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Persian Heritage

Vol. 12, No. 48

Winter 2007



Berahna Massoum – p. 57



Who Are Iranians? – p. 28



A Map of the Heart – p. 40



Dr. Jim Bakhtiar – p. 51

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK	10
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	12
NEWS BRIEFS	13
COMMENTARY	
Persian Not Farsi	17
<i>(Shapour Suren-Pahlav)</i>	
First Iranian Reference Library	18
<i>(Manoucher Saadat Noury)</i>	
Two Days in Tehran in 1979	20
<i>(Brian H. Appleton)</i>	
A Lyrical & Passionate Minimalist Writer	21
<i>(Sima Sayyah)</i>	
History of Terrorism — Part XIV-B	22
<i>(David A. Yazdan)</i>	
The Bench Occupier	23
<i>(Firouz Hejazi)</i>	
Pan Arabism's Legacy of Confrontation with Iran	24
<i>(Kaveh Farrokh)</i>	
Response to "Who Are Iranians?"	28
<i>(Imanoel Kohanim)</i>	
Claims & Facts on Azaris & Azarbaijan	32
<i>(Fatema Soudavar Farmanfarmaian)</i>	
THE ARTS & CULTURE	
Book Reviews	35
The New Yorker: Letter from Iran	36
<i>(Joseph Kraft)</i>	
A Map of the Heart in Moulana Poetry	40
<i>(Rasoul Sorkhabi)</i>	
Check Out Being Iranian <i>(M.S. Tajar)</i>	44
Remembering Ostad Shahriar	45
YOUR PERSIAN HERITAGE	
The Last of Hesarol-Saltaneh's Line	48
<i>(Jahangir Hedayat)</i>	
Interview with Dr. Jim Bakhtiar	51
<i>(Shahrokh Ahkami)</i>	
Hafez and Wine	55
<i>(Karimi-Hakak and Wolak)</i>	
Interview with Berahna Massoum	57
<i>(Shahrokh Ahkami)</i>	



FROM THE EDITORIAL'S DESK

It is frightening how quickly the years pass as one gets older. The world is about to celebrate the December holidays. People are rushing about, trying to find the perfect gift for their loved ones. Like them, we are also working hard to continue to bring you a quality magazine, dedicated to protect your culture and heritage.

While many of the world's citizens will be in joyful celebrations, there are people in certain parts of the world with little to celebrate. Their lives, because of natural disasters, have crumbled. One can do little to prevent natural disasters and their consequences. In a natural disaster, those unaffected can do little more than offer a hand in friendship, send money and pray for their recovery. Sometimes, we learn from the disasters and build stronger levies and foundations, hoping that we can prevent future devastation.

Besides natural disasters plaguing the world, there are far more devastating events created by the hands of man, war and intentional destruction through the use of weapons. Like natural disasters their devastation is wide-spread and extreme. While a natural disaster can be excused as an act of God, one that is man-made has no excuse. There is no Godly reason for the destruction they leave behind, a destruction that is the result of greed and control over who will own land, water and oil fields. The world has not learned from these disasters and this is unfortunate. There are no stronger levies or foundations in place to protect the innocent from wars and destruction. The only defense is reasoning, fair negotiation and they simply do not exist.

In war, the death of men, women, children and the destruction of homes, businesses and livelihoods are not measured in humanitarian terms but rather in dollars. People and their personal lives become expendable, all in the name of DEMOCRACY and PROTECTION of our interests and human rights. In reality, the rich are getting richer; the powerful, more powerful; poor, poorer and illegitimate faces are gaining legitimacy. We are expected to accept the explanations of our leaders for this destruction without question.

Technology has linked the world and news travels fast. Inflammatory statements no longer have the luxury of time to calm their intent. They now become an immediate source of fuel to enhance the flame of hatred. You only need to listen to the news to understand what I am saying. One day, while driving I was shocked by what I heard and to date have not been able to wipe it from my mind. A British Parliamentary group was visiting the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. During a discussion with one of Vice President Chaney's assistants, Ms. Debra Cagan, she made the statement that she hated all Iranians. This baseless and hateful statement, coming from a high representative of the White House, shocked the British diplomats and I felt as if an arrow had pierced my heart.

How could someone at her level make such an inflammatory statement? How can one, in a position of leadership, harbor such blatant feelings of hatred against an entire nation of people? A nation, I must add, that has a history of tolerance and peace?

Does she not understand that it is the governments of Iran and the United States that are at odds and not the people? How could she make such a state-



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PUBLISHED BY
PERSIAN HERITAGE, INC.
A corporation organized for cultural and literary purposes

Cover Price: \$6.00
Subscriptions: \$24.00/year (domestic);
\$30.00 & 50.00/year (other countries)

Typesetting & Layout
TALIEH PUBLICATIONS

ment and expect people to believe that the United States is a country founded on the protection of human rights?

It is unfortunate that statements like the one made by Ms. Cagan, are becoming the norm. For example, President Ahmadinejad, without any hesitation continues to deny the Holocaust and the horrible events that were part of the Nazi regime. Both, his statement and the statement of Ms. Cagan, attacked the integrity of its innocent victims.

When will people understand that it is the governments, not the people, who rule countries. Accordingly, it is not the general population that should fall victim to hateful words. Haven't Ms. Cagan, President Ahmadinejad and the likes, learned that they should not put the people of an entire nation on trial because of the actions of a few. When will they realize that they are obliged to their citizens and the world, to work for peace and harmony, not provoke hatred through inappropriate and reprehensible statements. They need to unite, not divide the world and do everything possible to extinguish the flame that leads to war.

The reaction by both President Ahmadinejad and Ms. Cagan are important and can teach us a very valuable lesson. Immediately after his statements regarding the Holocaust, there was a universal front against him. The world's population was sickened by the statement made by President Ahmadinejad. The statement he thought would rally the world to his side, back fired.

Unfortunately, the equally hateful statement of Ms. Cagan did not receive the media attention it deserved. I have to ask why? Was it because Iranians actually saw truth in her words? Do they believe that these statements are meant for the government and not individuals? Do they believe because they have found success in wealth and status, outside of Iran, that such statements will not impact them? Do they believe that if they remain quiet and support political candidates they will be rewarded with future business?

Shame on those who answer 'yes' to any of these questions. Ms. Cagan's words, whether original or planted by her superiors, will have no positive effect for Iranians in Iran, around the world or in this country. Our weak response to her statement confirms our weakness as a group and weakness has no place in the United States or for that matter, the world. Our generation has been unsuccessful in organizing a front to fight hatred against us as an ethnic group. I only hope that future generations will see the light and organize to protect its ethnicity. Be proud to be American, but please for your sake, and the sake of your children, protect your heritage!

I wish you all Happy Holidays and a Healthy, Peaceful and Prosperous New Year

Shahrokh Alavi



*Best Wishes For a
Happy and Healthy
Holiday Season*

from the Persian Heritage Staff

To A Grandson

*Through the drone of the sweeper
the thoughts take shape.*

*I wax poetic in the suds
And wash and fold the little duds.*

*As the long wait dwindles,
and your birth draws near.*

*We await renewal at your coming
And marvel as fresh from the angels you appear.
We are filled with awe at your flawless soul.*

*Will you cherish life or curse its burdens or
Cherish its burdens for the strength they bring?*

*Ancient cultures are in your marrow.
The hope of ages rests in you.*

Sheila A Whitworth

ALWAYS SOMETHING FASCINATING IN YOUR JOURNAL

Many thanks for sending me *Persian Heritage*. As an anthropologist who has been working in Iran and visiting Iran for over forty years, and has spent some 7 years in Iran (before and after the revolution), I always find something fascinating in your journal.

*Erika Loeffler Friedl
Kalamazoo, MI*

WHO AM I?

When I first started reading this article as a parent, born in Iran who has children born and raised in the United States, I wanted to tear the article to pieces. I wanted into insure that my children never saw it. By the end of it, however, I wanted my children to embrace it. You see, while I am proud of my heritage and sometimes miss the simpler side of life in

Iran, I love America. It is not my birthplace, but I and my children are its citizens. Under no circumstance do I want to influence them in another direction or deprive them of independent thought.

Yes, my household practices our cultural traditions but we also incorporate the customs and traditions that now are our daily life.

If America is to remain, as so beautifully described in this article, a place where freedoms live, we newcomers who reap its benefits must nurture our children's American roots. WHO AM I? a displaced Iranian, WHO ARE MY CHILDREN? Beautiful new Americans who have a beautiful heritage.

A. S., California

REMEMBERING THE FORGOTTEN

Recently a friend of mine showed me a copy of your

publication: *Persian Heritage*. I was delighted to see it.

Keep up the good work,
M. Reza Vaghefi, Ph.D.

LEARNING

Your editorials constantly strike out at our hearts. They cause us, for a short time, to reach inside and acknowledge our flaws. Hopefully we will use this to change things. Unfortunately what we are taught is quickly forgotten and we all too often revert back to our selfish selves.

In your fall editorial you discussed a situation, a public execution. Despite your protest to what they did, in a way you seemed to be asking for our sympathy for them. These were individuals who right or wrong, took a life. As you so correctly stated the world cannot exist with vigilantly justice. You condemned the government as being unjust and suppressive. I take the position

that only those living under Iran's present rule has the right to describe the government. I further opine that any change that is desired should be left to those living it daily, perhaps with some assistance.

For example look at the American Revolution. While I hope that Iran will turn back into a more democratic state I also believe that in order to succeed it must be accomplished from within, if it is to truly succeed. If it comes from the outside, then any leader that will follow is certain to continue to be the puppet of their "so called" supporters.

Those of us who still hold Iran close to our hearts and consider it home, must understand that change for the better will be and should be for the people who remain on its soil living the reality and not for those who dream to regain the past.

B. G., Gorgia

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IRAN FIRST

“I may not like or agree with the way my government operates, but on the bottom line and in the face of international intrigue and instigations, my first loyalty is to my country and my people.” It amazes me how this people who call themselves patriotic Iranians! cannot hide their enthusiasm for United States and/or Britain and Israel to attack Iran!

Is this what you want?

- Do you want a repeat performance of Iraq in the past 4 years in Iran?
- Do you want your family and friends killed everyday?
- Do you want your country divided between the Baluch, Kurds, Turks and Arabs?
- Do you want innocent Iranians killed and maimed by daily explosions?
- Do you want Iran’s infrastructure destroyed?
- Do you want Iranian schools closed indefinitely?
- Do you want Iranian businesses go bankrupt?
- Do you want innocent people die for the lack of food and medicine everyday?
- Do you want to expand and expedite the Iranian brain drain?
- Do you want Iranian refugees to beg for a handout around the world?
- Do you want Iranians to be humiliated and kicked around by a bunch of foreign mercenaries who have no business being there?
- Do you want a government like Afghanistan and Iraq where its fate is decided by a people half way around the world who have no sympathy and appreciation for, or knowledge of Iran’s culture? If this is what you want, then you are on the right track. Continue your screams of “لنگش کن” from afar and destroy what is left of our once proud nation.



But if you are like us, who want greatness for our country and pride for our people, then you must return home and work from within to change the government of Iran and it’s antiquated rules and regulations, no matter what the cost to us personally while at the same time defending our sacred borders against foreign invaders. Only then can we be proud of ourselves that we Iranians saved our nation from certain death, whether at the hands of Iranian Mullahs or the colonizing mercenaries of a foreign nation.

Where have our legendary pride, bravery and self-reliance – that we have read in history books and in Shahnameh – has gone? When did we turn into mice? Worse, when did we turn into parrots, puppets and advocates of foreign powers against our own homeland and people?

It is alright, rather necessary, to criticize Iran’s government constructively and intelligently, to demonstrate peacefully against its excesses, to ask, rather demand for God given individual freedoms of thought, speech and spirituality, to demand justice and equality.

But it is not all right to advocate and rain misfortune on our nation by creating killing fields for our people, destruction of the infrastructure and what little peace and comfort our people have.

If we can’t rid ourselves of the evil that lurks in Iran today by ourselves, then perhaps we don’t deserve to have the great nation we aspire to have and profess that we want. By asking a foreign nation to attack and invade our nation, to kill our innocent people even under the guise of “helping us,” we prove that we rather have someone else run our affairs so long as they throw us a bone, as they do so with dogs, to sit in a corner and munch on while they rob the house.

This is not the way of The Persians of the Old. True Iranians standup on their own two feet, give of themselves, flesh and blood freely, to have a free and proud nation we call our own, created by ourselves and run by ourselves – as did our ancestors.

Nothing less can define Iran and Iranians.

Fereidoon Eimen
2 Shahrivar 2566 (Iranian) / August 24, 2007

MAHMUD HESABI: WORLD’S MAN OF SCIENCE



Mahmud Hesabi (February 23, 1903-September 3, 1992) was a prominent Iranian scientist, researcher and distinguished professor of the University of Tehran. Hesabi was born in Tehran; at the age of seven, he moved to Beirut where he began attending school. At this age, he also memorized the Holy Quran by heart and later he started to read the masterpieces of Persian literature.

At the early age of seventeen, he obtained his Bachelor’s in Arts and Sciences from the American University of Beirut. Later he obtained his B.A. in civil engineering while working as a drafter. After a short period, he obtained a B.A. in mathematics and astronomy. He continued his studies and as a graduate of the Engineering School of Beirut was admitted to the *Ecole Supérieure d’Electricité* and in 1925, graduated from this school at the same time he was hired by the French Electric Railway Co.

He had a scientific mind, continued his research in physics at the Sorbonne University, and obtained his Ph.D. in physics from that university at the age of twenty-five. In 1947, he published his classic papers on “Continuous Particles.” Then he proposed his model of “Infinitely Extended Particles” in 1957. The medal of the “*Commandeur de la Légion d’Honneur*,” France’s greatest scientific medal, was awarded to him for his achievements. Mahmud Hesabi was the only Iranian student of Albert Einstein.

Payvand News, 9/5/07

RAFSANJANI CALLS FOR UNITY PROTECTION

According to the Chairman of the Experts Assembly, Ayatollah Akbar Hasemi Rafsanjani believes that safe guarding national unity is of utmost importance, especially in light of the present circumstances. He feels unity is the main element for solving problems, and is urging various political currents to refrain from any kind of differences and disputes which he believes is the demand of the enemies.

INTEREST FREE BANK

November 22, 2007 marked opening day of the first interest free bank. It was approved by the Money and Credit Council in the last days of former Central Bank of Iran (CBI) governor's tenure, David Danesh-Ja'fari. According to him the banks will have the right to start work after receiving the permit.

SOUTH AMERICA – IRAN DEAL

Iran and Venezuela have made a deal in trade contracts that are worth over 20 billion dollars. Some of the areas included will be in the building of factories and the production of cars.

INFLATION RISES

November marked the highest inflation rate for Iran this year, 16%!

SUFI FIGHTING

Fighting broke out in November between the para military officers and police with representatives of the Sufi branch of Islam. The incident was sparked by a difference in religious beliefs with the Shiite Muslims of southwest Iran. The Sufi order of Islam places emphasis on the mystical experience rather than the traditional practice of Islam.

EXQUISITE BEAUTY



The color, leaf, *Kavir: Environmental Art Festival* of Kerman was planned for the first to fourth of Aban.

It lasted a few days during which the participants, 130, discussed their artistic concepts and installed their compositions in the Kerman mountainsides.

They were then displayed for the public in *Shahdard Kavir* which is considered one of the most attractive areas in *Kavir*, and were then displayed for the public.

INTERNET TRAFFIC SLOWING

The BBC stated that it does know the reason for the slow down in their programing but will contact the Iranian government to assure opening access to the site.

The BBC Persian site is the most successful of the BBC language sites with 30 million page impressions per month, coming from Iran.

CGIE TO REPUBLISH MAP

The Center for the Great Islamic Encyclopedia (CGIE) will republish an ancient map of the Persian Gulf designed by a French cartographer in 1724. Copies are to be donated to universities, libraries and science centers throughout the world.

THE NEW TURQUOISE LOUNGE

Do you remember back in August of 2006 the story of the 100 Iranian scholars who ventured to America for the reunion of Sharif University of Technology? While they all had valid travel documents, once they arrived in the US they were told that their documents were being revoked. Consequently they were denied access into the states.

About thirty of them were deported back to their country the same day, while the remaining were deported the next day, only after they were fingerprinted, separated from their families, handcuffed and some incarcerated. None were ever charged with any crime.

Each year five hundred plus people travel to the United States and meet this same problem. Though they have no criminal records they have been treated as criminals.

The San Francisco Human Rights Commission received a number of complaints from the Sharif group and began to investigate the situation and seek out ways to prevent harassment of the innocent individuals. The US State Border Control and Boarder Protection and the Airport Commission responded to the Human Rights Commission and designated an area at the airport as a holding facility for those visitors whose visas have been revoked or cancelled. It is called the *Turquoise Lounge* and that is in honor of the Sharif group. The lounge includes a number of amenities and comfort while the individuals are waiting for return flights.

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NOT JUST A CARTOON, AGAIN!

It doesn't matter how journalists in other countries act, what matters and what is constantly under public scrutiny is what America does and how they act! America is supposed to lead by example and lately it seems that we, as a nation, have allowed our integrity to decline. An example of this is a cartoon that was recently published, September 4, 2007, in the Ohio Daily Columbus Dispatch.

The cartoon depicts Iran as a giant sewer and Iranians as cock roaches. This I find, coming from this nation, unacceptable and embracing, if not frightening.

To dehumanize an entire nation in this way is completely prejudicial and will do nothing more than fuel the fire of hate.

Doesn't anyone remember when the Jews were depicted as rats, in the German papers? We all know what happened to them!

Meshkati came to the United States in 1970 to pursue a higher education. He intended, like so many other exchange students, to return to Iran.

With the onset of the revolution in 1979 his plans were forced to change. Since 1970 he has returned to Iran only as a visitor.

His position is a difficult one, loving two countries that allegedly hate one another. And, he is saddened that the human element in the conflict may encourage rather than discourage the escalation of animosity.

THE ATLAS OF HEAD COVERING

An Atlas featuring the head coverings of Iran will be released shortly. It is part of a project that encompasses the costumes of Iranian people in 25 provinces, 564 urban, rural and nomadic regions and studies the dress of men and women from these regions. The Atlas is the product of a research project that began in 1999 by the Anthropology Research Center of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization.

According to Minu Karimnia, supervisor of the project, The complete atlas of costumes will be in three volumes – head coverings, clothing and footwear – the first part of which is now complete. The series reviews expressions and words related to costumes and locations where specific clothing was found.



A TALE OF TWO WORLDS



LMAKprojects, located in Brooklyn, New York held a two person exhibition featuring the works of Nava Lubelski, under the title of *Imperfectionism* and Negar Ahkami under the title of *Birth of Pattern*.

This is Ms. Ahkami's third successful exhibit this year and she has ended it on yet another high note. The unique talents of both women are clear in their displays.

The exhibit opened on November 9 to a full house. Included in Ms. Ahkami's exhibit was a piece of her new designed furniture, a sectional sofa, painted in a paisley pattern. Lounging on the sofa were live models, dressed in chadors. This added to the authenticity of her work. She continues to show her command of color, movement and her intense emotion for her Iranian and American heritage. Her paintings are her way of showing the public that the alleged differences between the cultures is not as distinct as imagined and are on a journey to become a beautiful mix.

DEAD DOLPHINS ON PERSIAN BEACHES

To date there remains no diagnosis on what caused the death of 73 dolphins found dead on the Jask beaches on the Persian Gulf. A system put together by the Environment Program of the Persian Gulf and Oman Sea and Iran's Department of Environment monitors fish activity in the area. The number of deaths is concerning and autopsies were ordered. According to sources it is imperative to find a diagnose to determine diagnose if toxins were involved.



SAY WHAT YOU MEAN OR DON'T SAY IT

Official leaders have no room to make a statement that will be later described as rhetorical. When this is done the statement and its author lose credibility.

President Bush recently made the following statement at a press conference in October, "I've told people that if you are interested in avoiding World War III, it seems like you ought to be interested in preventing them (Iran) from having knowledge necessary to make a nuclear weapon."

