightness, and illumination (cf. Schmandt-Besserat, 1998:11). The conflict between the woman and the snake depicted in the Shamaran legend depicts the capture of a princess by Shamaran, who is portrayed as a monstrous being (Niktin,baile: 1366, 571-572). This contrast is also present in similar legends where a girl and bread must be offered as a sacrifice to the dragon at the spring in order to restore its flow (Rodenko, 2010: 253). The frequent references to the gem beneath Shamaran's tongue, the golden crown, endless wealth, and treasures, as well as the glorification of Shamaran's kingdom, serve as crucial elements that have shaped belief systems. This includes the notion that the snake possesses the unique ability to discern between genuine and counterfeit gems (Ibd: 440-442).

In this myth, the tale unfolds as a symbolic representation of contrasting elements. The tail of the snake embodies death and disease, while its head symbolizes vitality and healing. The depiction of the snake in relation to medicine and treatment, as well as its association with the image of Shamaran, a mythical woman intertwined with the snake, further emphasizes these opposing forces. The black and white snakes represent the dichotomy of darkness and light, with the underground and cave denoting darkness and the kingdom embodying light.

The legend of Shamaran delves into the concept of immortality, stipulating that healing is a prerequisite for attaining eternal life. The snake, considered an immortal creature, correlates with the shedding of skin, which indirectly alludes to Shamaran's transformation. This notion of

immortality is also echoed in the Sumerian poem "Gilgamesh," where a snake steals and peels the plant of life in the dark world (Saunders, 1383: 166-167).

Shamaran's image accentuates the juxtaposition between the head and tail, mirroring the contrasting relationship between the woman and the snake. The woman, adorned with a gem-encrusted crown and double eyes symbolizing light, stands opposite the serpent—the primordial creature and embodiment of darkness and the abyss. The presence of two pairs of eyes carries profound symbolism in the historical context of the Kurdish region (ancient Mesopotamia), representing the gods, brightness, and illumination (cf. Schmandt-Besserat, 1998:11).

Throughout the narrations of the Shamaran legend, the confrontation between the woman and the snake manifests as Shamaran, appearing monstrous, ensnaring a princess (Niktin basile: 1987, 571-572). This particular contrast also manifests in similar legends, where a sacrifice involving a girl and bread, offered to a dragon at a spring, leads to the release of the life-giving water (Rodenko, 2010: 253).

The recurrent mention of gems, such as the jewel-laden language of the Shamarans, the golden crown, boundless wealth, and treasures, as well as the kingdom they possess, holds significant importance within this myth. These elements have shaped certain beliefs, including the notion that snakes possess the unique ability to distinguish between authentic and synthetic gemstones, thus recognizing their true essence (Masrour and Rahbar, 1398: 77).

A cluster of contrasting concepts, such as the absence of matrimony, is subtly implied within the context. Conversely, marriage holds a significant position as one of the fundamental pillars in the legendary account of Shamaran. According to the beliefs of the people, Shamaran is revered as the progenitor of home, family, and wedlock. Consequently, the depiction of Shamaran constitutes a crucial element within the realm of marital rituals.

The prevailing beliefs among the inhabitants of Kurdish regions align harmoniously with this mythological framework. Specifically, these beliefs encompass the notion that the act of slaying a snake, especially within the context of matrimony, engenders the fragmentation and ruination of familial ties. Additionally, the legend of Shamaran includes a pivotal narrative element involving peasants attaining affluence and sovereignty and constructing opulent palaces. These palatial structures are bestowed with grandeur, as they are described in various legends to be adorned with materials such as marble, lapis lazuli, ruby, and other precious stones. These magnificent edifices are further complemented by the presence of gardens blooming with basil flowers and

fragrant herbs (see Oskarman, 2000: 161-160). Such descriptions possess a distinctly mythical essence, evoking similarities to the sacred sanctuaries associated with the goddesses "Ishtar (Inana)" and "Anahid" (cf. Langdon, 1914: 21, 63, 67). Temples and ziggurats were meticulously constructed using symbolic and valuable gemstones (cf. James et al., 2008, 1840: 125-127; Kramer, 1340: 30).

