

# **Mazdak: A Social Reformer or a Satanic Heretic (A Study of Mazdak's Uprise in Sassanid Sources)**

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Based on the political culture of Iran during the Sassanid Period, the existing order in society is an example of heavenly order, and the King and other social classes are responsible for the establishment of order in society. However, the occurrence of Mazdak's social movement in the 5<sup>th</sup> century was a sign of disruption in the social order of the time and demonstrated that the prevalent political and social structures and the laws dominating the society had deviated from their main framework. Egalitarianism and justice-seeking, as the most important goals of Mazdak's uprising, signify the existence of injustice and disorder in society. However, Mazdak and his movement have had an extremely negative and ambiguous reflection in the sources of the Sassanid period (*Khwaday-Namag*, a Middle Persian history text) and post-Sassanid Pahlavi texts. The writers of these texts introduce Mazdak as a satanic force and his movement as the cause of disorder in the Sassanid society. This study, which was conducted following a descriptive-analytic method, examines the relationship between Mazdak and his movement and social order. A careful study of Sassanid and post-Sassanid sources reveals that Mazdak's uprising was the outcome of disorder in society and the poor government of the country in the Sassanid period.

## **Key Terms**

Mazdaki Movement

Sassanid Empire

Islamic history books

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Pahlavi texts

Order in ancient Iran