Is there anything rhetorical about this statement? The answer is doubtful considering President Bush's position on Iran and his constant threat to strike the country. After all what does he have to lose should he take that direction, his legacy is already considered to be at a historical low. However, a good press secretary will do what they can to prevent damage control and that is exactly what Dana Perino tried to do, "The president was not making any war plans and he wasn't making any declarations. He was making a point, and that point is that we do not believe-and neither does the international community believe-that Iran should be allowed to pursue nuclear weapons." Who is that international community she refers to?

Iran took the statement for face value as indicated by Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Mohammad Ali Hosseini, "This sort of policy will jeopardize peace and security at the international level, and is a barrier for peace."

ANOTHER GREAT WALL

Another great wall, measuring 200 kilometers in length, has discovered by archeologists in Asia, specifically Iran. It is known as the Gorgan Great Wall located in the Gloestan province. The age of the wall is similar to that of The Great Wall in China and used for defense.

HELPING THE WAR DISABLED

Tehran was the setting and the hands of Dr. Mohammad Nabi Nemati did the surgery. The surgery performed was urogenitaly system operations on a patient who suffered from a spinal cord injury. The procedure is likely to help him and others in the same condition with urination, defecation and sexual activities.

PERSIAN HERITAGE EDITOR COMPLETES 31ST MARATHON



Shahrokh Ahkami was one of the 38,000 runners who made their way across the Verrazano Bridge for a 26.2 mile run to the finish line in Central Park to complete the famous New York City Marathon, on November 4, 2007.

He missed only 2005, when his grandson was born in San Diego on marathon Sunday, "That was more important." He loves what the marathon brings, a showing of respect and care among the runners and the crowd on race day, a feeling he wishes would carry through the year. "It's a proud day for New Yorkers and for every American, by the encouragement they show." He once completed the race in 3.36 but his goal in this one was to simply finish and he did in 6.19. "I've run in Boston but there's nothing like New York. It's the people, the people in New York are very special. Every inch of the streets are covered with people cheering and encouraging you."

NEW DEAN OF ARCHETECTURE AT HARVARD

Mohsen Mostafavi has been name the new dean of the Faculty of Design at Harvard. His term will commence in January 2008. Currently he is the dean at Cornell's College of Architecture, Art and Planning. His past achievements include acting as chairman of the Architectural Association School of Architecture in London.

CHINES AWARD

During China's National Week, an Iranian neurosurgeon, Majid Samii, was honored with a distinguished medal, for his medical services in China. He was one of seventy candidates in contention for this prestigious award.

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The term Persian has been used in the English language for over five hundred years: to describe both a nation with 7000 years of archaeological history, and also the language that the nation has used since the rise of the first Persian Empire, the Achaemenids.

Unfortunately, however, the word ‘Farsi’ is increasingly and incorrectly being used to describe the Persian language. This paper outlines the linguistic and cultural context of ‘Persian’, as well as exploring the potential motivations of those promoting the incorrect usage of the word ‘Farsi’.

It explains clearly how the use of the word ‘Farsi’ instead of Persian voids important historical and cultural associations for the Iranian nation, with its long history of civilization, and how it can therefore be seen as an insult to the heritage of Iran.

LINGUISTICS

New Persian or Persian for short is described linguistically as an Indo-European language. It is categorized as one of the Modern Iranian languages, along with Kurdish, Baluchi, Pashto, Ossetic and number of other languages. It is a member of the Western Iranian branch of the Iranian languages, which are themselves a subgroup of the Indo-Iranian (or Indo-Aryan) family of languages. As such, Persian is distantly related to the vast majority of European languages, including English.

Over the past three millennia, Persian has developed through three distinct stages of Old, Middle and New. New Persian is a successor to, and derived directly from, Middle Persian and can be considered as having two phases: classical and modern – although both variants are mutually intelligible.

The period after the Islamic conquest is described by Iranian scholars as the ‘Two Centuries of Silence’. There is no inscriptional or textual evidence for New Persian and only very scanty indications for the continuing use of Middle Persian. However, scholars consider it unlikely that Iranians deserted their mother tongue and only cultivated Arabic. The lack of any literary evidence from this period will certainly have been compounded by the destruction of Iranian libraries by the Mongols under Genghis Khan and his successors – and there may also be other reasons unknown to us.

The subsequent ‘Persian renaissance’ was marked by the advent of Classical Persian. This emerged in Khorasan in eastern Iran and so was strongly influenced by Eastern-Iranian linguistic elements. Arabic also had a

major impact: with large numbers of loanwords, increasing palatalization and the inclusion of some grammatical elements. A modified version of Arabic script was adopted and some letter changes were made. For the purposes of this paper, the most important of these was the use of /F/ for /P/. As Arabic has no /p/ phoneme, the area of Pārs, the Iranian people who originated there and their language came to be described by natives as ‘Fārs’ and ‘Fārsi’.

After these linguistic changes, Persian then remained essentially unchanged until the nineteenth century. At that time, what is now called Modern or Standard Persian developed from the Tehrani vernacular – following the adoption of Tehran as the capital city of Iran by the Qajars in 1787.

NOMENCLATURE

The name Persian derives from the province of Pārs (modern Fārs) in southwestern Iran. This was itself named after the Persian tribes of Indo-European nomads who migrated, along with some other Iranian peoples, from territories east of the Caspian Sea onto the Iranian plateau in the middle or later part of the second millennium BCE.

The Persians settled in the mountain country rising over the northeast side of the Persian Gulf and enclosing the high basin in the west in which Persepolis and Shiraz are situated, sometime between the seventh and ninth centuries BCE. The name sur-

vived as Fārs. This region then became the birthplace of two Persian dynastic empires – the Achaemenids (550-530 BCE) and the Sasanids (224-651 CE) – as well as the cradle of the Persian language.

Achaemenid Persians called their language (Old Persian) *Pārsa* and the Greeks followed this in naming it *Persis*. From then on, other nations have predominantly named Persia and Persian using words based on the root *Pārs*.

For example, the English use of the word ‘Persian’ has a five hundred year history and is derived from the Latin *Persianus*, itself drawing on the Greek *Persis*. Similarly, the French word is *Persane*, the Germans use *Persisch*, the Italians *Persiano* and the Russians *Persiska*.

As outlined above, Persian only came to be described as ‘Fārsi’ by natives of Iran following the P/F letter substitution associated with the Arab conquests.

PERSIAN NOT FARSI

IRANIAN IDENTITY UNDER FIRE: An Argument against the Use of the Word ‘Farsi’ for the Persian Language

BY SHAPOUR SUREN-PAHLAV

Abridged version: 06 July 2007

Source: http://www.cais-soas.com/CAIS/Languages/persian_not_farsi.htm

FIRST IRANIAN REFERENCE LIBRARIES

By Manoucher Saadat Noury, PhD

INTRODUCTION

Libraries have been always regarded as one of the institutions that play a very significant role in advancing literacy and education in every society. Literary, a library has been defined as a building, room or organization, which has a collection, especially of books, for people to read or borrow usually without payment. In his well-written essay of Education for Special Groups (1994), Professor Akinpelu referred to books as “The shrines where the saint is believed to be, and having built an ark to save learning from the deluge.” British poet and essayist Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) believed that, “No place affords a more striking conviction of the vanity of Human Hopes than a public library”.

In ancient Iran, many libraries were established by the Zoroastrian elites and the Persian Kings. They were possibly one of the first Bibliophilists (more informally Bookworms) of the world. According to reliable documents, the oldest library of Iran was possibly the Royal Library of Kohan Dej or Jay in Isfahan, which was founded during Achaemenids (550 BC-330 BC). In northeastern Iran, there was a Royal Library in Nisa, one of the capital cities of Persian Empire during the Parthian

Dynasty (248 BC-224 AD). Nisa is now one of the historical places in present day Republic of Turkmenistan. In the south-western Iran, the most important medical library was the Library of Jundishapur (aka Gundishapur), which was established during Sassanid Era (224 AD-651 AD). All those Royal Libraries were in fact some sorts of the present-day Reference Libraries. A reference library refers to a place for looking at a collection of books that must be read only where they are kept and not taken away. In this article, the most important aspects of the First Iranian Reference Libraries established during Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sassanid Dynasties are studied and discussed.

ACHAEMENID ERA (550 BC-330 BC)

Achaemenids supported and encouraged broadly the development of culture and science in ancient Iran and other parts of the world. The Book of Arda Viraf (a Zoroastrian religious text composed in the 3rd or 4th century BC describing the dream-journey of a devout Zoroastrian through the next world.), suggests that the Gathas (17 hymns believed to have been composed by Zoroaster) and some other texts that were

incorporated into the Avesta (the primary collection of sacred texts of Zoroastrianism) had previously existed in the palace library of the Achaemenid kings.

Achaemenids made Babylon one of their major capitals and extensively used the texts at the temple libraries. The library and museum at the Persepolis were built to rival the Babylonian archives famous in the ancient world. It is reported by scholars Homayoonfarrokh and Price that Darius the Great (521 BC-486 BC) in one occasion ordered his representative to return to Egypt in order to restore a department dealing with medicine. (Homayoonfarrokh and Price refer to this representative as Ozaharrisniti and Udjahorresne respectively). “At the time his majesty was in Elam, he ordered me (the representative) to return to Egypt. I gave them every useful thing and all their instruments indicated by the writings, as they had been before. His majesty did this because he knew the virtue of this art to make every sick man recover,” quoted the representative.

Achaemenids also established large-scale libraries in various cities in ancient Iran. The libraries founded in Susa, Persepolis, Pasargadae, Ecbatana (modern Hamadan), and Isfahan are only a few examples of those establishments that have been all regrettably destroyed by Greek Alexander and Arab invaders later on.

Royal Library of Kohan Dej or Jay in Isfahan (in Persian: Ketabkaneh-e-Jaye Isfahan), aka Sarouyeh, was one of the famous large libraries in ancient Iran. The



library was located near where the city of Isfahan is today. It has been documented by some researchers that the Library of Kohan Dej was firstly founded by Tahmurasp who was the third legendary King of World after Kayumars and Hushang, and before Jamshid. The reference book of the History of Isfahan and Ray (in Persian: *Taarih-e-Isfahan va Ray*) edited by Hassan Jaber Ansari and printed by Abbas Eghbal Ashtiani, gives details of that historical library of Isfahan and the list of books and documents it contained. Abbas Milani referred to the fortified collection of writings and documents kept in the historical library of Isfahan and wrote, "Though only a few pages of its vast holdings have survived, we know of its grandeur through the testimony of its contemporaries, who compared it, in terms of the awe it inspired, to the Egyptian pyramids".

PARTHIAN ERA (248 BC-224 AD)

The Parthian Empire is a fascinating period of Persian history closely connected to Greece and Rome. Ruling from 248 BC to 224 AD in ancient Iran, the Parthians defeated Alexander's successors, the Seleucids, conquered most of the Middle East and southwest Asia, controlled the Silk Road and built Parthia into an Eastern superpower. The Parthian Empire revived the greatness of the Achaemenids and counterbalanced Rome's hegemony in the West. Parthian Kingdom established one of its capital in Nisa, now in the suburbs of Esfgh Abaad (aka Ashgabad), the capital of Republic of Turkmenistan.

The Chinese explorer Zhang Qian, who visited Nisa in 126 BC, made the first known Chinese report on Parthian Kingdom. According to the book of Records of the Grand Historian, Zhang Qian clearly identified Parthia as an advanced urban civilization and wrote that, "The people are settled on the land, cultivating the fields and growing rice and wheat. The coins of the country are made of silver and bear the face of the king. The people keep records by writing on horizontal strips of leather." Homayonfarokh wrote that, "In Parthia, people kept records of political and economic events in the books written on the rawhide, the skin of cattle."

According to the Denkard, a semi-religious work written in the 9th century, the Parthian king Volgaash, aka Vologases IV (147 BC-191 BC), collected the sacred texts of Avesta and kept the texts in his palace library.

SASSANID ERA (224 AD-651 AD)

The Library of Jundishapur was one of the most important parts of the Jundishapur University. The exact date of the establishment of Jundishapur University is unknown. Some evidences indicate that the University was founded in 566 AD during Sassanids and it was under the rule of Khosrow Anushiravan (531-579) when the institution reached its peak. It is documented that Khusrow Anushiravan was remarkably eager for the science and medicine and he therefore invited a very large group of scholars and physicians to his capital. It was by his decree that the Borzouyeh, possibly the first famous Iranian physician, was given a mission to go to India to gather the best minds and sources of knowledge of the day. (Borzouyeh is also famous for having translated the ancient text of Panchatantra from Sanskrit into Persian, naming it *Kelileh-o-Demneh*). Upon these efforts, Jundishapur University and its Library became an important center of medicine, science and philosophy of the ancient world. According to the book of *History of Knowledge and Wisdom* (in Persian: *Tarikh-e-Daanesh va Hekamat*), it was in Jundishapur where every known book on medicine was gathered, translated, and compiled, making Jundishapur a key center of transmission of ancient medical knowledge to the new world.

Khosrow Anushirvan is mentioned by many historians and biographers to have been a major promoter of science, philosophy, and medicine. In the Book of the Deeds of Ardashir son of Babag (in Persian: *Karnamag-e Ardashir-e Papagan*), Khosrow Anushiravan has been quoted as, "We have made inquiries about the rules of the inhabitants of the Roman Empire and the Indian states. We have never rejected anybody because of their different religion or origin. We have not jealously kept away from them what we affirm. And at the same time we have not disdained to learn what they stand for. We should not forget the fact that to acquire knowledge of the truth and sciences are the most important aspects of life by which a king can adorn himself. And the most disgraceful thing for kings is to disdain learning and be ashamed of exploring the sciences. He who does not learn is not wise". Khosrow Anushirvan also established a Royal Library, aka Imperial Library, in his palace. The later Muslim historians refer to the Sassanian Imperial library as the House of Knowledge (in Persian: *Daaneshgah*, in Arabic:

Bayt-al-Hekmat). According to Price, the library functioned as a site where accounts of Iranian history and literature were transcribed and preserved. At the same time it was a place where qualified hired translators, bookbinders and others worked to preserve, purchase, copy, illustrate, write and translate books.

EPILOG

According to trustworthy documents, in 651 AD when the Arab commander, Saad Abi Vaghas, faced the huge Imperial Library of Ctesiphon, he wrote to Caliph Omar and asked what should be done about the books? Omar wrote back, "If the books contradict the Koran, they are blasphemous and on the other hand if they are in agreement with the text of Koran, then they are not needed, as for us only Koran is sufficient". Thus, the huge library of Ctesiphon was destroyed. Other libraries in Ray, Isfahan, Ecbatana, Pasargadae, Persepolis, Jundishapur, Nisa, and Khorassan received the same treatment and thousands of valuable books and documents which were the product of the generations of Iranian scientists and scholars were sadly lost in fire or thrown into the Euphrates River!

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(taken from the *Persian Journal*, July 27, 2007)



Two Days in Tehran in 1979

BY BRIAN H. APPLETON

DAY ONE

As I recall in mid morning on January 16th, 1979, my new driver Hussein, who the company had hired for me, with his orange taxi, with a fringe of dingo balls around the tops of the windows and a clear blue acrylic sun visor on top of the windshield, and I were trying to get across town. The crowd in the streets was all around us like we had been engulfed by a vast herd of sheep reminiscent of when I was a boy with my family driving back roads in Greece. I had never seen so many people out, dancing in the street, in my life and it went on all day. I found myself waving and smiling at the crowd and making the peace sign with both my hands. Drivers had tied white ribbons on their windshield wipers and had clicked them forward so that the wipers did not touch the glass when they swept from left to right waving the white ribbons like cheering flags. I had never seen so many laughing, happy, jubilant, dancing people anywhere before in my life.

It was the culmination of months of fighting, months of shouting “*Marg Bar Shah*”, Death to the King, from the rooftops after curfew, from the voices of many millions of souls. How must that man have been feeling at that moment looking from his airplane at Mount Damavand sticking through the cloud cover for the last time? How had he managed to lose the popular support which was the only support he had ever really had from the time he handed the former serfs land grants? The old aristocracy had never liked him.

Where had he gone wrong? He had stopped appearing in public and had started sending a life size photo of himself in his limo instead on the day of the

annual parade celebrating the put down of the revolt in Azerbaijan in 1947. He had become inaccessible to the people and in desperation he had appointed Shahrpour Bakhtiar as Prime Minister, a man who had opposed him his entire career. It was Bakhtiar who asked him to leave; it was Bakhtiar who forbade the troops from firing on public assemblies. I often wonder if the Shah had not ordered his troops to fire on the people if things might have gone differently. Certainly rubber bullets, tear gas and even salt would not have created martyrs. But then what poison had the Shah sewn within his subjects with his SAVAK and their tortures, rapes and executions. They say that SAVAK raped Ayatollah Taleghani’s daughter and forced him to watch. “As you sew so shall you reap...” He had allowed no loyal opposition. And the ways of dictatorship and tyranny and revenge his subjects had learned well.

Poor Bakhtiar, a well-educated man who could have led a secular Iran into a great era of democracy, basically signed his own death sentence by accepting the position. Did he do it because he thought

it was his patriotic duty?

DAY TWO ENTER THE DRAGON

February 1, 1979. When I got up and went outside, Tehran was a ghost town. Not a creature was stirring—in fact there was no movement, no sound. I remember the only motion which caught my eye was a dead leaf twirling around in a little dust devil from a breeze in the middle of the street. It was as if the city of millions had become a ghost town or perhaps all humanity had been wiped out by radiation. It could have been a warning of the endless rounds of death, torture and execution, which were to come.

It was ironic that on the day the Shah left, everyone was dancing in the street, which it seems that they should have been doing on this day if this new leader had come with love in his heart, forgiveness and peace but instead Tehran was like a cemetery that day, empty of human life. I didn’t even see cats or dogs. The reason the city was deserted of course was because the masses had gone out to the airport to witness his arrival.

I never saw Khomeini smile. His dark angry eyebrows were like thunder clouds, sinister and frightening to me in all the posters and photos of him, which had been plastered all about even in Bank Windows in hopes of not being broken by bricks. If he represented God at all, it was only His wrath. What if, like Nelson Mandela after 30 years in prison ushering in the end of Apartheid in South Africa by calling for a general amnesty, what if Khomeini had done that? What if the new leader of Iran had won a Nobel Peace prize?

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SOFIA MAHMOUDI

A Lyrical and Passionate Minimalist Writer

By Syma Sayyah, Tehran



Sofia Mahmoudi is a lady who writes for fun, yet her writing is anything but fun. Her short stories definitely have a very strong feminine sense and speak of women's suffering and pain; this specially comes across in her very short story titled Dinner (*shaam*) where in my opinion she surpasses herself and with a deep black humor she describes the food that is being prepared and how she feels and sees the meat in the *abgousht* (meat stew) as if it was her own flesh that is being boiled.

I do not have much time to read these days and since my Persian literature teacher at school was such a bad one, I seldom read in Persian, to my own great loss. It was strange recently when a friend gave me one of Sofia Mahmoudi's books *The Woman and her Child with a Sparrow and a Song*, which to be honest I thought

was a rather silly title. However, not only did I manage to find time to read it but I also found it most interesting and very good. I loved her use of unusual metaphors, and the fact that she did not have to write page after page repeating herself – she gets down to the point and she does it so well! To me she is a first class minimalist writer of great passion, flair and gift.

It is my habit to buy many copies of the books that I like or think are important and give them away to my friends and family. This is to support what I find good and interesting and also encourage people to read more. I went to a few bookshops to get copies of this book but in vain. So I called the publisher, which is supposed to be a small, but supporter of

women writers and issues about women. Despite the fact that I left several messages, sadly I did not hear anything from them at all. So I tried other means and found Ms Mahmoudi herself and went to see her.