Within certain traditions, limited references to conflicts are made, and the inherent structure of these confrontations remains obscured by fragmented and disjointed narratives. For instance, in the narrative of Shamaran, the number seven is mentioned; "The hero remains imprisoned for seven days within the depths of Shamaran cave" (Ibrahim Samin, 1399: 182). In another account, Shamaran takes up residence in a subterranean castle with seven floors (Masrouf and Rahbar, 2018: 83), or alternatively, Shamaran's ring descends into the depths of the seven seas (Ramazani, 1402: 61). Conversely, the number three, which stands in stark contrast to the number seven, does not find any mention in this context. Among other legends that share similar themes and structures, the narrative unfolds with an arduous journey lasting three days, characterized by pursuit, search, and combat against a three-headed dragon (cf. Lisko, 1370: 168, 174), culminating in a lavish seven-day celebration of matrimony. It is through this parallel that the central couple in the Shamaran legend can be discerned, thereby signifying their renewal.

In the legendary tale of Shamaran, the serpent embodies the custodian of plants and their wisdom. Additionally, it assumes the role of the deity overseeing agricultural abundance within flourishing gardens. These two entities, being Rostaminejadan and Rafifar (2024), engage in a perpetual confrontation as depicted in the article "The Plant of Life." The interaction between the woman and the snake serves to highlight the juxtaposition between land and water. Shamaran conveys to Tamasab the imperative notion that he must refrain from traversing the vast sea in order to safeguard his clandestine secret, as expounded upon by Masrouf and Rahbar (2019: 77). In certain narrative contexts, it is relayed that Shamaran's daughter metamorphoses into a lizard, as illuminated by Ramezani (1402: 56). The lizard, or alternatively the toad, embodies the enigmatic aspect of water and aquatic life forms. Moreover, the fish serves as yet another symbol of water, as it devours Shamaran's ring, as extensively detailed by Ramazani (1402: 61-62). The dichotomy between water and land parallels the dichotomy between nakedness and clothing. A prerequisite for Tamasab's reintegration into earthly existence necessitates that his unclothed form remains concealed from the gaze of any onlookers, as emphasized by Ibrahim Samin (2019:

88). Consequently, he returns clad in garments, tangibly alluding to the profound significance of clothing within the vast realm of creation mythology.

Snake/Water Woman: Symbolizing the dryness of darkness and the lightness of the tail, the black snake represents the concept of Shamaran. On the other hand, the white snake embodies celibacy and the marriage of poverty.

Kingdom of Water/Gold (Emerald) Plant: The concept of the Kingdom of Water is intertwined with the presence of a precious gold (emerald) plant that holds immense significance.

The Tree (Garden) of Ignorance/Knowledge: Within the Shamaran myth, the existence of the tree (garden) of ignorance symbolizes a lack of knowledge, while the tree (garden) of knowledge represents enlightenment and wisdom.

The narrative of Shamaran myth encompasses contrasting notions such as life-giving nakedness and the affliction of a disease cloak. Furthermore, it delves into the healing properties that lead to a sense of immortality.

Number Three/Number Seven Deadly Sacrifice: The Shamaran myth incorporates the symbolic significance of numbers. The number three represents sacredness, while the number seven is associated with deadly sacrifices.

The serpent epitomizes the profound symbology of water in its ethereal form, while the feminine entity personifies the aridity of obscurity. The luminescence of the serpent's tail stands as a testament to its inherent luminosity, whereas the head of the black serpent known as shamaran represents its pursuit of chastity. Additionally, the alchemical fusion of the white snake signifies the union of destitution and matrimony.

Within the realm of aqueous dominion lies the exalted kingdom, wherein the emerald-clad flora reigns supreme. Concurrently, the flora within the arboreal enclosure symbolizes ignorance, serving as the conduit to the triune manifestation of knowledge. Subsequently, the culmination of these three manifestations aligns with the figurative septenary notion of deadly sacrifice.

Furthermore, the concept of life-giving nudity conveys its bestowed vitality, whereas the cloak of affliction serves as a metaphorical barrier to be overcome in the pursuit of restoration and eventual immortality.

Snake	Water	Darkness	Tail	Black	Being	Poverty	Water	Plant	Illiteracy	Number	Deadly	Nakedness	Illness
Woman	Dryness	Light	Shamaran's	White	Marriage	Kingdom	Gold	Tree	Wisdom	Number	Life Giving	garment	Immortality

Diagram 1: Contrasts of Shamaran Myth

Shamaran and the Legend of the Garden of Eden

The evolution of mythology follows two distinct paths. The first path involves scattered and transformed elements existing within folklore and folk legends. The second path entails a more profound collection of myths that serve as the foundation for religious structures, being regarded as sacred and religious narratives.