Before I met her a friend gave me another one of her books. This one was called *Jumbled Words Puzzle*



(*Jadval-e Kalamat beham Rikhteh*). This book is the result of two years that she worked with runaway girls at *Tehran's Kanoone Eslah va Tarbiyat* (Center for Reform and Education for Girls). Many of the girls she met there were very young, desperate and pained to the bone, and the book is a narration of some of their stories. This book was also very moving; fortunately this book had a different publisher, *Nashre Ghatreh*, and it is available in the bookshops.

When I met her at her house, I found a modern and sophisticated lady. Sofia told me she had started as a translator and children's writer. She brought me some *Khakesheer*, a refreshing

drink for hot summer days. We talked about many things, women issues, life, writing and others.

I like her stories very much but I had one complaint about them, and that was that most of the characters in her *The Woman and her Child with a Sparrow and a Song* were so passive. They seem to accept what was happening to them. She told me that this is what real life is like.

She spent a few years in the USA when she first got married and when she returned to Iran did not continue her Sociology studies and switched to Russian and many of the books she has translated, mainly short stories, are from Russia. She lives with her husband and her daughter who is studying music and who is considered to be one of Iran's future hopes in this field. Her other family are not here to support her but she enjoys the company of many good friends. Her house was simple yet comfortable, and it seems that the sense of minimalism is large in her life too.

I can only hope that she writes more and I assure you that I shall be getting her next book and reading it even if it is in Persian! I am sure when you get a chance to read any of her books, you will agree with me. Maybe one of you would be inclined to translate some of them for others to enjoy.

Payvand News, June 11, 2007



HISTORY OF TERRORISM

PART XIV-B

David A. Yazdan

A HISTORY OF ENGAGEMENT

In 1985, in a secretive measure, the United States sent National Security advisor Robert McFarlane and White House national security staffer Colonel Oliver North, along with a Bible, a cake, a Colt revolver, and some 2,000 TWO antitank missiles, on a mission that came to be known as the Iran Contra affair, a major fiasco and political embarrassment that tarnished the Reagan presidency. The belief was that if the United States could strengthen the hand of moderate elements within the Iranian regime, the hostages would be released and eventually the behavior of the mullahs in Tehran would change. The chief moderate whom the United States intended to empower was Iranian parliament speaker Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. Ironically, Rafsanjani was the Iranian official who, in a humiliating speech at a Friday prayer service, revealed the details of the American overture and its secret trip to Tehran. In 1988, the Iranian regime accepted United Nations Resolution 598, which called for a cease-fire between Iran and Iraq, ending their bloody eight-year conflict weeks later, high-level European delegations went to Tehran in an effort to participate in the postwar reconstruction of the country and repair the relationship between Iran and the West. Soon after taking office in 1989, President George H. W. Bush sent a signal to Tehran that was intended to settle the hostage crisis in Lebanon, where a handful of American hostages remained in the hands of Tehran's proxy groups. In his inaugural speech, he said, "goodwill begets goodwill."

In June 1989, Khomeini died, and Ali Khamenei assumed power as the new supreme leader. Soon afterward, Rafsanjani assumed the presidency. What had seemed wishful thinking in the West became a reality in the summer of 1988, many analysts and Iran observers had defined three events as a turning point toward moderation that would bring Iran back to the community of nations; the end of the Iran-Iraq war, the death of Khomeini, and the election of the "moderate" and "pragmatist" Rafsanjani. In less than a year, all three desired events had actually taken place. Iran was expected to be in a rush toward moderation that nothing could stop. Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 and the United States' attack to push the Iraqis out of Kuwait created yet another opportunity for the Iranian regime, because the United States was preparing to focus on Iran's archenemy, Iraq, and to provide concessions to Iran. None of those events later proved to be a catalyst toward change in Iran.

When President Clinton took office in January 1993, a new round of rapprochement was initiated by his State Department. American officials used every opportunity to call for dialogue with Iran. In his famous "dual containment speech," the National Security Council's senior director for the Near East and South Asia, Martin Indyk, emphasized that it was not the policy of the United States to change the regime in Iran; at the same time, he painted Iraq under Saddam Hussein as an irredeemable regime that should be changed. The new strategy was essentially a one-

size-fits all, linked policy approach to both Iraq and Iran. U.S. exports to Iran increased dramatically, and by 1995, in a sharp surge, American oil companies became Iran's biggest customers, purchasing about \$4 billion of oil every year. The companies included Exxon, Bay Oil, Coastal, Texaco, Mobil, and Caltex. Other companies obtained lucrative contracts to sell Apple Computer, Motorola, and AT&T Global Information. Rockwell International sold helicopter gear and electronics, Bell Helicopter sold helicopters, Hewlett Packard sold advanced computers, Chrysler planned a jointly operated Jeep assembly plant and Octagon signed a contract to sell portable satellite telephones to the Iranian military.

But the commercial heyday was cut-short when Iranian rulers were implicated in a series of terrorist attacks. In March 1995, President Clinton issued an executive order banning U. S. investments in Iran's energy sector. Later, a May 1995 presidential order banned all U.S. investment in Iran and prohibited the export and reexport to Iran of U.S. goods and services.

When Mohammad Khatami took office as the new so-called moderate president of Iran in May 1997, the United States initiated a dramatic policy change toward Iran. Clinton administration officials wasted no time in testing the new president, and they provided a series of concessions to help remove obstacles between the two countries. For his part, Khatami went on a charm offensive, including making conciliatory statements in interviews with CNN's Christiane Amanpour, who threw softballs to Khatami, providing him the opportunity to preach to Americans about their history and about the Puritans rather than dealing with Iran's human rights situation and its ambitious nuclear weapons program.

Khatami's presidency led the Clinton administration to a round of successive concessions. In July 1997, the administration decided to drop its opposition to a natural-gas pipeline across Iran, "the first easing of United States' efforts to isolate Iran economically". In September, Khatami's foreign minister, Kamal Kharazi, in speech during a session of the United Nations general Assembly in New York, pledged to "cooperate with the international community to root out terrorism," provided that western countries would "stop supporting the main armed Iranian opposition group, the People's Mujahedeen. Days later, in an effort to send a conciliatory message to Tehran, the State Department designated the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). A senior Clinton administration official said at the time. "The inclusion of the People's Moujahedin [sic] was intended as a goodwill gesture to Tehran and its newly elected moderate president, Mohammad Khatami."

In May 1998, President Clinton waived sanctions against Russian, French, and Malaysian firms, hoping to develop Iran's South Pars natural-gas field. In June 1998, in a policy speech at the Asia Society in New York, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright announced that Washington had implemented a more streamlined procedure for issuing visas to the Iranians and offers "a road map leading to normal relations? In September 1998, Khatami traveled to New York to give a speech at the United Nations General Assembly, where he spoke shout a "dialogue among civilization? Supporters of the MEK opposition organized a massive, peaceful rally at which a bipartisan group of members of Congress addressed thousands of Iranian Americans who denounced Khatami as a terrorist. In a speech at New York's Asia Society that was considered Iran's official response to Albright's 'Road Map,' Foreign Minister, Kharrazi rebuffed Albright's offer

for dialogue, it did not offer a road map for the future,” Thomas Pickering, U.S. under secretary of state for political affairs, said of Kharrazi’s speech.

Despite continuing problems, the Clinton administration embarked on a general review with the aim of relaxing sanctions on Iran. In November 1998, the Treasury Department amended its regulations to eliminate the reporting requirement for purchases or swaps of Iranian crude oil. In December 1998, Iran was removed from the list of major narcotics producers. In April 1999, the administration further amended the trade and investment ban by announcing that license applications for commercial sales of agricultural and medical products would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, a significant easing of the trade ban. In the same month, Indyk, in a speck to the Council on Foreign Relations, said that the United States had pursued several steps that could broaden U.S. engagement with Iran. In the fall of 1999, with a series of quiet approaches and inducements, the White House tried to achieve an opening to Khatami, but all of its efforts were rebuffed. In August 1999, a secret message was sent to Khatami, seeking his cooperation in solving the 1996 bombing of the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, in which 19 U.S. servicemen were killed. The message also sought for the first time to reopen consular offices in Tehran. “Not interested,” was the response.

Former FBI director Louis Freeh wrote in his autobiography that President Clinton sidetracked the investigation into the June 1996 bombing of Khobar Towers. According to Freeh, the Clinton administration was so determined to press ahead with its campaign for a diplomatic opening with Iran that it failed to press the Saudis for access to several suspects in the case and did little to assist the FBI investigation. In an October 1999 speech entitled “Iran and the United States: Prospects for a New Relationship,” which was another follow-up to Secretary Albright’s speech, Indyk again asked Iran to enter into a format dialogue with the United States. He introduced a number of clear signals to Iran, including announcing that the State Department had added the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) to the list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO). Indyk explained, “the Iranian government had brought this to our attention, we looked into it and saw that there were good reasons for designating the NCRI (NCR) as an alias for the MEK.” Indyk probably did not want to remember that, in response to questions from reporters during a State Department briefing in June 1998, department spokesman James Rubin had insisted, “A careful review of the evidence concerning the National Council or Resistance, which is associated with the MEK, has shown that it does not meet the criteria in the law for the designation of the NCR as a foreign terrorist organization.” (The United States Court of Appeals D.C. Circuit clarified at this time that the NCRIO U.S. was a separate entity and not designated as an FTO.)

In March 2000, Albright announced an end to the ban on imports of products such as caviar and rugs, and she apologized for the U.S. role in the 1953 coup that brought the shah to power. In response, Supreme Leader Khamenei denounced rapprochement with the United States as “treason in the September 2000 U.N. “Millennium Summit” meetings, Albright and Clinton sent a positive signal to Iran by attending Khatami’s speeches, which many described as irrelevant ramblings about philosophy and religion.

to be continued.

The Bench Occupier

Firouz Hejazi

We grow up in our local community
 Every day we pass each other’s way
 Walking casual and cautiously;
 “Haya doin man?”
 “Hanging in man, hanging in”
 We are aware of our each other’s affair
 Also the time one of us has spent
 There; with White - Jackets people
 Or, in behind, the familiar, bar
 We live together, in a group shelter
 Do we have any other choices?
 Often we try to beat the system;
 By doing less, and asking more
 we too, fall in love
 When our carts are piled up
 With junk and a lot of canned food
 And, if the bottle is still half full
 Then a secret dream shall occupy
 Our confused beating heads
 A colorful, rapturous dream
 It is a lottery dream
 So, we don’t feel the traffic flow
 Even so close as we are sitting
 On the bench inside the bus-station
 The authorities and the people
 We should thank
 They built a lot of bus-stations for us
 And made themselves easy
 To know where we are with our minds
 And when the time comes for leaving
 They just stop on the curb.
 Soon after it seems that the bench
 Was never occupied by a man
 Down there was living for a while.



Pan-Arabism's Legacy of Confrontation with Iran



Part Two

BY: DR. KAVEH FARROKH

Pan-Arabists such as Bin Laden have perverted religion to further their own truly nefarious pursuits – one can look to many current white supremacists or religious fundamentalists to see the parallels.

Aflaq went further than Satia Al-Husri in that he clearly outlined the “enemy of the (Arab) nation.” This broad encompassing term has entered many Arab educational and popular circles, resulting in a whole generation of individuals believing Iranians to be the “enemy of the Arabs” (Aflaq’s article “Us and Our Enemies” is often cited as providing insight into this type of thinking). Fortunately, many Arabs have bravely and courageously rejected this thinking; nevertheless, the impulse of anti-Iranianism has taken root in Arab education and mass media (e.g. the Al-Jazeera TV network).

It was in Saddam Hussein’s Iraq where Arab racism attained its most vulgar form, truly on par with the neo-Nazi philosophies of today’s white supremacists. A prime example is the tract by Saddam’s maternal uncle, Khairallah Tulfah, entitled “Three Whom God Should Not have Created: Persians, Jews and Flies”. Tulfah’s writings were widely distributed in Iraq during Saddam Hussein’s rule. Even more incredible is the following description by Said Aburish (in *Saddam Hussein: The Politics of revenge*, London: Bloomsbury, 2000, p.123):

“...the (Saddam) government offered ‘pure Iraqis’ married to anyone with Iranian blood 2500\$ reward for anyone divorcing them”

This quote is a chilling reminder of what happened in Nazi Germany in the 1930s (e.g. Nuremberg Rally) and the ensuing Nazi ‘racial purity’ laws against the Jews. Saddam in fact expelled thousands of people of Persian origin from Iraq in the 1970s, many of whom live in Iran today. Although not generally known, up to a third of Baghdad’s population may have been Persian-speaking by the early twentieth

century. Decades of sustained anti-Iranian propaganda certainly has had its effect in destroying Iraq’s vibrant Persian community. The Kurds, an Iranian people like the Persians, have certainly felt the violent brunt of pan-Arabism. The tragedies of Saddam’s gassing policies (i.e. Halabja) and the forceful expulsion of Kurds in favor of Arab settlers in Iraqi Kurdistan is so well known and documented that we need not pontificate further on this issue.

Even as I quoted Aburish’s description of Saddam’s ‘divorce reward’ policy, I was personally amazed. The Arabs would be shocked if they learned what ‘Iraq’ actually means. ‘Iraq’ is derived from Middle Persian or dialectical Pahlavi; it means ‘the lowlands’, like the Germanic term “Niederland” for modern day Holland. There is a region in Iran today, which shares the same Pahlavi root as ‘Iraq’ – modern day Arak. The term ‘Baghdad’ is also of Iranian origin – “Boghu” (God) + “dad” (provided by, given by, bestowed by) – “Baghdad” is rough Iranian equivalent of the term “Goddiva”. The remains of the capital of the Sasanian Empire, Ctesiphon, stand only 40 kilometers from modern Baghdad. Iranians themselves may be shocked to learn that the term “Tehran” is not of Aryan origin – this was an Assyrian settlement (before the Aryans came to dominate the Iranian plateau); the Assyrian term “Taharan” is roughly translated as “The place to which I shall return”. Of all Arab countries, Iraq has the strongest Persian legacy, as highlighted by this reference by Fred Halliday (Arabs and Persians – from *Cahiers d’etudes sur la Mediterranee Orientale et le monde Turco-Iranien*, no.22, July–December, 1996):

“...Iraq, open for centuries to Iranian influence, not least in the period of the Persian influenced Abbasid Empire, the very culture of the Arab speakers is suffused with Iranian influence. One only has to listen to spoken Iraqi, or look at the turquoise domes of the mosques of Iraqi cities, to see how strong the Iranian influence is...

while Kurds who, by language and culture, fall very much within the Iranian cultural sphere”.

Negative portrayals of Iranians continue to appear today in Arab media and education: the recent caricature portrayal of Iranians by the Al-Jazeera Television network is one recent example that is truly lamentable. Arabs have complained (with justification) that they are portrayed negatively in western press, media and education, yet so many in the Arab world are unaware of the Husri-Shawkat-Aflaq legacy of racism within their own ranks.

Incredible as it may seem, Pan-Arabism’s anti-Persian attitude has found unexpected allies in the western world: a handful of western academics and politicians propelled by political, economic and even romantic interests.

It was Richard Farmer in his book “A History of Arabian Music to the XIII Century” (London: Luzac Oriental, first published in 1929, reprinted in 1967, 1994, and 1996), who began to instill doubt on the Iranian nationality of the men of sciences cited above (e.g. Razi). The outright attack on Iran and its contributions to the Arabs is exemplified by Montgomery Watt (The majesty that was Islam: the Islamic world, 661-1100, New York, Praeger, 1974) who bluntly downplays Persian contributions as outright irrelevant. Watt’s denial and/or downplaying of any Persian heritage in Arab and wider Islamic civilization would have made Shawkat himself proud indeed.

The term “Arab Gulf” neatly encapsulates the history of western (mainly British) economic interests. It was Sir Charles Belgrave who first invented the term “Arab Gulf” and attempted to change the name of the Persian Gulf. Belgrave was the British advisor to the Arab leadership of Bahrain in the 1930s. Belgrave proposed his “Arabian Gulf” invention to the British Foreign and Colonial offices in London, where the project was quietly dropped. Belgrave however

had succeeded in a way; he had set the stage for future Iranian and Arab friction.

The British themselves soon began to see the benefits of propagating the “Arab Gulf” project, especially after Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh took control of Iran’s oil industry from the British in the 1951. Furious at this perceived outrage, Roderic Owen (see photo), a British secret agent linked to British Petroleum (originally Anglo-Iranian Oil Company) saw the potential of using “Arab Gulf” as a weapon against Iran. Owen eventually published and promoted a book called “The Golden Bubble of the Arabian Gulf: A Documentary” (London: Collins, 1957). The British were not going to be ejected from the Persian Gulf without a fight – and what better way than the famous “Parthian shot” of attacking the heritage, history and civilizational legacy of Persia herself. For an excellent synopsis of the attack on the name of the Persian Gulf, please refer to Mahan Abedin’s article: <http://www.daneshjoo.org/cgi-bin/generalnews/article/execute/view.cgi?archive=10&num=9808&printer=1>

Owen’s success as a British secret agent is outmatched only by Ian Fleming’s James Bond 007. His genius set the stage for the full ignition of the Arabs against Iran, allowing the British to avoid direct confrontation. Significantly, Owen had provided fresh ammunition to a new generation of post Al-Husri Arab chauvinists, now coincidentally coming to the fore in the 1950s.

Western Arabism is basically a combination of political-economic interests (briefly addressed below) and raw admiration of the Arab Bedouin. The latter (admiration of the Arab Bedouin) deserves some mention. As noted by Barrie Pitt in *History of World War One* (edited by A.J.P. Taylor, London: Octopus Books, 1974, p.136): *“Englishmen...appreciated the Arabs’ virtues...have overlooked their weaknesses...when subjected to the persuasive charm of the Bedouin...”*

This “persuasive charm” (along with petro-dollars) has been able to overpower a number of western (mainly English-speaking) academics, politicians and businessmen. To obtain an understanding into the mindsets of such men as Sir Charles Belgrave, Roderic Owen, or Montgomery Watt consult:

McLoughlin, L. (2002). *In a Sea of Knowledge: The British Arabists in the Twentieth Century*. Reading, UK: Ithaca Press.

Kaplan, R. D. (1995). *The Arabists:*

The Romance of an American Elite. New York: The Free Press, A Division of Simon & Schuster Inc.

Many well intentioned but naïve westerners often selectively and exclusively praise the Arabs for their contributions to medicine, the sciences and mathematics. The Arabs certainly are on par with all the great peoples of history, and their scientists such as Al-Heitham, or scientific contributions in areas such as Ophthalmology certainly cannot be dismissed. Nevertheless, the extent of their contributions are being highly exaggerated by certain Arab chauvinists and their western Arabist sympathizers with political, economic and romantic agendas.

From the western viewpoint, this error can be traced to the false fallacy of defining all Muslims as Arabs, a problem that began during the Arab occupation in Spain. The terms “Arab science” or “Arab soap” gained currency among the Western Europeans of the period. Europeans then (and today) identified “Arab” and “Muslim” as synonymous. “Muslim” is no more a “race” than is “Christian”. No one speaks of “Christians” as an “ethnic group”. This false and simplistic logic in the western world has resulted in the identification of Iranians as Arabs by current western education, popular media and press.

This logic can be applied to Catholic Christians, with silly results: as Filipinos are Catholic then they must be Italians! Many Westerners have fallen victim to this dangerously false line of logic as it pertains to Iranians, with tragic academic results.

An example of this amateur scholarship is evidenced in the Newsweek magazine articles by Fareed Zakaria (see photo) “Why Do They Hate Us?” (October 15, 2001) and “How to save the Arab world” (Dec. 24, 2001). Zakaria inaccurately (or perhaps deliberately) portrays Iranians as Arabs by depicting Iran as a member of the Arab world (depicted on map of p.37 of October 15, 2001 Newsweek article). He also states that “Arabs...invented algebra” (October 15, 2001, p.29). To my knowledge, Newsweek has never replied to, apologized or retracted from Mr. Zakaria’s statements.