The Babylonian creation myth and the epic of Marduk hold utmost significance as the most notable creation myth in history. Other creation myths, such as the Sumerian myth of the storm known as "Dilmon" and the tale of "Enki" (the water-god) and "Ninhorsag," alongside the myth of "Adapa" and certain parts of the story of "Gilgamesh and Enkidu," contribute to the rich tapestry of ancient Mesopotamian mythology. Similarly, within the Bible, in addition to the account of the Garden of Eden, the story of "Noah" encompasses another facet of the creation narrative. Hence, in order to reconstruct the foundational elements of the creation story, it becomes imperative to adapt and assimilate various components from these diverse traditions. A crucial aspect of this reconstruction process involves employing structural analysis to extract thematic patterns from these narratives and subsequently prioritizing their inclusion.

Amongst the multitude of creation myths, the account of the creation of the Garden of Eden encapsulates a significant number of ancient creation elements.

The theme of garments holds significant prominence in the narrative. As described in Genesis 2:33, God fashioned garments of skin to clothe Adam and his wife. This notion of clothing is similarly observed in various Babylonian and Sumerian traditions, where Adam and Enkidu, portrayed as the initial humans in the Gilgamesh epic, embrace cultural development through marriage and the adoption of clothing (Jastrow, 1899: 201-202, 204).

Furthermore, the awareness and understanding acquired by humans in the Garden of Eden allude to the wisdom possessed by Shamans. The Bible suggests that through partaking in the forbidden

tree, which granted knowledge of good and evil, mankind becomes aware of their own nakedness, thus constituting their primary area of knowledge (refer to Tabari, 1356, 55, Genesis, 3:6 and 7). Adam's ability to name all animals and creatures, as depicted in Genesis 1:20, specifically emphasizes his intellectual acumen. This theme also finds relevance in earlier myths, demonstrated by the bestowal of vast knowledge upon Adapa, the first man (Hebrew equivalent of Adam), by Aa, the god of wisdom in Sumerian mythology. Additionally, Adapa is attributed with naming various entities within the world (Langdon, 1964:75, Hook, 2019: 64).

Moreover, the themes of downfall, illumination, and the garden reoccur within the Garden of Eden narrative. In Genesis, it is conveyed that due to Adam's disobedience in consuming the prohibited fruit, the Earth becomes cursed, necessitating him to toil for sustenance and endure hardships until his eventual return to the dust from which he was created (Genesis, 17-20). Another instance references the expulsion of Adam from the Garden of Eden and his resettlement in a land removed from it. This account also mentions the placement of cherubim and a flaming sword on the eastern side of the Garden, serving as guardians of the path leading to the tree of life (Genesis, 3:23-24).

Additionally, the narratives surrounding the Garden of Eden prominently incorporate precious stones and treasures. Ezekiel chapter 28, verse 13 describes Adam to have resided in the garden adorned with an array of precious stones such as red rubies, yellow rubies, diamonds, turquoise, sapphires, jade, red rubies, emeralds, and gold (Ezekiel, 28, 13).

The subject matter concerning marriage does not find explicit mention in the narrative of the Garden of Eden. However, the creation of Eve as a companion to Adam, and the depiction of Adam and Eve in a state of nudity (Genesis 2:20-25), can be seen as the origin of the institution of marriage. This theme is further reinforced through the mention of procreation, as God informs Eve that due to their consumption of the forbidden fruit, she will experience difficulties in childbirth (Genesis 3:16).

In the story of the Garden of Eden, the central theme of the woman and the snake bears great significance, paralleling the prominent theme of the Shamaran myth. The snake within the Garden of Eden entices the woman to partake of the tree of knowledge (cf. Genesis 3:1-14). This narrative of the Garden of Eden can be viewed as a continuation of ancient Mesopotamian myths, highlighting the creative role of women in creation myths. Within Mesopotamian creation myths,

women and the feminine aspect are regarded as the creators of humanity and terrestrial existence. In the enduring and renowned Babylonian creation myth, the struggle between Marduk and Tiamat, the goddess named "Auroro" holds responsibility for the creation of earthly life and human beings, gradually attributed to Marduk (Jastrow, 1901:633-634, 645).

The distinction between darkness and light is mentioned in the creation story, with the two being separated from each other (Genesis 1:20). This contrast can be understood similarly to the contrast between a woman and a snake. Just as in the Shamaran myth, the contrast between a woman and a snake reflects the distinction between the head and tail of a snake. Here, the snake symbolizes the realm of darkness, while God represents the world of light. In numerous traditions concerning the mythology of creation, including the Hebrew mythology surrounding the Garden of Eden, the association between the snake, darkness, and the devil is significant. The snake and devil are depicted as cooperating with each other (cf. Schwartz, 2004:442-443).

Within the creation mythology, the connection linking the snake to darkness and the devil carries weight across various traditions. In the myth of the Garden of Eden, the emphasis on light simultaneously symbolizes dryness. The work of Maurice Jastrow (Jastrow, 1901; Jastrow, 1916) demonstrates that the story of the Garden of Eden finds its roots in Babylonian mythology. In the Babylonian narrative, Marduk triumphs over Tiamat, the primordial giant who takes the form of an enormous snake within the primordial waters and deep darkness. As a result, the waters subside, revealing the appearance of the earth and dry land (Jastrow, 1901:624-626). Marduk is hailed as the "god of the sun" and possesses wisdom, reason, and knowledge, earning him the title of "king" bestowed upon him by the gods (Ibid: 624, 630, 628).

In the narrative of the Garden of Eden, the presence of disease is not explicitly manifested due to the continuous introduction of various subjects in mythology aimed at conveying similar themes. However, the theme of disease can be inferred through other symbols depicted in this story. One such symbol is nudity, which can serve as a metaphor for both physical exposure and the presence of illness. When Eve consumed the fruit from the "tree of good and evil" and shared it with her husband, they both became aware of their nakedness (Genesis 3:7 and 8). In this biblical verse, the attainment of awareness equates to a state of healing. Within Hebrew traditions, Adam entreats God to provide him with the curative oil from the "tree of compassion" (Schwartz, 2004:442-443). By juxtaposing these narratives with the preceding accounts of creation, it becomes evident that this parallel is even more pronounced. For instance, in Sumerian creation

mythology, the goddess Nin Horsag plants eight varieties of plants in the "Eridu" (a Sumerian utopia and celestial garden) (Neck Hook, 1399: 34-36). Through their consumption of these plants, Enki gains insight into their properties and acquires the knowledge of their innermost secrets (ibid., 126). The gods, likewise, are restored to health. Enki's adherence to a vegetarian diet can be likened to Adam and Eve partaking of knowledge from the tree and their subsequent descent (Kremer, 1340: 122).

Another significant theme within this narrative is that of sacrifice. The first instance of sacrifice mentioned in the Bible involves "Cain" (a farmer) and "Abel" (a livestock breeder), with Cain offering the first fruits of the earth and Abel offering the firstborn of his flock (Hakes, 1377: 692). Hebrew traditions recount that "angels brought a ram to the Garden of Eden for sacrificial purposes" (Schwartz, 2004: 150). The theme of sacrifice reoccurs in the story of Noah, which serves as a parallel creation myth within the Bible (Nek Hok, 1399: 175-179). Following a period of seven days, Noah disembarks from the ark and presents a sacrifice to God (Genesis 8:1-20). This account closely aligns with the Babylonian flood myth wherein "Otnapishtem" waits for seven days after the deluge before dispatching a dove, which returns without finding a resting place. He subsequently sends forth a sparrow with a similar outcome, ultimately relying on a black crow that discovers nourishment and does not return. Otnapishtem then releases all the inhabitants of the ark and performs a sacrifice, the sweet aroma of which attracts the attention of the gods, who assemble around it like flies (Hook, 2019: 54).

In the early narrations, there is a mention of two types of sacrifices, similar to the narrative of Abel and Cain. In the Sumerian system, a conflict arose between Emesh, a shepherd, and Itenen, a peasant. Both individuals sacrificed themselves for Enlil, and it is noteworthy that Enlil favored the peasant god (Kremer, 1340: 156-159). These two types of sacrifices represent dedications to the two main realms: the abyssal world and the superior world of gods, as observed in the legend of Shamaran. In the Sumerian storm myth, following the conclusion of the flood, Ziusudra, the king, prostrated himself before Oto, the sun god, and offered a cow and a sheep as sacrifices (Crimer, 1340: 180-181). The act of sacrificing played a prominent role in these narratives.