It is true that Islam is the predominant religion of Iran, but that does not make it an “Arab” country. By “Arabs”, Mr. Zakaria may be referring to general facets of “Islamic” culture; however this would include other non-Arab Muslims such as Che-Chens, Turks, Bosnians, Pakistanis, Filipino Huks, or the Sinkiang Turks of

Northwest China. Islam is a multi-cultural society that includes many races and distinct cultures. The use of the term “Arab” is analogous to our previous example of Filipinos being “Italian” simply because they are Roman Catholic. With this failure at distinguishing religion from ethnicity, Mr. Zakaria has set the standard of academic mediocrity. It is a mystery as to (a) why he is so favored by the American media (he is regularly invited to television as an “expert”) (b) why he has received awards for his misleading and simplistic writings on the Near East.

One should not be surprised as to why over 80 percent of North Americans (and a growing number of Europeans) believe Iranians to be Arabs (see Jack Saheen’s “The TV Arab”, Bowling Green Press, 1982). The recent row over the use by National Geographic of the invented term “Arab Gulf” in parallel with the historical and legal “Persian Gulf” is simply another example of substandard (and politically motivated?) scholarship.

The “Arab Gulf” gospel was picked up quickly in Egypt by Eli Cohen, a Syrian Jew in league with the Ba’ath party. Cohen was later executed in Syria on charges of being an Israeli spy.

It was Gamal Abdel Nasser however, the enigmatic pan-Arab nationalist leader from Egypt, who truly popularized Belgrave-Owen’s “Arabian Gulf” to the Arab masses in the 1950s. His fiery rhetoric and emotional calls for Arab unity envisaging confrontation with Iran, found a largely receptive audience, thanks to a generation of Arabs exposed to the Al-Husri-Shawkat school of education. The tiny Sheikdoms of the Persian Gulf gleefully chimed in with Nasser, bankrolling the Belgrave-Owen project with vast sums of petrodollars. The aim was to not only change the name of the Persian Gulf, but to change world history as it applied to Persia. The “Arabization” of Persian contributions on the world stage was in full swing by the 1960s and 1970s.

Politics makes strange bedfellows indeed: British oil imperialism and pan-Arabism were united in their quest to diminish and ultimately marginalize Persia’s legacy and heritage in world history. This is exemplified by the BBC’s adoption of the term “The Gulf”, truly one of the pan-Arabists’ greatest successes. Other British media have followed suit, and thanks to the standard set by the BBC for its “impartiality”, other European and North American media outlets have followed suit.

Pan-Arabism and Nasser's prestige greatly suffered however, after the Israeli armed forces crushed Arab military might in 6 days in 1967. The mantle of pan-Arabism was adopted by the Ba'ath regime of Iraq in 1968, which saw Saddam Hussein, rise to full power by 1979. The Ba'ath regime struck a very close alliance with Abu Dhabi in order to provide international legitimacy to Belgrave-Owen's "Arabian Gulf".

The Iraqi Abu Dhabi axis proved successful. A series of fabricated academic conferences and dubious institutions (e.g. Centre for Arab Gulf Studies in Basra) were established to project pan-Arabism into western academic and political circles. With respect to the latter, the pan-Arabs have had a powerful and receptive lobby in the west. The aforementioned British Petroleum and other companies such as Aramco, Llyods Shipping and Shell simply could not resist the prospect of billions of petrodollars being pumped into their coffers. Acceptance of the Belgrave-Owen "Arab Gulf" in financial and political transactions is simply "good business".

The fact that western (mainly English) academics are vigorously supporting and promoting the Owen-Belgrave "Arab Gulf" project cannot be mere coincidence. In fact, a plethora of books, especially from the 1980s onwards, have greatly aided the cause of pan-Arab nationalists such as Bin Laden. Note just four of such texts that have been published in England, Europe and North America since the publication of Owen's book in 1957:

1. Pridham, B.R. (1985). *The Arab Gulf and the West*. Published in London: Croom Helm and Centre for Arab Gulf Studies, University of Exeter.
2. Potts, D.T. (1991). *The Arabian Gulf in Antiquity: Volume I: From Prehistory to the Fall of the Achaemenid Empire*. Oxford University Press.
3. Rice, M. (1994). *The archaeology of the Arabian Gulf, c. 5000-323 BC*. London; New York : Routledge, 1994.
4. Olsen, P.R. (2002). *Music in Bahrain: traditional music of the Arabian Gulf*. Moesgaard: Jutland Archaeological Society; Moesgaard Museum; Bahrain: Ministry of Information.

These titles are oxymoronic in academic, historical and legal terms. Ever since recorded history the Greeks have referred to the waterway as "Sinus Persicus", followed by the Romans (Aquarius Persico). Historical archives, maps and historians, including Arabs, have recognized the waterway as such (see George

F. Hourani, *Arab Seafaring*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, p.85).

Refer also to the Iranian Studies Group at MIT for a recent compendium of maps that indicate the Persian Gulf as the name for that body of water: (<http://stuff.mit.edu/afs/athena.mit.edu/activity/i/isgf/>).

If Fareed Zakaria has set the standard of academic mediocrity, he at least has the excuse of not being competently educated. What is hard to comprehend is why highly educated professors such as Pridham, Potts, Rice or Olson have themselves been seduced into academic mediocrity? More seriously, are the distinguished professors aware of how much they have aided the cause of the likes of Sami Shawkat, Khairallah Tulfah or Mr. Bin Laden.

The only reference to "Arab Gulf" is found with respect to the Red Sea of antiquity (e.g. see Herodotus' "Histories", Penguin Books). It is interesting that neither Belgrave nor Owen made the proposal to change the name of the Red Sea to its former name, Arab Gulf. This is because neither Belgrave nor Owen was interested in scholarship; their aims were political and economic. Despite Arab attempts (and their western political and academic protégés), the United Nations has twice recognized the legality of the term "Persian Gulf" (UNAD 311/March 5, 1971 and UNLA 45.8.2 (c) on August 10, 1984). It is significant that all Arab countries (including Iraq, Egypt and Abu Dhabi) have signed both of these documents.

The above-mentioned UN resolutions or historical references are simply ignored by Arab universities. Note the link below pertaining to the University of Sharjah's College of Arts & Science course description for "History of the Arabian Gulf (course code: 0203102)": <http://www.sharjah.ac.ae/academic/arts/history/academics/undergraduate/course.htm>

One can only guess at what is being taught in these classrooms. These are people who will represent future Arab leaders in business, education and politics.

The ultimate tragedy of Arab chauvinism is indeed expressed by the attack of Saddam Hussein against Iran in September, 22, 1980, 47 years after Sami Shawkat's "Sina'at al-Mawt" (manufacture of death) speech.

On September 22, 1980, Pan-Arabism graduated from hate literature to outright violence: the Iraqis invaded Iran. Just as the Iraqi tanks were rolling into Iran, King Khalid of Saudi Arabia (1975-1982) (see photo) stated publicly to Saddam to "crush

the stupid Persians." It is sad that so much of the world at the time, threw its support for the Saddam regime and its genocidal policies. Note the following excerpt by Eric Margolis in the Toronto Sun (Sunday, January 19, 2004):

"Britain, the U.S., Kuwait and Saudi Arabia convinced Iraq to invade Iran, then covertly supplied Saddam with money, arms, intelligence, and advisers...Italy, Germany, France, South Africa, Belgium, Yugoslavia, Brazil, Chile and the USSR all aided Saddam's war effort against Iran, which was even more a victim of naked aggression than was Kuwait in 1991".

The Saddam regime believed that they would win the war in less than two weeks. Instead of a lightning victory, the Iraqis and the Arab world became bogged down for eight years in a wasteful, useless and inconclusive war against Iran. This was a war with no winner, millions of lives were lost and billions of dollars worth of damage was inflicted upon the national infrastructures of Iran and Iraq. Arab volunteers streamed from the entire Arab world to fight against what Saddam Hussein called the "fire worshipping Magi of Persia" (in reference to Iran's Zoroastrian past). Arab volunteers included Sudanese, Egyptians, Moroccans, Syrians, Jordanians, Yemenis, Algerians, Lebanese and Palestinians. Note in the photograph below, the diverse range of Arab nationalities and races in Iraqi service, seen here captured by the Iranian army in February 1984.

Never in modern Arab history, have the Arabs shown such long-term zeal, persistence, enthusiasm and unity against a common foe. It is fortunate for the western world and Israel that the Arabs have never been as persistently unified against them as they have been against Iran.

The above point must be balanced with a sobering fact. Many of the "volunteers" were uneducated and poverty-stricken in their home countries and were given financial stipends to fight the Iranians. Many others were guest workers to Iraq (i.e. Egyptian farmers) who were forcibly pressed into service for Saddam. Morale and fighting qualities were generally very low, and many of these men would simply surrender to Iranian forces. Many of Iraq's native troops (especially Shiites, Kurds and Assyrians) also deserted regularly, not having the desire to fight against a neighboring nation against which they had no animosity.

Saddam's invasion also aimed at permanently severing Iran's Khuzestan prov-

ince from Iran. Pan-Arabists have long claimed Iran's southwest Khuzestan region as a "lost" Arab province, requiring "liberation" from the "racist Persians". It is true that Iran's multi-ethnic mosaic includes Arabs in Khuzestan as well as the Persian Gulf coast. Nevertheless, Khuzestan has been Iranian since the days of the founding of the Medes and the Persians. This is the region of ancient Elam (an Elamo-Dravidian people) and was also known as Persis by the Greeks. Arab migrations into southwest Persia can be traced to the time of Shapur II (309-379 AD).

The Sassanians settled many Arabs inside Iran as a buffer against other marauding Arabs of the Arabian deserts. The Lakhmid Arabs were very loyal to the crown of Persia, and proved excellent warriors for the Sassanian army – a prime example is their role in support of Sassanian general Azarethes' Savaran (elite cavalry) at Callinicum in 531. At Callinicum, the Lakhmid leader Al-Mundhir supported the Savaran's left wing, an action which helped defeat the Romano-Byzantine general Belisarius – in AD. Khuzistan can be described in a variety of ways: Arab speaking Iranians, Iranized Arabs, Iranian-Arabs, etc. The fact remains that Khuzistan has been an integral part of Persia since antiquity.

Pan-Arabist hopes were dashed when the Arabs of Khuzestan resisted Saddam Hussein's invasion of Iran in 1980; very few (reportedly less than 500) joined Saddam's men. Although not known by many Iranians, the Arabs of Khuzistan fought very bravely for Iran. Saddam believed (as he still does today) that the Khuzestan Arabs would rise up and take over the cities themselves on behalf of Mr. Saddam's army. Note the following quote by Dilip Hiro (The Longest War: The Iran-Iraq Military Conflict, London, Paladin Books, 1990, p.43):

"Patriotism engulfed the (Iranian) military...and civilians – including the Khuzistani Arabs...instead of being welcomed as liberators by Khuzestan Arabs – the majority community in Khorramshahr and Abadan – as the Iraqi forces had been led to believe, the y found themselves facing spirited resistance."

To the dismay of the pan-Arabists, the Khuzestan Arabs fought against Saddam from the start of the invasion, giving the Iranian army precious time to re-organize and counterattack. It is worth noting that only 200 of the defenders of the city of Khorramshahr were professional soldiers

– the rest were locals of the city – many of them local Arabs. Together with the Iranian army personnel, they literally fought to the last man. The Khuzestan Arabs, like their Lakhmid ancestors at Callinicum, remained faithful to their nation.

These same Khuzestan Arabs again fought alongside the Iranian army when the city of Khorramshahr was liberated from Saddam's occupation in 1981. Unfazed by this failure (and rejection from the Khuzestan's), the pan-Arabists continue to advocate for the separation of Khuzestan from the rest of Iran (see www.alahwaz.com).

The tragedy of the Iran-Iraq war can be partly attributed to the Al-Husri and Sami Shawkat education philosophies dating to the 1920-1940s – these have done much to found Arab animosity against Iran. The Belgrave-Owen "Arab Gulf" invention (and their disciples such as Pridham, Rice or Olson) is undoubtedly another factor that continues to inflame Arab feelings against Persia. In my humble opinion, Belgrave and Owen are also responsible for the catastrophic loss of life and property suffered by both sides in the Iran-Iraq war. It is also tragic that the western world failed to see the dangers of pan-Arabism espoused by Saddam Hussein during that war, especially when he repeatedly used poison gas against Iranian troops and civilian centers, as well as his own helpless Kurdish Iraqi population. Instead as noted by the aforementioned Margolis (Sunday, January 19, 2004):

"Who supplied 'Chemical Ali' (Saddam's cousin Al-Majid – see photo) with his mustard and nerve gas? Why, the West, of course. In late 1990, I discovered four British technicians in Baghdad who told me they had been 'seconded' to Iraq by Britain's ministry of defense and MI6 intelligence to make chemical and biological weapons, including anthrax, Q-fever and plague, at a secret laboratory at Salman Pak."

To this day, few speak of the atrocities committed on Iranian civilians by Saddam's troops. Atrocities against Iraqi civilians or Kuwaitis are only mentioned due to current political expediency. Sixteen years after the Iran-Iraq war, Iranians must speak out.

The most recent individual to espouse the Al-Husri version of anti-Persianism is Osama Bin Laden, a man who openly despises Iran and Persian culture. Before the Taliban were ejected from power by the US following the tragedy of 9/11, Bin Laden practically ruled Afghanistan as his

personal caliphate where he made vigorous efforts to stamp out Persian culture (i.e. Persian language, music, the Nowruz, etc.). This attitude has been adopted by many of Bin Laden's non-Arab followers in Pakistan where his supporters frequently shout "Death to Iran" during their regular anti-western rallies. Many in the western world misconceive Mr. Bin Laden as a religious fanatic; he is in fact a racist in the tradition of Mr. Satia Al-Husri, Sami Shawkat and Khairallah Tulfah. His less than exemplary treatment of Persian speakers in Afghanistan certainly speaks for itself.

Having observed the dangers of pan-Arab chauvinism, let us not forget the dangers of racist attitudes among Iranians. It is unfortunate that a growing number of Iranians, incensed by over 60 years of pan-Arabist rhetoric and blatant racism, have resorted to their own version of anti-Arab chauvinism. Bigotry is a human trait and has the potential to unfold within any human being (myself included) and must be vigorously crushed.

These attitudes ignore one very important fact: many of today's Arabs virulently oppose Arab chauvinism. These include the aforementioned Samir el-Khalil as well as the late George Hourani. Samir el-Khalil has attacked pan-Arab chauvinism and reminds Arabs of the legacy of Persia in their culture as well as in Islam. Khalil was for years a hunted man by the Saddam Hussein regime. The late Arab scholar, George Hourani, not only appreciated the Iranians for their role in helping the Arabs form their civilization, but was rigorous against politically motivated attempts to re-name the Persian Gulf as the "Arab Gulf". Many Iraqis have dismantled Saddam's anti-Iran propaganda props from their streets and monuments after the US invasion – this was done in order to destroy Saddam's legacy of hate against Persia – the Iranians must applaud this.

Calm discourse and education are the best weapons – the pen is truly mightier than the sword. The Arab world and Iran have a great deal to offer each other – not to mention Turkey, a nation with strong ties to Iran, culturally and ethnically. No matter how hard the disciples of Satia al-Husri, Sami Shawkat, Sir Charles Belgrave or Roderick Owen may try, a calm examination of historical archives (and common sense) will confirm the legitimacy of Persia's past (like that of Greece, Rome, India, Europe, the Arabs, the Turks and China) and the importance of appreciating her.

RESPONSE TO MR. TALAFORUSH'S ARTICLE TITLED: WHO ARE IRANIANS?

BY: IMANOEL KOHANIM

Mr. Talaforush, congratulations for your well written commentary article published in 2007 summer edition of *Persian Heritage Magazine*, titled, "Who Are Iranians." I must say that you did a superb job enlightening your readers regarding Iranians' past history, heritage, and their contribution to the world in general. Also, your outstanding detailed coverage, on the Iranians' significant accomplishments here in the U.S. and around the world, obviously makes every Iranian proud. With that in mind, my objective of writing this commentary, other than to appreciate your fine job is, first, to challenge some of your claims that, to me, seem to be unfounded or highly exaggerated, to say the least, and then, to reveal your underpinning intent.

As an introductory, let me state that, in regards to Iranian accomplishments and achievement, you sir, start off by claiming lack of acknowledgement on the part of Americans in general and mainstream American media in particular. Then you move one step further, maintaining, and at times, insisting that Iranians here in this country are being victimized and furthermore claim that the American media have tried to portray them as terrorists, etc. In due course, you characterize the aforementioned scenario as a "phenomenon with a growing trend." Your ultimate step has been to proficiently evolve this so called "phenomenon" into a plot, the plot being, as you have stated, "to teach the world to hate the Iranian people." And who do you claimed to be behind this plot? The U.S. government and of course the Israelis, who else? To accomplish the above task you have selected a peculiar path with conviction. I believe, and I will later show in my response, that you have pursued a trend of transforming events, into scenarios that are far from reality. Once these scenarios are engrained in the hearts and minds of your readers, then the accusations are inflicted more effectively. (You see, in order for some people to achieve their goals, that is to plant the seeds of hatred in the minds and hearts of humanity against a targeted people, the world must hate or continue to hate those targeted people. They are to serve simply as a means to an end).

One way to accomplish the aforementioned mission is to create a touchy scenario, which does not relate to reality. Once this picture is developed in the minds of your targeted readers, then your goal is more than halfway met. It is then, that the targeted people are, more than any other time, prone to any unfounded accusations. You, in your article, have masterfully underscored just that and I have the intent to disclose your primary goal as best as I can. To do this, I would like to walk you and your readers through your article to show your readers how you attempted to create your scenario.



In the beginning of your essay you indicate and I quote: "In the face of hostility, recently more and more Iranians find themselves *stuttering* when they are asked a very simple question: "where are you from?" Then you go on even further stating that Iranians use alternate nationalities, ascertaining and I quote: "This is a deeply disturbing phenomenon that is very typical and indicative of their existence in the U.S., and one that is a growing trend, etc, etc." Sir, I believe this is simply not true, and absolutely not a growing trend. Other than the reprehensible acts of the Islamic regime, inside and outside the country, I do not see any foundation for humiliation 'God forbid,' to make Iranians in this country stutter when they are asked about their nationality. Therefore, this so-called "disturbing phenomenon" does not exist; yes, even in the face of the current hostilities.

Then you continue your article by referring to some governments trying to topple the regime and let me quote: "You see, in order for some governments to achieve their goals, that is to topple the current **Iranian** regime, as well as take control of the oil rich regions of Southwest and Central Asia, the world must learn to hate the Iranian people: they are to serve simple as a means to an end." Is this not a form of rhetoric? You make it sound as though the current Islamic regime is a legitimate government for Iranians and it rules by the will of people. Furthermore, that it is democratically elected by choice and *protector* of Iranians' interests and their oil wealth! Are you not elevating this regime's esteem?

Then you move on by referring to a CNN viewer and his or her less generous views about Iranians and I quote, "What has Iran or any of these 'Arab' countries ever given 'us'? They are void of scientific, artistic and intellectual endeavors. If we wipe them off the map, no one will surely miss them!" It is of course vicious and heart breaking, but the good news is, as I am sure you already know, that the American public in general does not maintain these views. The American people, including the American media, cherish Iranians and respect them. Just take a look at the schools, colleges, universities, workplaces, your American neighbors and friends, you will then realize why it is unfair to link a demagogue's view to a broader American community. How could Iranians in this country flourish and reach this profound level of achievement, as you have also indicated in your report in length, if they were subjected to discrimination, disrespect or bad treatment. *We are not*. Not by the American people and not even by the American media. It is by no doubt evident that America is not representative of these kinds of spiteful view, so why the insistence on its cornucopia? This is an insult to Americans who have

so graciously welcomed and accepted us into their communities. (For readers with an average knowledge of English, like myself, cornucopia simply means abundance.) You then go on writing and I quote: "This article is a refutation of such misunderstandings." If refutation is a denial or is to repudiate, which means to reject, then it has no place in your sentence. Misunderstandings cannot be denied nor can it be rejected.