Furthermore, a clear manifestation of this duality can be seen in the Iranian myth's victimization theme. Mashi and Mishianeh roasted a sheep and observed that "the size of three fistfuls of meat was in the fire of heaven and they said this is the fruit of the fire and they threw some of it to the sky and said this is the fruit of the gods" (Dadagi, 2015: 82).

Another recurring theme in these narrations is the number seven, which holds significant importance in the mythology of sacrifice. As evident in the aforementioned texts, the number seven holds a crucial role in the creation mythology. For instance, in the narrative of the Garden of Eden, it is stated that "the heavens and the earth and all of them were completed, and on the seventh day God did what he had completed, but on the seventh day he rested from all that he had done" (Genesis, 2:1-3). This heptad or the group of seven represents the continuation of the heptad tradition in creation mythology. In fact, it is stated that "the tablets of creation (stages of creation) are seven, and man is created on the sixth day of the Babylonian creation" (Hook, 2019: 49-50). According to the Babylonian system of creation, all seven winds were created to tear Tiamat's entrails (Saunders, N.K, 1373: 143). Additionally, in the myth of the flood and human settlement in Dilmun, the flood endures for seven days and seven nights (Hook, 2019: 33).

It is worth noting that in the epic of Gilgamesh, which echoes some of the themes found in the Garden of Eden, Enkidu and the prostitute were together for six nights and seven days (Jastrow, 1899: 201). Thus, the number seven holds significant symbolism and recurring motifs in these narratives of sacrifice and creation.

The theme of house building emerges as another enigmatic facet in the journey of genesis. In the Book of Genesis, subsequent to the creation of man, God situates him within the garden that He has planted (Genesis, 2:10). The establishment of the garden and its cultivation are replete with the notions of settlement and house construction, which stand in contrast to the rearing of cattle and a nomadic lifestyle. In this regard, the garden connotes human habitation. One could argue that the Garden of Eden itself symbolizes the abode of mankind. An association between the Garden of Paradise and architectural endeavors can be observed within certain mythologies, wherein the ancient concept of heaven is akin to the construction of edifices and temples. For instance, the term "paradise" from Iranian parlance, meaning "heaven," originates from "paradid," which signifies "fortress" (gods)" (Gazeshte, 1378: 64). Simultaneously, the act of erecting temples dedicated to the gods is equivalent to the establishment of a dwelling for humanity, as man was created in the image of gods. Remarkably, the earliest temples were essentially considered abodes for divine entities; in Babylon, the towering structure known as the ziggurat of Babylon was referred to as "Etemanaki," meaning "the fundamental house of the earth and sky" (Saunders, 2013: 60). Similarly, in Sumer, the house of God occupied a central position within the ziggurat, with specific emphasis placed initially on the house of God followed by the

mention of the ziggurat itself, while rituals were conducted in connection with the divine dwelling (Jastrrow, 1916: 289).

The significance of honey finds mention in the Bible in relation to the "Promised Land." Within the Promised Land, rivers flowing with milk and honey symbolize abundance and blessings, conceptualizing this land as an earthly rendition of heavenly paradise (cf. Smith, 2008: 4-7). In the Holy Qur'an, which carries forward the traditions of the Holy Bible, rivers of milk and honey are envisioned as rewards reserved for the celestial realm (Muhammad: 15). Before the advent of these sacred texts, honey held a special place within mythology, indicative of the sacred realm. "Gilgamesh constructed a wooden table to commemorate Enkidu, upon which he placed an emerald dish brimming with honey and a lapis lazuli dish filled with butter." These offerings were presented before the sun as a gesture of devotion (Sandars, 1383: 139).

The theme of the snake's symbolic immortality within the myth of the Garden of Eden resonates with the myth of Shamaran. Within the narrative of the Garden of Eden, the serpent, nestled amidst the two trees of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil, entices Eve to partake of the latter, leading to their mortality and serving as an implicit denial of access to the tree of life. This narrative parallels the mythical motif of the serpent purloining the plant of immortality in earlier tales, such as in the Mesopotamian epic of Gilgamesh (Frazer, 1918: 52-24).