Then you refer to the Hezbollah group and I quote: "The Hezbollah group born in Lebanon is in its essence, a resistance group, who is aided in part by the Iranian government (differing). The desperate, defenseless Lebanese women and children under relentless bombardment by Israel for the past 25 years, accept help from any proxy, including, yes, even Iran." Of course, you then indicate to your readers that this is in no shape or form an endorsement or a condemnation of this group. I must say that I find your final statement to be a bit problematic. You already stated something as clear as above; therefore, your endorsement or condemnation is irrelevant, since the intention has already been delivered. In other words, you said what you intended to say. Having said that let me tell you sir that these rhetorics and/or accusations are all too familiar and I do not intend to take the reader's time to comment any further. However, let me elaborate that every year billions of dollars of the Iranian wealth is being channeled, by this non-Iranian regime, to the Hezbollah group, Syria, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad. A small portion of this money, i.e. the recent \$1.65 billion, has been delivered to the above groups to supposedly build infrastructure, but billions of dollars are being funneled into their charity organizations; this is the part most Iranians are not aware of. So, why instigate a war against Israel, and then pay the consequences with Iranian money. Is this what the *true* Iranians desire?

Hezbollah, in essence, is the cause of the hostilities. But the question that should be asked is why there is no reference in your article about your own defenseless women and children in Iran and why the obsession with Hezbollah? Iran's women and children have been deprived of their basic rights by the Islamic regime for the past twenty-eight years. So why no mention of this regime that has tried to uproot all the values that Iranians held dear for millennia mainly "being Iranian." In other words, the aim of this regime is to convert Iranians from being Iranians: they are to serve simply as a means to an end, to convert to Islam. Moreover, I must say that to a great extent, they have succeeded. Remember our hero, Dr. Shirin Ebadi, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, in her acceptance speech, she referred to herself as a Muslim woman before stating that she is an Iranian. And what did she do for us Iranians? She asked Mr. Bush to close Guantanamo! To *true* Iranians, this is alarming, our values fading under the shadow of darkness, gradually and calculated, by keeping Iranians obsessed with matters that do not really relate to them namely, Hezbollah, Hamas, etc., and then step by step strip them (Iranians) off of all their rights. I tragically believe that if this trend continues, sadly enough, in one or two more generations, there would be no Iranians as we know them today. So let me then conclude this part of my commentary by stating that trying to convince your readers about justifying regimes' support for Hezbollah simply does not work. The overwhelming numbers of *true* Iranians and Americans in general just will not buy that.

Now let me turn to your coverage on Iranian achievements and your list of many Iranians, of which a majority is living in the U.S., that have gained groundbreaking achievements. I must congratulate you on the fine job. You then refer to Iranian intel-

lectuals and authors that have been active in the American media holding press conferences and interviews. Then you continue and I quote: "Not one of these guests or commentators has been clearly identified by his or her nationality (something that is very typical in the American news institutions)." And you also stated that the mainstream American media have masterfully downplayed Iranian achievements, etc; this is just not true. The American media, despite its obsession with the coverage of the war in Iraq, in my view, has kept its balance, as best as one can expect. So Mr. Talaforush, let me put it this way, if we want to reach our voice to Americans and the rest of the world, if we want to regain our glorious history along with its unmatched values (that you beautifully covered in your article), if we want to ascend Iranians back to where they were, and if we want fair and balanced acknowledgements, then, let us be fair, let us be vigilant but compromising, let us simply be affable and endearing in the eyes of the people. Stop rendering stereotypes, stop with the accusations, stop `always` blaming others for your plights and stop the obsession with the past. When you go back again to the 50's, when the U.S. government executed a plan to overthrow the government of Dr. Mosadegh, I agree with you whole heartedly that this probably changed the course of history in Iran, but how long do we want to repeat ourselves? True, we have to know our past in order to learn for the future, but the obsession is detrimental, it would divert our attention from our main enemy, namely, the Islamic regime.

Now let me tackle another subject regarding your claim that the Bush government officials, aka (also known as) Neo-Cons along with some ex-Israeli intelligents have a plan for the dismemberment of Iran. Sir, I think it is a bit irrational to assume that this administration with its fragile standings in the polls and its grave entanglement in Iraq is capable of engaging itself in another episode. Therefore, even if, god forbid, there is a plan, it is not going to materialize under the current administration. But, the question that should be asked is, who is to blame? I can assure you that most of your readers, regardless of their ethnicities, blame the regimes' steady provocations, lack of reason and transparency in the world politics as the primary cause.

Now let me turn to another subject in your article; I quote: "There are many other enduring and triumphant ethnic groups such as sedentary Irish or the prolific Asians, who in the case of the latter hide their wealth beyond statistics, something that is also true for the Iranian expatriates. Yet, certainly in a capitalist country that eats and breathes money, such a striking accomplishment by such a small group can be deemed significant, and for an Iranian community so in need of having something positive to hold on to, this does mean something." True and I could not agree more, but shouldn't the same logic also apply to hundreds of thousands

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of unfortunate European Jews who fled Europe and took refuge in America? These prolific Jews, also in a relatively short period, made astonishing accomplishments in the past half century in all aspects of science, academia, medicine, economics, etc. Therefore, the question remains, if prolific Asians accomplishments in the U.S. are regarded as highly astonishing and/or something to hold on to, why then the exact same phenomenon for Jewish Americans is regarded 'in your report' as having a "stranglehold" on the U.S. economy? Are you not building your scenario?

Dear friend, regarding your comments on Holocaust, I have to quote, "Much attention is concentrated on the more political fodder and some wrongful comments made in regard to Holocaust (and attention should be given to this issue)." Let me again respond to the point; you sir, in one hand, concur that attention should be given to the Holocaust, but then, when the attention is given, you call it "political fodder", a rather strong word for a tragic and sensitive issue like the Holocaust, to say the least! Also, let me emphasize that a "wrongful comment" is when one admits to its mistake, if you do not, it is a belief. And, keep in mind that this calculated belief is being publicized and prophesized routinely in the regime's media, conferences, etc.

Let me now move to another subject, and I quote: "In fact, had it not been for Iran, today there'd be no state of Israel that we know of. It was the Persian knights led by their rebel king {Cyrus}, who blasted through the Zagros Mountains in the Iranian plateau and literally cut the chains and shackles off the hopeful Jewish slaves in Babylon, freeing them and taking them back to Israel- rebuilding Jerusalem by using the gold from Persia's treasury." True. That is why, Cyrus the Great, is highly placed in the Holy Bible, and more importantly in the hearts and minds of every Jew throughout the world and humanity in general. Nevertheless, the question that should be asked is the following. Is the current Islamic regime a believer of Cyrus the Great? The Islamic regime is in the verge of demolishing the remains of Percepolis. They disgust Cyrus as much as they disgust, our greatest poet, Ferdowsi. Are you not misusing his name as a political fodder?

Mr. Talaforush, your most offensive, if not provocative comments, about the U.S. and the Israelis comes in the last part of your report and I quote: "Is America, along with some feverish propagandist efforts by Israelis, whose only goal is the convenience of the state of Israel at any cost, even loss of American lives, portraying a lopsided, at times outright inaccurate image of Iranian people themselves, in order to convey a certain message so it could achieve its objectives easier?"

Let me answer this question and conclude with my response. The above charge is the most ferocious and reprehensible of all your accusations in your article. What does the U.S. or the Israelis achieve by portraying lopsided or inaccurate images of the Iranian people. Let me approach your charge with logic. Is it not the desire of the international community, including the U.S., to go along with the aspirations of the Iranian people, to join force to pressure the Islamic regime to change or to drop out? If so, which is in fact the wish of every true Iranian, then why should the U.S. and I quote: "With the feverish efforts of Israelis," need to demoralize their principal partner, namely the Iranians? Let me sir, leave the judgment to the readers, but I would like to elaborate that the U.S. has always had full respect for us Iranians, our heritage and our values. As for Israel, from its inception, has always been an ally to Iranians and a friend. Even during almost three decades of the regimes' steady provocations, Israel has been patient and

tolerant, but this could of course change if its existence is challenged. Therefore, portraying inaccurate and misleading images of the U.S. and Israel is against the interests of the Iranian people and could only help the Islamic regime.

You see, in order for the Islamic regime and its well-wishers to achieve their goals, which is to plant seeds of hatred in the hearts and minds of humanity against the U.S. in general and Israel in particular, the world must hate or continue to hate those people. And what is the regime's underpinning goal: to stay in power. And how do they remain in power when faced with perpetual popular dissent, they fabricate a common enemy to divert attentions. Yes sir, Iranians are victimized, but in the hands of the Islamic regime. Unfortunately, the story does not end here. The Palestinians in Gaza under the leadership of Hamas are also victimized. These unfortunate people, under the wrong leadership and by the will and ambitions of their Godfather, the Islamic regime, need to be kept desperate, poor, hopeless, but uncompromised, so as to give the regime, reason, to keep their rhetorics alive. In fact, another related, but disturbing phenomenon, is that anybody from any Muslim state, who is courageous enough to extend a hand for peace with Israel, is immediately labeled as a collaborator. Remember, *The Greatest*, Anvar Sadat?

To conclude my response, I must say that, I find a troubling sense of peculiarity established in your article. You skillfully attempted to blame anybody, other than the Islamic regime, for Iranians' plights here in the U.S. Is it not the existence of this regime, the primary cause of why we are here in the first place? A regime whose goal is to converge Iranians into universal Islam, a regime who is stoning to death our men, women, and children for crimes absorbed in civil societies, a regime who literally rape our girls, before their imminent death, in order to justify their ugly justice. And then sir, you feel troubled for Lebanese women and children? Where is your objectivity? At least sir, the women in Lebanon are allowed to watch a 'mere' soccer game!

Thank you



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CLAIMS AND FACTS: ON AZARIS & AZARBAIJAN

FATEMA SOUDAVAR FARMANFARMAIAN
The Iranian, October 2, 2002

Does Azarbaijan have a north and a south or are they two different entities? A long overdue issue has been raised and discussed by Aynalu Jurabchi and Reza Ordubadian.

The fact is that so-called ‘northern Azarbaijan’ has only borne that name since 1918, and that was in a bid to dissociate itself from Russia and bring itself closer to its cultural roots. Of course, when the Soviets took over, they found the name convenient for future claims on the real Azarbaijan and perhaps well beyond. This meant rewriting a lot of history, some of it here to stay, at least in the short term.

When the Republic of Azerbaijan first declared independence from the Soviet Union, I went to Paris to meet the first delegates the newly independent republic sent to Western Europe. At that time, they insisted on their Turkishness and were still critical of ‘Persian discrimination’ against Turks, as they had been told and taught.

They spoke of Shah Ismail Safavid, whom they know by the pen name, ‘Khatai’, as their very own king who also happened to conquer a large empire stretching from Isfahan to Kandahar. They also insisted that Nezami wrote his poems in Turkish, not Persian, and if you showed them an original text, they would describe it as ‘old Turkish’, not Persian, and if you retorted that it was no different from Persian, they would look at you as though you were the one who rewrote history. That Shah Ismail had red hair, was of Kurdish ancestry, that Nezami was Persian, with a Christian, probably Armenian mother, were not acceptable to them. No matter how hard you tried to give them dates and facts about the Turks beginning to arrive in those parts at about the time of Nezami and of the first Shaikh Safi (the remote ancestor of Shah Ismail and the founder of the Safavieh Sufi order).

To reaffirm their claim on the name of Azarbaijan, their then UNESCO delegate produced a letter by Ibrahim Khalil Khan, the great and wily Khan of Qarabagh at the time of Aqa Mohammad Khan’s first incursions into the Qarabagh (coincidental with those of the Russians in Georgia). The basis of their argument was just one sentence, in which Ibrahim Khalil complained to the Ottoman Sultan about the fate that had befallen the people of Azarbaijan. (I have a photocopy of that letter).

That Qarabagh, because of its situation on the Aras River, was actually sometimes included as part of the province of Azarbaijan, is a historical fact. So, the letter may have referred to that and to the fact that the people of Tabriz also suffered from Agha Mohammad’s exactions as he moved north to recover the seceding provinces north of the Aras. But, Ibrahim Khalil Khan’s letter never meant to include neither Baku nor Shirvan, since these were not even remotely attained by Agha Mohammad Khan who, soon after the capture of Shisha in the Qarabagh, fell victim to an assassin from his own camp.

Ganja was an exception in that it was the fief of a Qajar tribesman, though it is doubtful that even Ganja would have been considered part of Azarbaijan in Ibrahim Khalil’s mind. The claim that this one letter proves that the khanates north of the Aras were included under Azarbaijan forces the issue with flimsy material.

That does not mean that there were not intimate bonds between the people on both sides of the river. Their commitment to Shiism, their language — the same Turkish Azari on both sides of the Aras — and the fact that Persian was part of the curriculum of the educated elite north of the Aras too, and yes, even their ethnic makeup, made the people of the khanates feel very close, not only to the Azaris to their south, but to Iranians in general.

Regional differences in ethnic composition do exist but no more than between, say, Lorestan and Fars. As Reza Ordubadi rightly says, there is no such thing as ‘purity’ except in the most primitive and isolated communities and even those have been ‘tainted’ nowadays. Mixtures are the stuff of civilization and there is no particular merit in ethnic purity.

Eric Hobsbawm in his *History of Nationalism* since 1789 says that there are at most 12 out of more than 200 countries registered with the UN that can lay any claim to purity, and since he wrote that book, their number must have dwindled to a handful at most.

A case in point with respect to Azarbaijan, is that, after the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the US decided to grant visas to Iranian minority groups. It included the Turks, only to find out that they totaled fifteen million in 1980, that they were one of the most productive and wealthy segments of Iranian society, that many of those who called themselves ‘Turks’ were now Persian-speakers and vice-versa. The ignorance of the Western public, outside of the ivory towers of academia, about us and our history feeds such misconceptions.

I have several friends from Baku who recognize their part of ‘Persian’ ancestry, through one or more lines, and even admit with a degree of pride. Very few of them are entirely devoid of a link that a Jurabchi might look down upon. The official (or is it ‘officialous’) discourse, as presented by Aynalu Jurabchi, has not really changed much since the hotheaded early days of independence.

There is still a lot of misguided historical information in what she says. She seems to believe that the Aras River was always as hermetically sealed as it was during the Soviet era. Whereas in fact there was a lot of to and fro throughout the ages. From the indigenous people of the Caucasus to the Iranian Scythians and Alans (who gave their name to Arran, the former name of the territory of Azarbaijan), to various Turkic tribes and even some Arabs, and and Mongols of the Golden Horde of Russia, to name only the most important movements.

To try to validate her assertion, Jurabchi falls into the trap of fishing out some of her statements from old propaganda and dubious scholarship. To wit, that Atropates, governor of Azarbaijan under the Greek Seleucids, was a Mede — a mere error of five centuries! Media covered not only the province of Azarbaijan and beyond, sometimes as far as Rey, but especially most of the northern Zagros, which includes first and foremost the capital of the Medes, Ecbatana (Hamadan). When Atropates became governor of Media Atropatena, it meant that part of Media which is the province of Azarbaijan.

I agree with Reza Ordubadi that the name of Atropates was not what gave the province its name, as Western scholars

claim on the basis of their sacrosanct 'classical sources'. On the contrary, it may have been the association of those parts with subterranean volcanic activity and the resultant fires (later consecrated as 'sacred' by Magians) that was responsible for the title given to Adurbad, i.e. Atropates in Greek, the appointed governor of Media. (This probably explains the confusion in Jurabchi's mind).

That there should be no textual evidence before that for the name of Azarbaijan, does not mean that it was not in use already before Atropates was sent to govern the province. It would seem too absurd to name such a large and important province after a satrap appointed by occupation forces and to retain it long after they were gone. In that case Rey-Tehran would be still be Europa, as the Seleucids renamed it.

But, where Jurabchi really goes off the track, and she shares this error with present-day Turkey and some of the Central Asian republics, is in her redefinition of the word 'Turk', which is now often used to designate any mixed cultural heritage that has, as its vernacular, a much modified and hybridized 'Altaic' language. In the definition of Jurabchi, the Turks should be equated with the Scythians, to the exclusion of any indigenous natives of the Caucasus who were there long before the great migrations of Indo-Iranians, as linguistic studies indicate.

'Azerbaijan' has long claimed that the Turks had been in the area since two thousand years before the common era, an absurdity that even the punctiliously kept Chinese negate and they were best placed to know when Turks or Koek-Turk, as they were first known in Chinese sources of the early centuries of this era, developed out of the Huns of the Mongolian steppes and moved on to the then Scythian-occupied region of the Altai.

I have no argument with the substitution of the word 'Turk' for 'Scythian' (a generic term for various 'Iranian' tribes on the steppes and the original stock of the tribes that branched out under various names such as Persian, Mede, Sogdian, Sarmatian, Alan and of course Scythian or more correctly Saka in their own Iranian language). If that makes them happier, but let us not pretend that, the Turks and Scythians are one and the same.

Without doubt, some of the Scythians (Saka in Iranian languages) eventually mixed with so-called 'Altaic' or Turkic people, as well as with indigenous peoples of the Caucasus and of the Iranian plateau, and with Greeks and others in the Black Sea area, but all that happened much later than Jurabchi likes to think. As for the Ghuzz or Oghuz, they are known by serious historians to have only appeared on the frontiers of Transoxiana and Iran around the year 1000 AD. Before that, the earliest indication for them is in Western Xinjiang, not too far from Kashghar in the 6th century, where a Toghuzsaray, the site of a now ruined Buddhist monastery, still bears their name.

So let us call things by their name and not sow further confusion in a region that has had an exceedingly complex history of interaction, from the Mediterranean and the Black Sea to the Mongolian steppes, with the Iranian plateau often serving as the focal point of interaction. With ancestral roots on both sides of the Aras and a blend of some of the other strands that have gone into our making.

I like to pride myself on the lack of prejudice beyond that which my judgment and my taste might dictate. That is often not so with the vociferous defenders of concocted theses. What motivates the breakaway republics of the former Soviet Union is their search for a separate identity, which some of their leaders hope (rightly so, it would seem) will bring them greater wealth

from their oil and gas resources.

Countries like Azerbaijan have had a long enough role in history not to be in need of that sort of historical misrepresentation to claim their resources. Why separate one's cultural past from that of the greater whole, if it gives all of us more joint clout in asserting our contributions to world civilization? Why isolate segments of the past into scattered and therefore meaningless leaves of a book that an ill wind has tried to blow apart? Can you imagine Britain, France or Germany denying their debts to ancient Greece and Rome or Renaissance Italy? Only by joint effort can we too stake our claim on the stage of world history.

So far, I have not said anything about the issue of language on which many of the debates about the meaning of 'azari' is based. Although I agree with Reza Ordubadian on most of his many points, I hate to have to take issue with someone as qualified as he is on one that one issue. Kasravi may have not made it clear in his book, but from what I have learnt from my sources, he must have been referring to Tati which was the main Iranian language spoken for centuries by the common folk of Azarbaijan. As of the Islamic period, Persian became the literary lingua franca of all educated Iranians and of many more besides, 'from Istanbul to Delhi', to use a popular cliché, but without displacing local vernaculars until the arrival of the Turks.

Like Persian of all periods, the Tati dialect belongs to the Western Iranian group. But is considered to be more closely related to Median and Kurdish, and very similar to the Taleshi still spoken in pockets along the southwestern Caspian coast of Iran and Azarbaijan, including Lankaran (Lenkoran, as they like to call it in Baku), where the inhabitants pride themselves on their ancient heritage and language. Thus, there actually was an 'azari' dialect, which was not restricted solely to Azarbaijan. That language was practically wiped out by Shah Ismail's Turkic Qizilbash troops in the early Safavid period.

Turkicization had of course been an ongoing process for some time by then, largely thanks to the Saljuqs who had sent their loyal Ghuzz or Oghuz tribesmen to the 'frontiers of Rum' in the twelfth century, allegedly to convert infidels, but in actual fact to keep them as far as possible from his court and from the wholesale Persianization to which he had become committed and in which the warlike illiterate tribesmen could not participate at that early stage.

Tati had survived both the Ghuzz tribesmen and the much more vicious onslaught of the Mongols, but I'm not sure to what extent it was still being used north of the Aras before the Qizilbash. The Caucasus had always been a Babel of dialects, some of which were bound to disappear gradually. Tati must have been one of them, and a dominant one, but to what extent and for how long, hopefully Reza Ordubadian's erudition can provide a much-needed answer to the fabricated scholarship that tends to come out of some of the former republics of the Soviet Union. I cannot blame them for dissociating themselves from a bunch of mullahs for whom not much love is lost in Iran, but one does not build historical and cultural identity on short-term sentiments.

Meanwhile if we cannot come to terms on mutually acceptable cultural concerns, if we cannot make others call places by their rightful names, let us not fall into the trap of spelling our own Azarbaijan with an 'e' as in the Turkish pronunciation used for the country to the north of the Aras — Azarbaijan, not Azerbaijan. Let them call their country as they please until they too come to realize what is good for them, as they inevitably will, thanks to all the soul-searching currently going on in our part of the world.

The New Oxford Definitions!!!

sent by Majid Kafai

FEW DEFINITIONS

School: A place where Papa pays and son plays.

Life Insurance: A contract that keeps you poor all your life so that you can die rich.

Nurse: A person who wakes you up to give you sleeping pills.

Marriage: It's an agreement in which a man loses his bachelor degree and a woman gains her master.

Divorce: Future tense of marriage.

Cigarette: A pinch of tobacco rolled in paper with fire at one tip and a fool on the other.

Conference: The confusion of one man multiplied by the numbers

Compromise: The art of dividing a cake in such a way that in eating it one believes he got the biggest piece.

Tears: The hydraulic forte by which masculine will-power is by feminine water power.

Dictionary: A place where success comes before work.

Conference Room: A place where everybody talks, nobody listens and everybody disagrees later on.

Classic: A book which people praise, but do not read.

Smile: A curve that can set a lot of things straight.

Office: A place where you can relax after your strenuous holiday

Yawn: The only time some married men ever get to open their mouth.

Etc.: A sign to make others believe that you know more than you actually do.

Committee: Individuals who can do nothing individually and yet decide that nothing can be done together.

Experience: The name men give to their mistakes.

Atom Bomb: An invention to end all inventions.

Philosopher: A fool who torments himself during life, to be something when dead.

Diplomat: A person who tells you to go to hell in such a way you actually look forward to the trip.

Opportunist: A person who starts taking a bath if he accidentally falls into a river.

Father: A banker provided by nature.

Criminal: A guy no different from the rest... except that he got caught.

Boss: Someone who is early when you are late and late when you are early.

Politician: One who shakes your hand before elections and you lose confidence after.

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BOOK REVIEWS

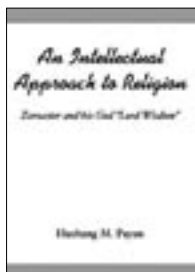
AN INTELLECTUAL APPROACH TO RELIGION

by **Hushang M. Payan**

(World Association Publishers 2007)

Hushang M. Payan, has just released an interesting paperback, *An Intellectual Approach to Religion* published by World Association Publishers. It is written from the perspective of a Zoroastrian and contains nine chapters. The author was born in 1925 in Iran and is by profession a medical doctor. He was forced to leave Iran during the revolution. While he never returned to Iran, he committed himself to researching Zoroaster and has ended with a most intriguing book. I found the book to be informative for a number of reasons. First, his simple approach to his explanation of Zoroastrian faith, second for his in depth description and comparison and finally for his strength to come forward and profess his beliefs in his religion.

While not one sided about his faith he is biased and this may offend the less than open-minded. This reader, however, whose religion will go undeclared found the book fascinating and read it cover to cover, in one session.



NOW I KNOW

by **Homa Sarajedini**

(Ketab Corp. 2007)

Sometimes a child's book can teach us the greatest lesson. This book is about a number of things relevant to all from conservation to education, a simple story with a great big message. The author has dedicated this bilingual book to her young daughter, so when reading it you can actually hear the voice of a devoted mom. Another aspect of the book I found to be wonderful is the fact that it is bilingual, in Persian and English, so it is very useful to anyone learning Persian or a Persian learning English. Unfortunately, there is one small criticism the use of the word Farsi instead of Persian. Of course some might think this a trite point but, often a trite point sends the biggest message.

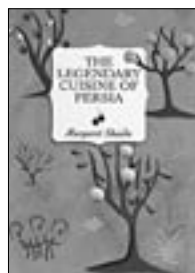


THE LEGENDARY CUISINE OF PERSIA

by **Margaret Shaida**

Grub Street Publishing, 2007

Persian cooking is one of the oldest and greatest cuisines of the world. It is justly famous for its fragrance, sophistication, elegance and subtlety. The unique combination of ingredients such as fresh herbs, dried limes and saffron had a remarkable influence on the cooking of the Middle East, Spain and India. In this highly acclaimed cookery book, which won the Glenfiddich Food Book Of The Year Award, Margaret Shaida traces the origins of this alluringly exotic cuisine and weaves her researches through a colorful tapestry of lively anecdotes and quotations to provide the most complete collection of authentic recipes available.



Central to a Persian meal are the numerous rice dishes, some containing almonds, pistachios and raisins, others with vegetables and spices and occasionally meat. Other recipes include stews, dumplings, kebabs and stuffed vegetables accompanied by different sauces. The sweetmeats and pastries are especially mouthwatering. Persian cuisine is perfectly suited to today's style of eating - many of the dishes are vegetarian, and the marriage of sweet and savory, such as grains and pulses stewed with fruit and spices, make for unforgettable meals. The result is a feast of flavors and textures as well as a visual delight.

Margaret Shaida's exquisite collection of recipes and fascinating information on the background and history of (Persian) food is both a joy and a precious contribution to the world of gastronomy.

SPIRIT OF IRAN, A HISTORY OF ACHIEVEMENT FROM ADVERSITY
by **Peter Avery**

This book is aimed at demonstrating the continuity of a characteristic Iranian artistic genius which is marked by the capacity for appreciation of nature sufficiently sensitive for the leap to be made from the reality of natural objects to abstract symbols representative of them. The persistence of a distinctive way of looking at nature, reproducing it in art, and illustrating man's close, congenial relationship with his environment, are the themes which this book sets out to expose as peculiar to Iranian culture. It is perhaps superfluous to say that this peculiarity harks back to man's special relationship with nature as inculcated in Zoroastrianism: as well as an ancient and continuing Iranian trait, it is sanctified by Iran's ancient religious tradition. As for political history, no book on the fibrous continuity of Iranian artistic aspirations and techniques can ignore the vicissitudes of the Iranian region's history. They have tempered and tested the Iranian genius as if it were in a crucible. As for the literary history, no such essay can be without constant citations of the poets of Iran and its annalists. In Persian poetry reposes one of Iran's greatest art forms, which is to say, one of the world's. In the historians are to be found descriptions of the sufferings of the Iranian people that made up so much of this people's history, and which their historians intended should be recorded for posterity to know what those sufferings entailed. Further, it has been considered appropriate as far as possible to tell some of the story of Iran in the words of Iranians themselves. It might be observed that the modern period, principally the 19th and 20th centuries, has been treated scantily. This defect, if defect it is in a book of this kind, can readily be corrected: the author is willing sympathetically to consider extending the narrative to deal in more detail with recent years, although the complexity of their political history might only be included insofar as they offer evidence of the particular kind of psychology of the Iranians, and the continuing vitality, in face of grave adversity, of their genius.



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“A whole generation of Iranians has been raised, educated: and given no freedom. Young engineers, for instance, have only a minor chance to take part in technological development. The Shah didn’t develop a technology-he bought a blueprint of technology from the West. So there were very few major jobs for Iranians. At least ninety per cent of our people have been left out of development. I have a small consulting firm. I take only private clients. Unless we were huge and foreign, we couldn’t get government contracts anyway. I might be able to do a project for the government at a charge of say, ten thousand dollars for a couple of months’ work. But people in the government would rather hire foreigners at a thousand dollars a day. That way, they get a kickback.”

He continued. “Khomeini is merely a symbol of opposition. He is respected as a Moslem, but he has no power. Ten years ago, no prayers were said in the universities. Religious students were mocked. Now there is a genuine student problem. Many of the students come from poor families in the provinces. They have to rent rooms, and the financial burden is unbearable. There has never been a systematic study made: so we don’t know how badly off they are. But they don’t have enough money. They have to cluster six or seven in a room. In the last few years, there has been an undoubted effort to reform things. There’s real talk in the parliament. Those in Savak who were corrupt and who tortured people have been ousted. There’s an effort to bring roads to villages, and water. If there should be elections soon. I’d probably vote. But I wouldn’t join the government. Next year is going to be bad. Already, because of the strikes and the big wage settlements, it is clear

THE NEW YORKER

FROM THE ARCHIVE

LETTER FROM IRAN

Part Three

BY JOSEPH KRAFT

Issue of 1978-12-18 Posted 2006-02-27

This week in the magazine, Connie Bruck writes about how, as Washington considers taking a tougher line with Iran exiles are positioning themselves as the country’s next rulers. In this article, from 1978 Joseph Kraft reports on conditions that led to the Iranian revolution of 1979.

that the gross national product will be down by ten per cent. There’ll be an incredible inflation. One good thing I can say: At last, after twenty-five years. Iranian politics are becoming interesting.”

Pakravan put me in touch with another economist trained in the United States, who divided his time between teaching and working for Iran’s Plan and Budget Organization. Because of his government job, he asked me not to mention his name. He said that economists at the Plan and Budget Organization had repeatedly done studies showing that, while the national wealth was increasing, many people, particularly in the countryside, were relatively worse off. He showed me a report that indicated that the income share of the top twenty percent of urban Iranians had risen from 57.5 per cent in 1972 to 63.5 per cent in 1975. The share of the middle forty per cent dropped from 31 per cent to 25.5 per cent. The share of the bottom forty per cent dropped from 11.5 per cent to 11 per cent. While urban consumption per head was about two times that of the rural areas in 1959, it had by 1972 grown to three times that of the rural areas.

But these studies, while circulated abroad, were, he said, not published in Iran.

The economist went on to talk about the religious revival. “I was very active in politics during my high-school years,” he said. “At that time—the early nineteen-fifties – there were only two important groups: the Communist, or Tudeh Party; and the National Front—which included the Pan-Iranians, who wanted to take over parts of Iraq, Turkey, and Pakistan. The young had absolutely no interest in religion. After that, the political situation calmed down. There was a brief revival of politics in 1961 and 1962, when Ali Amini came to office as Prime Minister. He started the land reform that the Shah later claimed as his own, the Tudeh Party was dead then, but the National Front was strong. The religious people didn’t count. Khomeini became important only after he was driven into exile by the Shah. The Shah’s father, Reza Shah, had been very successful in fighting the mullahs. He made a direct assault on the clergy—forcing women to take off veils, riding into the shrines and beating the mullahs, He had public sympathy, because then the clergy were corrupt

and wealthy. They were hated by everybody. Now they have lost their lands and the religious foundations. The mullahs have been purified. They have the power of poverty.”

The economist at the planning agency introduced me to Magid Tehranian, an intellectual in his middle thirties who had been trained at Harvard and then co-opted into the Shah’s system as the head of an institute for the study of communications. I went to see him at the institute, where he looked every bit the European or American intellectual in his cozy oyster shell; he had a comfortable office with a couple of secretaries, and wore a neat blue suit, a silk tie, and shoes of soft Italian leather. He talked briefly about Iranian intellectuals. He said, “The great problem facing the university graduates once they are out of school is a lack of freedom. We have lots of intellectuals and technocrats who have views, but they are never allowed to express them. Everything is dictated from the top, and some of it is silly. For instance, the government tried to build up the television network – with which I was involved. It was extended to the point where it reached seventy per cent of the people in Iran. Then the palace intervened. They insisted that we show pictures of urban guerrillas confessing their terrorist deeds. They made us put Parviz Sabeti, the head of Savak’s anti-terrorist campaign, on the screen, giving his view of history. We have an intelligentsia, but they have no chance to participate. They’re just supposed to support the regime. But they don’t like slavishly supporting the Shah, so they turn against him. Yet, with all this, we have been surprised by the breadth of the movement against the Shah. It reaches from plush Teheran to the remotest villages.”

Tehranian was said to have been a Marxist before he

joined the government, and I had gone to see him primarily because I needed some help in ascertaining the part that the Marxists had played in what had been happening. Clearly, the Marxists counted for something in the movement against the Shah, but I had been given the most diverse estimates of their role, from the most surprising sources. The view around the palace was that the religious movement had been totally taken over by the Marxists. That view was shared by the economist who taught at the university as a form of “passive resistance” to “the establishment.” “The resistance is run by the Communists,” he had told me. “If you want to buy weapons, there is a number you can call and you get what you ask for. I don’t know exactly who supplies the weapons – the Russians, the Cubans, or the Palestinians. But They’re the ones who have made the country erupt.’ An American official, on the other hand, put absolutely no stock in the theory of Communist manipulation. He remarked to me that “the Army and the police and Savak have been combing the country all year looking for the Communists behind the demonstrations. So far, they haven’t found a single one. Why? Because there aren’t any. The mullahs and the *bazaaris* between them have informal networks that they’ve used for years to organize processions and festivals. That’s all it takes now. That’s all there is.”

I told Tehranian of the confused picture I was getting, and asked if he could put me in touch with any of his former Marxist colleagues. He said that it would be easy, and set up an appointment for me with a friend holding a high post in the Ministry of Information. The friend would organize an interview with three officials in the Ministry. I was not to talk about Marx. Instead, I

should use the euphemism “a European social philosopher of the nineteenth century.”

At the last minute, I had to change the appointment from the morning to the afternoon, but that was no problem. I went to see the official, and after a few moments he took me into a room behind his office. Three men, all about thirty, were sitting at a table with a woman – a graduate student at the University of Michigan, who acted as translator. I asked them if they were believers in the philosophy of a certain well-known European social philosopher of the nineteenth century, and all three smiled and nodded. I asked them about their education and their jobs. They were university graduates – one from the Sorbonne, the two others from the University of Teheran. The man from the Sorbonne helped put together public-opinion polls for the Ministry, and the two others had jobs as engineers.

I asked what they found useful in the works of the nineteenth-century social philosopher. One said, “He exposes the imperialists and their rape of all the countries of the Third World, including Iran.”

I asked how, specifically, the philosopher’s theories were relevant to Iran, and was told about the depletion of Iran’s oil reserves and the purchase of American weapons for open “use against the people.” I asked about Iran’s practice of selling natural gas to the Soviet Union, and they responded that there was no shortage of natural gas. I asked if they felt that the Russians had designs on Iran. All of them thought that compared to the United States influence, which was “all-pervasive,” the Russian influence was “so small it doesn’t count.” I asked what recent works by followers of the well-known nineteenth-century social philosopher they had read. After some hesitation, the man from

the Sorbonne said, “Jean-Paul Sartre.” No other names were forthcoming.

I asked how they felt about the religious movement against the Shah. All said that they agreed with its objectives. I asked if there wasn’t a contradiction somewhere. Wasn’t religion supposed to be “the opium of the people”?

“Sometimes that is true.” I was told. “But in developing countries it is different. At times, religious feelings and social movements go hand in hand. That is the way it is now in Iran. We are all of us united against the Shah.”

I asked how they thought the government of the Soviet Union felt about the Shah. They said they felt that they had the backing of Moscow. I asked whether they and their leaders were working from within the religious movement. There was a silence. Then one of them said, “We are in an Islamic country, and all social movements inevitably have a religious coloring. We do not believe there will ever be Communism here as there is Communism in Russia or China. We will have our own brand of socialism.”

Later, the official who had arranged the interview told me that I should have asked him the same questions. “I believe that the Communists are manipulating the religious movement,” he said. Still later, an American official showed me a translation of an article in *Navid*, a new, underground publication of the Tudeh Party. The article, entitled “The Tudeh Party and the Moslem Movement,” said, “We are ready to put at the disposal of our friends from other political groups all our political propaganda and technical resources for the campaign against the Shah.” I was also shown an interview with Iraj Eskandary, the secretary-general of the Tudeh Party, now living in exile in Moscow. Among

other things, Eskandary said, “As far as the religious aspect of the present movement is concerned, it should be emphasized that the Shiite clergy cannot be viewed as a force demanding a return to the past, to the Middle Ages. The position of the clergy reflects, to a significant extent, popular feelings. And the fact that the religious movement is now playing an important role in the mobilization of democratic and nationalist forces against the dictatorial, anti-nationalist, and pro-imperialist regime of the Shah can only be welcomed We are in favor of a union with all democratic forces, including the religious ones.”

If the role played by the Marxists in the fomenting of trouble remains obscure, the role of the liberalization sponsored by the Shah and his ministers looms larger and larger. The Shah acknowledged when I saw him that he had begun to loosen things up “about two years ago.” I was in Iran in the spring of 1977, and I remember well the widespread talk of relaxation. Jimmy Carter’s emphasis on human rights was one of the reasons, but only one, and not the most important. Iranian students in the United States and Europe had focussed attention on the repressive features of the regime – particularly the practice of torture by Savak. The international press, led by *Le Monde*, of Paris, had picked up the theme. Both the Red Cross and Amnesty International, the private human-rights group based in London, were asking questions and proposing visits. But by far the most important reason for the relaxation was that the rapid development that followed the great oil-price increase of 1973 proved too complicated for direct control from above. Dislocations and shortages were universal. I recall visiting a new aluminum plant in

an industrial area outside Teheran. The plant was supposed to accommodate several hundred workers, but they had no housing and no transport, and there were no telephones in the offices. All over the country, power failures were frequent, and the pursuit of scarce goods and services drove inflation above the twenty-five-percent-per-year level. An effort to hold down inflation by fixing prices was failing in a spectacular manner. It was clear that the economy could be made to work only if there was some freeing up, some devolution of authority.

Signs of reform were abundant that spring. Batches of prisoners were released, and were allowed to talk to the press. The Shah declared that torture would cease—an admission that it had been going on. Corruption, which had never been far below the surface—as witness the Persian origin of the word “baksheesh” — became public in the wake of a scandal that involved payoffs to high officials of the Iranian Navy. *The National Front*, the chief opposition party, was allowed to circulate letters highly critical of the regime. Student demonstrations went forward with only token harassment. Even the television appearances of Parviz Sabeti, the director of Savak’s political section, were part of an effort to prove that the organization had a human face.

The direction of policy, to be sure, remained ambiguous. Low-level agents of Savak continued to stage raids on opposition meetings. Investigation of corruption at the highest levels was systematically blocked reputedly by the Shah’s entourage. But a key figure in the entourage. Amir Assadollah Alam, the Minister of the Imperial Court, fell ill in 1977, and died in New York early this year. His departure from the Court Ministry opened the way for a

political change that signalled an undoubted commitment to reform. In August, 1977, the Shah appointed a new Court Minister, Amir Abbas Hoveida, and a new Prime Minister, Jamshid Amouzegar. I saw both men at their homes in Teheran in late October of this year, along with the Information Minister in the Amouzegar government, Dariush Homayun, they all talked freely, but not for individual attribution. What follows is my interpretation of their accounts of what happened during the twelve months beginning in August, 1977 — a period of sweeping reforms that boomeranged to injure them, and the Shah as well.

Hoveida, an affable and highly intelligent man, with degrees in history, economics, and political science from the Universities of Paris and Brussels, came to the Court Ministry after nearly thirteen years as Prime Minister — the longest term in modern times. He had a major hand in the rapid development that changed the face of Iran and soured so many of its people. Though he was said to have been tolerant of corruption in the past, he was reputed never to have been on the take himself, and he certainly did not live on the grand scale. He had realized as early as 1975 that the pace of development had to be slowed down.

“We’re in orbit,” he had told me at the time, “and we have to come down to earth.” He brought to the Court Ministry, a determination to achieve economic slowdown and political reform. As he saw it, the key to both was ending corruption at the highest levels. From the beginning, he worked with the Shah on a code of conduct for the royal family. That project brought him into conflict with many members of the family who had been active in private business affairs. In July, 1978, after a long and

bitter battle. Hoveida finally won the Shah’s approval for the code of conduct.