Picture of Shamaran



Picture of Shamaran, (Masroor and Rahbar 2019: 85)**Bag of Salt with the picture of Shamaran (Masroor and Rahbar 2019: 89)****Results and Discussion**

The analysis reveals striking parallels between Shamaran's creation myth and the narratives found in Mesopotamian mythology and Hebrew texts. The motif of the Garden of Eden, symbolizing a pristine and paradisiacal realm, is a shared element across these belief systems. Additionally, the concept of divine creation and the emergence of human beings is explored in a comparable manner. However, subtle differences emerge in the details and theological nuances, indicating distinct cultural interpretations and contextual variations. The Shamaran myth presents the tale of a lush, abundant paradise that existed in the Kurdish region, echoing the enchanting qualities associated with the Garden of Eden in Hebrew texts. Both narratives portray idyllic landscapes, abundant resources, and a harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. The creation of the first man and woman is also emphasized in both traditions, albeit with differing names and

contexts. These nuanced distinctions enrich our understanding of the diverse cultural fabric present within the broader region.

Conclusion

The legend of Shamaran embodies a plethora of myths and legends, featuring diverse appellations, elements, and themes scattered within forsaken traditions. Furthermore, the belief system and cultural rituals associated with Shamaran can be meticulously reconstructed to discern its fundamental elements. Conversely, the myth of creation within the Babylonian-Sumerian tradition exists in the form of numerous narratives, epics, and fragmented sources, similar to the multifarious creation themes and narratives found within the Bible. By meticulously examining these variations and modifications, a comparison can be drawn between these two traditions: the Shamaran myth and the creation story. It is important to acknowledge that each of these traditions bears its own set of metaphors and expressions.

Based on our investigation, the analysis of both narrative and structural aspects of the Shamaran myth and creation mythology is mutually complementary. The narrative structure of the Shamaran myth follows a triadic pattern, comprised of a knot, mediating events, and a final victory. This structure essentially conveys the concept of man's creation and the emergence of culture, signifying the transition from a state of nature to one of culture. Notably, this theme is also evinced in various forms of duality present in numerous myths and legends, encompassing elements such as illness-healing, poverty-wealth, and darkness-light. Consequently, the structure of dualities, devoid of the mediating element, characterizes the Shamaran myth. The inclusion of such dualities, rooted in the primary opposition between darkness and light, is a prominent principle found in all creation myths and legends. It is imperative to note that reducing the content of the narrative structure to contrasts does not exclusively arise as a consequence of temporal changes; rather, these contrasts may serve as foundational symbols in the formation of creation myths. Therefore, the approach in scrutinizing the Shamaran legend and creation mythology is closely aligned and identical.

In summary, the analysis of the Shamaran myth and creation mythology, incorporating narrative and structural perspectives, demonstrates their interdependence. Consequently, this examination highlights the underlying concepts of man's creation and the development of culture within the

Shamaran myth, while also emphasizing the prevalence of dualities as a fundamental characteristic within creation myths.

The Shamaran myth encompasses two prominent elements: the woman and the snake. These two entities are locked in a perpetual antagonistic relationship that can be traced back to the ancient Mesopotamian creation myths. The enduring antagonism depicted in this myth holds significant value as an exemplification of the conflicts often found in creation narratives. The snake symbolizes the initial form of life, while the woman represents the final creation, positioned at the pinnacle of the material world. They respectively embody the lower and divine realms. In this regard, the Shamaran myth serves as a symbolic representation of all existence and its evolutionary processes.

By considering the striking similarities between the Shamaran myth and the Sumerian-Babylonian creation myths, which hold important positions within Kurdish culture, one can assert that the Kurdish people are among the ancient inheritors of Mesopotamian heritage. This proposition further solidifies the hypothesis that the Sumerians, to whom Babylonian mythology owes its roots, may indeed be ancestors of the Kurdish populace.

Within the Shamaran myth, the phase following the encounter with the Shamaran (snake) and subsequently overcoming it closely mirrors the characteristics associated with heaven in the myth. This particular aspect assumes great significance as it reveals that, on one hand, heaven symbolizes a phase of human existence characterized by new experiences and possibilities, rather than denoting the inception of life and primary creation. On the other hand, it forms the foundation for a common theme seen in legends and myths, depicting the conflict between mankind and snakes, which represents the attainment of advanced cultural achievements and knowledge (heaven).

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