The code was not published, for fear that the spelling out of what was henceforth prohibited would be regarded as a confession of past guilt. But the fact that it was adopted was made known, and caused virtually every member of the royal family to leave Iran. Here-published for the first time. I think — is the code that the Shah approved last summer: **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE IMPERIAL FAMILY**

In order to maintain the high status of the imperial family, which is respected by all Iranians, the following principles are instituted as the Code of Conduct of the imperial family:

- 1) Refraining from conduct considered distasteful by social custom.
- 2) Refraining from any acts or actions not in keeping with the high status of the imperial family.
- 3) Refraining from direct contact with public officials for the purpose of handling personal business. These matters will be handled through the Ministry of Court or His Imperial Majesty’s Special Office.
- 4) Refraining from contacts with foreign companies or organizations which are parties to contracts and deals with Iranian public organizations.
- 5) Refraining from receiving commissions for any reason whatsoever, from companies and organizations, foreign or Iranian, which are parties to contracts or deals with the Iranian government.
- 6) Refraining from receiving valuable gifts from persons, companies, or organizations.
- 7) Refraining from deals of any kind with public organizations, be it the government, organizations associated with the government, municipalities, or public organizations.
- 8) Refraining from direct or indirect (through third person or

persons) partnership or holding shares in companies or organizations that are parties to deals with the government or public organizations.

9) Refraining from founding or holding shares in organizations or companies whose activities are not compatible with the high status of the members of the Imperial family, such as restaurants, cabarets, casinos, and the like.

10) Refraining from the use of facilities and properties belonging to government and public organizations for private use.

11) Refraining from the use for private or commercial purposes — of the services of the employees of the government and associated organizations who also have responsibilities and duties in foundations associated with the Imperial family, or related organizations.

12) Refraining from asking for special favors or making recommendations to public officials in the interest of members of the Imperial family or others.

13) Refraining from the use of legal exemptions for persons outside of the Imperial family.

14) Refraining from the use of nationalized lands belonging to the government or public organizations for the purpose of profiting, for example, through construction projects or establishing commercial, service, or industrial organizations.

15) Refraining from receiving anything from persons (natural or legal) in lieu of influencing public officials in order to legalize acts which would not otherwise be eligible for profit-making (such as partnership in ownership of large pieces of land in return for registering such lands for the purpose of making profit).

16) Refraining from the use of nationalized lands for agriculture and dairy projects.

17) Refraining from accepting positions on the boards of

insurance, banking, and other companies.

18) Voluntary compliance with security regulations and whatever relates to public order.

19) Protecting the prestige and respect of national values and beliefs outside of the country.

20) Refraining from contacts with foreign embassies in Iran unless through the Ministry of Court.

Amouzegar came to the office of Prime Minister with a reputation as a brilliant public servant. He was educated at the University of Teheran, at Cornell, and at the University of Washington, and has a Ph.D. in civil engineering. Before becoming Prime Minister, at the age of fifty-four, he had successively headed four Ministries-Labor, Agriculture, Finance, and Interior-and had also served as Iran's chief negotiator in the price-fixing sessions of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Coun-

tries. Though less supple than Hoveida in political matters. Amouzegar was thought to be equally free of corruption and far more competent in economics. As Prime Minister, he set his sights on curtailing inflation and rooting out corruption at the ministerial level. By squeezing hard on the money supply, he cut inflation from thirty-five per cent in August, 1977, to ten per cent in August, 1978.

In the process, he earned the enmity of many of those dependent on credit, including most of the bazaar merchants and the high rollers in the construction field. As for corruption, he pushed General Nematollah Nasseri out as the head of Savak and off into a corner as Ambassador to Pakistan. He forced Hushang Ansari, the Minister of Finance, to step out of the Cabinet and become head of the National Iranian Oil Company.

He obliged Mayor Gholam Reza Nikpay, of Teheran, to quit. Those actions put him at odds with both the Shah and Hoveida, who had close ties to several of those who had been shunted aside. In the recesses of the Imperial Court, an intrigue was concocted which came to engulf everybody.

The starting point was the death, late in October of 1977, of Seyyed Mustafa Khomeini, the son of the exiled Ayatollah. The son, a mullah, was forty-nine at the time, and he died, according to supporters of the Shah, of a heart attack. His father suspected foul play, and, during the Shiite days of mourning for the dead, which fell in late December last year, circulated a number of letters throwing blame on the Shah. Early in January this year, there was sent from the office of the Court Minister, Hoveida, to the office of the Information Minister, Illo-

mavun, the text of an article. Hodayun, as was the custom, passed the article on for publication to the editors of a leading Teheran daily, Eta'alaat. The editors at the paper were sufficiently disturbed by the text to check with Hodayun. He told them that it came from the Court and they should go ahead and publish it. The editors then apprised Amouzegar of what was in the works. Amouzegar called Hodayun, who repeated the explanation that the article came from the Court and was supposed to be published. Exactly who wrote the article is not known to me, but the unwillingness of those involved to name the author suggests that it was either the Shah himself or somebody acting on his orders. My impression is that part of the motive was to embroil the Amouzegar government with the religious opposition.

to be continued

An Intellectual Approach to Religion

Zoroaster and his God "Lord Wisdom"

Hushang M. Payan

Available at: www.AMAZON.COM

The Author: H.M. PAYAN

4108 Windfall Lane, Gibsonia, PA 15044

Price: \$12.00 including the cost of shipping

Hushang M. Payan was born in Tehran, Iran in 1925.



After graduating from medical school in Tehran in 1951, he continued his education in New York City, where he practiced as a board certified pathologist eight years later. At the New York Medical College he served as assistant professor of pathology. At West Virginia University Medical School he became associate professor. In 1969 he began a 20-year career as director of the laboratory in a community hospital in Michigan. During that time he published 60 articles in medical journals dealing with human pathology and experimental medicine.

In 1979, when Iran experienced a revolution that resulted in a change of government under the religious faction of Khomeini, many people, especially professionals, were forced to flee. When many people began to wonder about their religious background, an interest in the pre-historic philosopher Zoroaster surfaced.

Even though Dr. Payan had never returned to his homeland, he kept abreast of the turmoil. This led to his intense research about Zoroaster and his philosophical ideas.



A sketch portrait of Moulânâ (by Setsuko Yoshida)

A Map of the Heart in Moulânâ's Poetry

RASOUL SORKHABI, Ph.D.

“So I come to you with Rumi in my hand and heart because I want to share with you the work of a supreme witness of the heart. I want to share with you the work of someone who really understands what has to be done for the heart to become divine and the will to become focused in the Light. I want to share Rumi's work because I consider him to be one of the most sublime mystic poets and masters who has ever been. This is the work of someone who is not dead, whose vast heart is poised over the hearts of the human race in a great outspread of Light, trying to guide us all into that Light.”

Andrew Harvey in

The Way of Compassion: A Celebration of Rumi (1994)

This year (2007) many literary, cultural and spiritual organization are celebrating the 800th anniversary of Moulânâ (“Our Master”) Jalâluddin Muhammad Balkhî Rumi (1207-1273), the great Persian Sufi poet of the thirteenth century (known in the West simply as Rumi). UNESCO has issued a Commemorative Medal in his honor, and at a meeting in June this year at the United Nations in New York, the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon remarked: “Eight centuries after his birth, Moulânâ Rumi lives on ... Rumi's poetry is timeless.” A 1998 US documentary film about Moulânâ is entitled *Rumi: Poet of the Heart*. What does the Heart mean to Moulânâ? What is the place and role of the Heart in his poetry and mystical vision? In this article, I explore this question drawing on Moulânâ's own works: *Masnawi Ma'nawi* (“Rhymed Couplets about Spiritual Matters”) and *Diwân Shams Tabrizi* (“The Poetry Book Dedicated to Shams Tabrizi”) – Moulânâ's spiritual master).

Heart is a recurring theme in Moulânâ's poetry, and he uses two words to express it: A Persian word, *dil*, and an Arabic word, *galb*. Both *dil* and *galb* are interchangeably used in Persian. The notion that the heart is the realm of love and spirituality is found in all spiritual traditions and literature. What is so profound in Moulânâ's poetry is the rich imagery he has created to show various facets and functions of the heart as a per-

son embarks on a spiritual journey. This imagery, in turn, gives insight into the spiritual path that Moulânâ himself as a Sufi master journeyed. Understanding Moulânâ's views on the heart also helps us better appreciate his love poems. Indeed, the Persian words which Moulânâ uses in his poems for the Beloved are associated with the heart: *Dil-dâr* (“The one who possess my heart”), *Dil-bar* or *Dil-rubâ* (“The one who has taken away my heart”) and *Dil-ârâm* (“The one who brings peace to the heart”).

We sometimes say that people think with their brains and feel with their hearts, or that the brain is the seat of rationality and intellect while the heart contains love. All these are, of course, metaphorical. The heart in Moulânâ's poetry is not the same meat of blood pump within our chest; the heart is connected to all organs and cells of our body, and also as a quality transcends the body. Indeed, to comprehend Moulânâ's poetry, one needs to picture a “spiritual physiology” in which the metaphorical organs like the heart, eye, ear, hand, foot, etc. have “qualitative existences.” A qualitative existence cannot be seen with our eye or touched by our hand; therefore, we may easily denounce it. But a spiritual being like the heart can be felt and its overwhelming presence can be observed through its effects, actions and manifestations.

Moulânâ's poems, which were recited while he was in retreat, meditation,

dance or ecstasy, paint a detailed map of the spiritual function. Here I refer to 12 attributes and functions of the heart in Moulânâ's poems.

1. THE HEART IS PLACELESS:

Why is the heart a stranger
In the two worlds?
Because the attributes of Placeness
Shy away from places.

(*Diwân*: verse 28934)

2. THE HEART IS VASTER THAN THE UNIVERSE:

The one who is detached
from this world
Finds a place in the heart.
Nowhere in this universe
Is spacious than the heart.

(*Diwân*: 4477)

3. THE HEART IS A MIRROR THAT REFLECTS GOD AND THE WORLD OF THE UNSEEN:

The Sufis have polished their chests
Clean from greed, desire,
meanness and hatred.
The heart is – no doubt –
a pure mirror
For it is receptive of
infinite images.
The Sufi possesses the heart's
mirror in his chest
Showing the infinite formless forms
of the Unseen.
Those forms are not confined
in the heavens

nor by the Divine Throne,
 the Footstool, or the Fish below,
 believed to support the Earth.
 Because these things are
 finite in number and boundary.
 The heart's mirror has no limits
 – Remember that!
 The intellect must remain
 silent here
 Or else, it will mislead us.
 For the heart is with God
 Or indeed, the heart is God.
 (*Masnawi*: volume I, verses 3484-3489)

The un-tarnished mirror of the heart reflects the Divine qualities. In the very opening poem of the *Masnawi* (I, 34), Moulânâ says, "Do you know why your mirror does not reflect and shine? Because the rust has not been cleaned from its face."

4. THE HEART HAS BEEN PURIFIED BY THE DIVINE WINE:

Our chest has been opened
 Our heart is woven and knitted
 with love
 It is crystal clear
 Because it is God's wine glass
 (*Diwân*: 2047)

5. THE HEART IS A WINDOW TO THE EVERLASTING LIGHT:

The heart is a window to light.
 Our house is bright
 Because of the heart.
 The body decays
 The heart remains.
 (*Diwân*: 9411)

6. THE HEART HAS THE QUALITY OF FIRE:

The body – for it is of sperm,
 Flows down like water.
 The heart – for its origin is fire,
 Only goes upward.
 (*Diwân*: 11879)

This is a reference to the ancient idea of Four Elements, in which each element attempts to return to its origin: Rocks fall down to earth, water flows into ocean, the air rises to the atmosphere, and fire goes to the sky above the earth. The heart looks heavenward.

7. TRUE WISDOM IS A LADDER TO THE HEART:

The heart is so light
 that went upward

And placed wisdom as its ladder.
 The heart, full of love,
 Heard the news of the Beloved
 And rushed to the roof
 In search of the Beloved's signs.
 (*Diwân*: 29014)

8. THE HEART IS THE SOURCE OF SINGING:

The source of all songs is the heart
 Even though their echoes are heard
 in the mountain of the body.
 O you who are clinging
 to the sound
 Silently go into the source.
 (*Diwân*: 2209)

9. THE HEART COMPREHENDS BEAUTY, AND GOD IS BEAUTIFUL:

In the bright rays of the heart
 This world is all flowers
 Beautiful, pleasant
 and with charming manners.
 (*Diwân*: 7386)

The face of the heart
 Is not like the face of any creature
 For God's beauty
 Is visible in the face of the heart.
 (*Diwân*: 10570)

10. THE HEART IS THE HIDDEN PLACE OF GOD'S TREASURES:

God's treasures are hidden
 in the ruined heart
 For much treasure
 is found in the ruined places.
 (*Diwân*: 33114)

Wherever there is a ruined place
 There is hope for treasure.
 Why don't you seek
 God's treasures
 In the ruined hearts?
 (*Diwân*: 1613)

The "ruined heart" (*dil-e kharâb*) is the heart in which worldly things and desires are all broken into pieces and

destroyed because of intoxication with the Divine love. The "ruined heart" is not constructed from the perishable bricks of this world but made of the pure Divine wine.

11. THE HEART IS PARADISE:

We have shut the gate of Hell
 We don't let in greed anymore.
 Now open the gate of Paradise
 Which is the clean and clear heart.
 (*Diwân*: 34717)

12. THE HEART IS HIDDEN BENEATH THE TONGUE (WORDS) AND TALKS IN SILENCE.

O the Silent one!
 Where is the heart hidden?
 "Beneath the tongue.
 When the words are abandoned
 The heart is revealed."
 (*Diwân*: 8408)

When the lips are shut
 The heart speaks
 in a hundred tongues.
 (*Diwân*: 9239)

"Silent" (*khamoosh*) was indeed Moulânâ's pen name cited at the end of many of his poems.

Moulânâ's poetry is a map of the heart. He uses words and symbols to guide us to the realm of heart which is beyond words and signs – like the map of a beautiful landscape.

NOTE

Translations of Moulânâ's poems in this article are from the following sources in Persian: *Masnawi Ma'nawi* (6 volumes), by Moulânâ Jalâluddin Mohammad Balkhi Rumi, edited by Reynold Nicholson (in 1925-1933, London), Tehran: Amir Kabir Press. *Kullîât Shams Tabrizi: Diwân Kabir* (10 volumes,), by Moulânâ Jalâluddin Mohammad Balkhi Rumi, edited by Foruzân-far (in 1957-1975, Tehran University), Tehran: Amir Kabir Press.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

All written submissions to *Persian Heritage* with the expectation of publication in the magazine must include the writer's name, address and telephone number.

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A HOME REMEDY: STAYING AT HOME AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO NURSING HOME CARE

There's no place like home - and that may be especially true for your aging parents as their health begins to fail.

If given a choice, few people would choose staying in a nursing home over living at home or with loved ones. And many have that choice. While failing health can make a nursing home the only option for some, many more can live comfortably at home or with their children with help from a home-health aide and regular visits from a nurse. Having a parent live with you can be stressful and demanding, but it is sometimes the best option. Your parent gets to spend time with family, your children get to spend time with a grandparent and you won't have to worry about whether your parent is getting the care she or he needs. However, caring for a parent can be difficult for children who have families of their own and demanding careers. Home healthcare assistance can make this option more affordable and less stressful for you. If your parent prefers independent living, home care assistance may make it possible to continue living at home. It's important to consider your parent's safety. Individuals with dementia and those who can no longer perform such daily tasks as cooking, dressing and cleaning may need to live with someone who can provide 24-hour supervision.

Paying For Home Care

Of course, home care can be almost as expensive as nursing home care. Having someone come into your home to care for your parent can be costly - and government programs do not cover non-medical expenses, unless your parent has virtually no assets. Typically, a home-care aide will spend eight hours a day in your home, but some home-health agencies provide aides for as little as four hours a day and some provide 24-hour care. Live-in care is one option, as room and board help pay the costs of care. One way to make home care more affordable is with a long-term care insurance policy, which typically covers the cost of nursing care and homemaker services, such as bathing, dressing and otherwise providing the personal care your parent may need. It can also fund home modifications, and training for those who are living in the home. The dilemma for many is that they may not be able to afford long-term healthcare cost, but they also may not be able to afford the insurance they need to protect themselves against those costs. There are several ways to make insurance more affordable for your parent:

Consider group coverage.

For any type of insurance, group coverage is significantly more affordable than individual insurance. That's because underwriters can better predict the insurance company's costs and can spread risk among a large number of people.

Buy it when you're young.

The younger your parent is when she or he buys long-term care insurance, the less it costs. Premiums increase as a person ages, because the odds of needing long-term care increase. To control costs, recommend that your parent purchase a policy that is renewable for life and has level-funded premiums (i.e., premiums remain at the level they are at when your parent purchases the policy).

Buy only what your parent needs.

Long-term care insurance comes with many different features. Stick to features that serve your parent's needs and don't buy what he or she doesn't need.

Long-term care rider.

Adding a long-term care rider to your life insurance policy may be an affordable alternative. Most riders pay 2 percent of the face value of the policy for up to 25 months. In addition to limiting the time period for which coverage is provided, the rider does not make adjustments for inflation. If your parent decides to use home care, whether your parent pays for it, you pay for it or insurance covers the cost, be certain to use a reputable home-healthcare agency to find a suitable aide. Under the right circumstances, home care can be a welcome alternative to nursing home care allowing your parent to live comfortably in a setting he or she enjoys. The key to home care is to plan in advance and to determine an option that is both realistic and affordable.

Insurance Considerations

If you or your parent decides that insurance is the best way to fund home care, before making a decision be certain to read the policy carefully to determine whether there are any exemptions. Purchasing the wrong policy can be as risky as having no policy at all. When considering the level of coverage needed, base your decision on the cost of long-term care in your market. The cost may vary significantly. The policy should also compensate for inflation. Unless the policy increases benefits by at least 5 percent a year, the benefit may be inadequate by the time it is needed. Also check to see what kind of long-term care services are covered by the policy. Some policies cover only nursing home care, some cover only home health care and some cover both. Ideally, the policy should cover skilled, intermediate and custodial care. Skilled and intermediate care is provided by nurses and other trained medical personnel. Custodial care assists the patient with bathing, eating, dressing and other routine tasks. One way to reduce the cost of coverage is to extend the waiting period before benefits begin. The best policies have a waiting period of 20 days. Before choosing a longer waiting period, make certain you can afford to pay for care during the waiting period.

Most insurance companies also offer a waiver of premiums beginning 60 to 90 days after the policyholder receives the first benefit payment. Some companies waive premiums immediately. Some policies limit coverage to anywhere from two to six years. With home healthcare, a person may live longer. While a policy that covers an unlimited number of days and an unlimited number of stays may be expensive, it is often worth the cost. It would defeat the purpose of insurance if coverage were to run out while your loved one still needs care. Under the right circumstances, home care can be a welcome alternative to nursing home care, allowing your parent or other loved ones to live comfortably in a setting they enjoy. The key to home care is to plan in advance and to determine an option that is both realistic and affordable.



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28. King Darius of Persia wrote the first Human Rights Charter, some 2,500 years ago. It is still engraved in the Alvand Mountain (Ganj-Nameh), near the ancient Persian Capital of Hagmataneh (Present City of Hamadan). It was this concept of Human Rights, freedom of religion and the equality of all races that lead to the freedom of the Jews, from the captivity of Babylon, by Cyrus the Great of Persia (539 B.C.).
29. While all other world powers persecuted and discriminated against the Jews (e.g. The Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Romans and later Germans and the Russians etc.) the Persians were the only world power who actually liberated and protected the Jews (the only monotheistic religion of that time). By doing so, the Persians pioneered the freedom of religion and culture of the minorities in the world. (While some European conquerors, like Alexander the Great, destroyed Persepolis and other areas, or exiled their people, the Persian kings supported the local culture and religion).
30. The first World Super-Highway, that connected the East and the West, was the Silk Road. It joined China to Europe; and its main part was Central Asia (Ancient Persia) with its many Caravans, Caravansarais, Bazaars, etc....
31. The first time that the Navy was used in a Military Operation was by the Persian Army around 2,500B.C.
32. The first time that the ships were used as bridge to cross the river, was done by King Darius, who crossed the Nile and conquered Egypt.
33. The first ruler who planned and constructed the Suez Canal in Egypt was King Xerxes of Persia (539 B.C.).
34. The first time that a canal was built to connect two seawaters was by King Xerxes of Persia, who built the Xerxes' canal, near Greece, and attacked Greece, during the Persian Wars, 500 B.C. (International Herald Tribune, Nov. 15, 2001).
35. One of the earliest Legal Codes in the world is called The Law of the Medes and the Persians.
36. The first system of federal government was started in the Persian Empire. There were many Ostans (Stan or State, like what you see in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Hindu-stan, Uzbeki-stan, etc.) that were run by the satraps or smaller kings (Shah) who were under the great king or Shahan-Shah (Kings' King).
37. The first secret service, called the eyes and the ears of the king, was started in Persia.
38. The first world leader, who was called great, was Cyrus the Great of Persia, some 200 years ahead of Alexander the Great!
39. Darius the Great of Persia established the First Tax System, Customs Duties, Official Records and The Legal Code, at the world level.
40. Countries of the world, whose names are originally Persian: 1) Afghanistan, 2) Iran, 3) Kazakhstan, 4) Azarbaijan (Fire Temples Land), 5) Turkmenistan, 6) Kyrgystan, 7) Tajikistan 8) Uzbekistan, 9) Pakistan (Land of the Pure), 10) Hindustan (also the Khalistan of the Sikhs).

41. Regions of the world, whose names are originated from Persian: 1) Dagestan (Caucasus), 2) Qara Bagh (Azarbaijan, also Afghanistan) 3) Baluchistan (Iran and Pakistan) 4) Rajastan (India) 5) Panjab or Punjab (India and Pakistan) 6) Waziristan (Pakistan) 7) Turkistan (China) 8) Kurdistan (Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria and Russia), 9) Bash-Kurtustan (Russia), 10) Hazara (Afghanistan, Pakistan) 11) Kafiristan, 12) Noorestan (Afghanistan) 13) possibly, the Iranian tribes of the Southern Philippines, the Ire-an of Palawan (Pahlawan?) in Southern Philippines, and the Irian Jaya of Indonesia, etc.
42. Capitals of the world, whose names are Persian:
 1. **Baghdad** (Iraq), combination of Bagh (God, Garden) and Dad (justice / giving) A God given Place (Diosdado) or Garden of Justice (of King Anush Ravan or Anushirvan of Persia). Actually, Baghdad was rebuilt by the Iranian Master Architect, Nou-Bakht, during the Abbasid Era (8th century A.D.).
 2. **Damascus** (City of Musk, capital of Syria, the oldest existing city in the world).
 3. **Ashq Abad** (or Eshqabad) capital of Turkmenistan.
 4. **Islamabad** capital of Pakistan (Note: Abad in Persian means Town, City).
 5. **Baku** (Baad Kubeh = the Windy City) capital of Azerbaijan.
 6. **Doshanbeh**, capital of Tajikistan.
 7. **Tashkant** (or Tashkent) capital of Kyrgystan.
 8. **Muscat** or Muskat (Musky, see Webster) the Capital of Oman, on the shores of the Persian Gulf.
 9. **Samarkant** (or Samarqand) Capital of Uzbekistan.
 10. **Bandar Sri Begawan** (Brunei).
 11. **Irvan** (Yerevan) capital of Armenia (Armanestan).
 12. **Astana**, Capital of Kazakhstan.
 13. **Moscow** or Musk-va (City of Musk, from Moschi or Moschos = Persian word for musk).

to be continued

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Remembring OSTAD SHAHRIAR

Mohammad Hossein Behjat Tabrizi, whose pen name is Shahriyar was undoubtedly a gifted and talented contemporary poet. He is the composer of the first and the most famous Turkish (the local Azari version) poetry collection ever written by an Iranian. Born in 1906 in Tabriz, he studied Divan Hafiz under his father's supervision and teachings. His father was a lawyer. Therefore, his first formal education was in Tabriz and later at Darul-Fonoon School in Tehran. Although he studied medicine in college he dropped-out right before getting his diploma, to go to Khorassan.

Initially he used to publish his poems under the name Behjat, but later he changed it to Shahriyar. The work of this passionate and gifted poet was initiated by composing tragic and heart breaking (*por suz o godaz*) poems. Years passed and he composed countless poems, until he finally at old age managed to publish his long awaited beautiful poetry collection of contemporary Iranian literature.

He has tried to write an autobiography in the form of poems, as the reader can learn about Shahriyar's biography by reading his divan. Many of his bitter and sweet memories are reflected in his books, "Hazyan Del", "Heydar Baba", "Mumia'ii" and "Night Fable." His other book, Takhte Jamshid is a collection of epic poems that reveals the poet's imagination. Shahriyar has composed diversified forms of poetry including lyrics, quatrains, couplets, odes and elegy poems.

Heydar Baba, composed in Turkish and later translated into Persian is considered one of his artistic works. Heydar Baba is the name of a mountain where the poet spent his childhood. Shahriyar also played the *sitar* (a musical instrument) very well and had a keen interest in and knowledge of music. He was also a good calligrapher.

As if flying on the wings of creative and dynamic imagination, he demonstrates his sensitive poetic spirit throughout all his books. You can sense a kind of tendency toward innovations in his work. The major reasons of his success in literature is the simplicity of his words. His poems can be understood even by a layman. He expresses his own ideas in this manner. The novelty in context and commentary is what makes his poetry distinguished. He died in 1988 to become an eternal celebrity.



Pictures by: Hamed Haghdoost, Fars News Agency

THE ROAD TO SUCCESSFUL INVESTING

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The road to successful investing is paved differently for each investor. One investor's road to success may be the high road, while another's may be the low road. However, common to both investors is basic principles that are true to form no matter which road an investor finds himself taking. Below is a listing of some of these basic principles that may lead an individual along the road to successful investing.

FORMALIZE YOUR GOALS.

As with the achievement of any goal, commitment to the goal is half the battle. Formalize your commitment to attaining your goals by writing them down, both short-term and long-term. Follow your progress by updating them at least annually. How else will you know if you are actually going to attain your goals?

INVEST EARLY AS POSSIBLE.

Procrastination is an investor's worst enemy. Though there is no perfect or ideal time to start investing now may be the best time of all.

INVEST IN WHAT YOU UNDERSTAND.

If you do not understand how an investment works, you will not fully understand the risks associated with that investment. Is it really worth placing your hard-earned money in this type of investment? No.

CONSIDER THE IMPACT OF INFLATION AND TAXES.

Inflation and taxes erode an investor's purchasing power. The consideration of investments that minimize the impact of these two forces may be key in meeting your goals.

YOUR PORTFOLIO IS FOR YOU AND YOU ALONE.

The design and formulation of your portfolio is based on your goals, time-horizon and risk-tolerance. Understand that what may work for your friend, cousin, or co-worker may not work for you because one size does not fit all.

A BASKET OF EGGS IS BETTER THAN JUST ONE.

Diversification of your investment assets may bring the positive benefits of reduced risk and stable returns to your investment portfolio basket. Mutual Funds are a cost efficient way to invest while at the same time reaping the benefits of diversification.

USE TIME, NOT TIMING WHEN INVESTING.

Trying to correctly time the ups and downs of the market is a risky, if not impossible, task. Most investors will fare far better by keeping their investment assets in the market the entire time. It is time in the market, not timing the market.

THE OLD TEAM PLAYER MAY BE BETTER THAN A YOUNG HOTSHOT.

Try to avoid the temptation of investing in the new "hotshot" investment that may lose its luster quickly. Seek investments with solid track records that will benefit you more over the long run.


KNOW WHEN TO CUT YOUR LOSSES.

Many investors do not know when to get out of an investment. If your investment selection is heading south and most likely won't return to previous form, face the music and consider getting out before your lumps get too big.

DON'T FORGET YOUR CHECK-UPS.

Your financial portfolio may need gradual adjustment as your lifestyle changes. You should review your holdings with your financial advisor at least once a year. If you have a major life change (e.g. marriage, baby, job change or early retirement), make an immediate appointment.

Reza Mollabashy began his career with Prudential Securities in Pittsburgh, PA, (now Wachovia Securities). He then accepted a position with Morgan Stanley in Indianapolis, IN, and was awarded the professionals foundations certificate in recognition for his ongoing commitment in serving clients with professionalism and integrity. Recently, he accepted a position with Raymond James as a Wealth Management Specialist. Born in Wabash, Indiana, Reza now resides in McCordsville, Indiana with his wife, Jessica. Reza is a graduate of Indiana State University with accreditations in economics and history.



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The Last of Hesarol-Saltaneh's Line

By: Jahangir Hedayat

Translated By: Kambiz Parsai

It was a fine day in autumn. I was sauntering about the streets in "Gholhak," enjoying my time pausing now and then at a shop-window.

Coming upon a big shoe-shop, I stopped to have a look at the shoes in the spacious window. After a minute or two, at the moment I decided to pass by and continue my way along the pavement, I suddenly noticed at a close distance, the approaching figure of a fat and rather short woman of about sixty.

Apparently and for an unknown reason, she had been having a watchful eye on me for a couple of minutes and was now coming directly towards me, brisk despite her age and fatness.

She was attired in the Islamic dark garb and wimple. Her face was not familiar to me at all. Why should she have been watching me? I didn't know and couldn't figure out. I stopped to see what was the matter. Was she an acquaintance? A trouble-maker? Or simply an addle-brained wretch?

When coming close enough, she said, "Good Day! Can you imagine who is the lady talking to you at this moment?"

I returned her greeting and fell silent as I was wondering what I could possibly say in answering her strange question. She had a tired and throaty voice like someone who had talked over her physical limits. Yet, her tone was firm and one could sense the self-confidence and well-

practiced eloquence in her wording. No more waiting for my answer, she added in a stretchy, impressing tone, trying to enrich it with all the poise and charm she could muster: "I'm the daughter of Hesarol-Saltaneh!"

This put me in a still more difficult position. I was truly puzzled. Was she really an acquaintance whose face and name I had forgotten? Was she after some sort of blackmailing and her claim was just a prelude to a later revealing of her intentions?

I didn't know and couldn't yet figure out. At any rate, I said, "No, I didn't know you are the daughter of 'Hesarol-Saltaneh'."

Suddenly she assumed a haughty blaming grimace and said, "No wonder that you do not know the daughter of Hesarol-Saltaneh!" She said this with such conceit as if wanting to say, "You cheap, low class nonentities do not merit the privilege of knowing a personality like the daughter of Hesarol-Saltaneh!" She continued, "All the noble and high-class know me very well." She sighed and added in a tone of deep nostalgia: "well, pity indeed! We were once among the top-brass and very influential-with all sorts of connections you might imagine!"

I asked, "by the way, what were the social undertakings of your beloved father, Excellency Hesarol-Saltaneh?"

For a second or two she looked up and down at me with great surprise, apparently deeply astonished at my

ignorance.

She said, "what an odd question! I presume you have been living abroad for many years. Hesarol-Saltaneh was the king's minister. Yes sir. He was a minister at the time of His Majesty Nasereddin Shah!"

This statement almost convinced me that I was dealing with a big liar and a charlatan. Daughter of the royal minister of Nasereddin Shah era could not possibly be a woman of her age wandering in the streets of Gholhak and chatting with the pedestrians! I began to weigh the situation in my mind more carefully, trying to find out what was under way and to what end she was fabricating the scenario. Was she simply a chatter-box looking for patiently listening ears? Was she pretending to be a big shot just to ask for an accordingly big thing? Was she luring me into an adventure?

In similar situations, usually people look for a way to immediately get rid of the entanglement, but I was different. I loved to meet the challenge and get involved!

Of course I observed all cautionary measures not to get stuck in a groove. At the outset, I was not sensing any threat: the claimant to Hesarol-Saltaneh's line was not young enough to make me be apprehensive of her imposing herself on me. I had her under close scrutiny, but she too, was doing the same. She was clever enough. She was looking straight into my eyes and had all my movements

under an analytical control. She was on full alert not to lose her grip on me. She continued: "Yes my dear, you're not talking to someone of trivial importance. Since I was only a little girl, I was the favorite of my father, his Highness the Prince. Besides, I was his last child and very dear to him and the family. I had two bond-maids in attendance, one white and one black. The white bond-maid believed double-plaits would become me more, but the black bond-maid insisted on having my hair straight and laying on my shoulders. You can't imagine what beautiful braids I had-long and shiny, reaching under my waist. Don't judge me on my present appearance. Passage of time and hardships of life have left nothing of my ravishing beauty. Yes, time is indeed senseless and cruel!"

I was gradually getting very interested in her and in what she said. I interrupted her and asked:

"Where was the house of your later father?"

For a second or two she stood transfixed, seemingly her self-confidence shaken and her firmness giving way. But she had a quick mind and was clever enough not to easily give up! In a matter-of-fact tone she said, "well, yes, so obvious! He lived in his palace in 'Arg'. It's a very strange question. I can not believe that you do not know the answer! Well, there were two big palaces in 'Arg'. One was that of the king and the other was that of my late father! It

was impressively beautiful and unbelievably spacious. If you wanted to go from one end of the garden to the other end, you had no way but to go on a coach. You couldn't possibly walk the long distance!"

She was indeed an odd person, more and more meriting my interest and curiosity as she went on with the elaboration of her story. She knew her job and had a reservoir of more or less good information about the past. I was certain she had never been on a royal coach. Her age witnessed that fact very evidently. I even doubted if she had ever been on the passenger coaches of Tehran either. Yet, I asked, "You drove on a coach?"

Assuming a sad grimace, she said in a complaining tone:

"There were no vehicles at that time-no cars, no taxis, no buses only horse-driven coaches my dear. The private coach of Prince Hesarol-Saltaneh was something beyond description. It was indeed a 'state of art' feat of craftsmanship. High-class families would come and borrow it from my father for the wedding night of their daughters. The handles of the doors were made of gold. The seats were covered by light-red satin. The coach-driver had a special uniform with rims of golden thread needle-work, a pair of black leather boots and a long whip. An attendant in uniform would stand on the rear-bar of the coach and during evenings another attendant in uniform, bearing a lantern, would run ahead of the coach."

Well indeed! This strange woman, claiming to be the daughter of Prince Hesarol-Saltaneh, had apparently rehearsed her lessons very well and was very skillfully coaxing me into believing her story! I said, "may I ask what is your academic education?"

She said: "Well, as you might know, there were no schools in those days like what we have today. Children did their education mainly at "*Maktab-Khaneh*".² But to me being the last and the most beloved child of the Prince, a tutor was employed to teach me at home. The quality of education in those days was really high. It had a depth. We studied pretty good and pretty hard. A child who finished the primary school could well be rated as knowledgeable and as informed as a person of our time who has completed a full program of university education! Yes my dear, and now you see me sir, the daughter of Hesarol-Saltaneh, degraded to dire depths of poverty in need of Just 500 Toomans!"³

I heaved a sigh of relief. Finally the purpose of the whole drama surfaced, and even the price of this interesting conversation too was very clearly stated!

She continued: "May no one meet the ugly fate I have met! May no one fall from the heights of glory and wealth unto the dark abyss of poverty, disrepute and ignominy! May no one meet such doom! Yes sir, That's what has happened to me. I, daughter of Prince Hesarol-Saltaneh, who once had her daily meals in gold dishes, wore dresses woven with golden threads, her

shoes arrived from Paris, had the most luxurious organ to practice music, had this, had that, now has to ask for a charity of only 500 Toomans!"

I asked: "Where is your home by the way?"

"Somewhere around this area."

I felt there was no more left in bag and she had no more to add to the fabricated scenario. Nothing was left except the main thing and that was a 500 Tooman note!

I had come to gradually develop a liking for this fake princess and was quite ready to give her a 500 Tooman note, but I felt like continuing this "historical" conversation and hear her talking about her apparently imaginary glorious past. There was yet another question hovering my mind: What had made her think of me as a simpleton who could be easily deceived? Had she observed some signs of simplicity and foolishness in my face that had tempted her to bring the scenario to me? This was not now of much importance as I was convinced it wouldn't affect the base of the matter. She had really amused me. I was even happy that she had selected me from among the dense crowd. She had filled my time by telling me interesting stories about her past, false or true, and was now demanding just a 500 Tooman note as a remuneration!

She had fallen silent and was staring at me with a sad and skeptic look.

She was afraid I might resort to some excuse and deny her the expected note.

She put a special emphasis on the sum "*Five hundred*

Toomans!"

As if talking to herself, I heard her say: "Where are you Hesarol-Saltaneh? Where are you to see your beloved daughter, the last of your line, the gem of your palatial mansion, left with nothing of the splendor of her past, and for a bad need to just 500-Toomans is bothering a top-to-toe gentleman in the street."

This was yet another calculated move she had thought as a wise move to make!

She had complemented me as being "a top-to-toe gentleman" to further ensure my paying her the money! She finished her declamation by very clearly stating: "Yes sir, just 500 Toomans will meet my needs."

My hand went into my pocket for my wallet. Her eyes shone with hope as she very carefully followed the movement of my hand. When I finally took out my wallet. I observed the shade of a hidden faint smile on her face.

I took out a 500 Toomans note and was thinking to give it to her after some words of consolation, but she suddenly jumped, snatched the note in the air and before I came to know what had happened, she vanished in the dense of the crowd! I took a few steps in the direction she ran, but in vain. A young man, who had apparently witnessed the scene, asked me: "Did she rob your money sir?" I laughed and said,

"No. I gave her the money on my own wish. I know her. She is the last of the line of the reputed Hesarol-Saltaneh!"

❖❖❖




1. Families with a suffix of "Saltaneh" or "Dowleh" were the aristocrats of Iran of some 70 years ago. (Translator)

2. Old-fashioned primary schools. Usually a "Mullah" (clergyman) would teach at "Maktab-khaneh" and the syllabus consisted mainly of religious teachings. (Translator)

3. About 50 cents. (Translator)

* A satirist of unique poignancy, critic and writer, Jahangir Hedayat is the nephew of the well-reputed Iranian writer Sadegh Hedayat. Jahangir has made the greatest contribution to the preservation of his late uncle's works. (Translator)

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Interview with

DR. JIM BAKHTIAR

*Member of the
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SHAROKH AHKAMI



It is a pleasure to finally meet you Dr. Bakhtiar and provide the opportunity for all of our readers to get to know you and learn your remarkable story. Can you begin with a small introduction about yourself and how it was, you came to America?

Thank you and *Persian Heritage* for asking me to do this interview. I was born in Tehran, Iran, my mother was an American from Weiser, Idaho and my father came from Borogen, a village in the Bakhtiari Mountains outside of Isfahan, Iran. So, I came from two cultures and biological gene-pools.

Do you see yourself, Iranian or American?

I do not see myself as one or the other, but as either and or; I look at myself as American and Iranian. We lived in Borjin until 1934. In 1939, my mother decided to take a trip with my two sisters to America to see her aging parent. Unfortunately, while in America the war started and she couldn't return until 1946. My brother, other two sisters and I stayed with my father.

After the war, Iran was a confusing place. Reza Shah was asked to leave in 1941 and Mohammed Reza Shah replaced him as the monarch. Iran was also divided into spheres of influence: British American and Russians.

How did your mother and father meet?

My mother was in New York studying nursing and met my father at Bellevue Hospital, during dad's residency. Dad came to America and became the first trained Iranian physician in 1926. For him it was a land of opportunity. He took pre-med courses at the University of South Dakota and Columbia and received his medical school diploma from the University of Syracuse Medical school in 1926.

Lets get back to your experience of coming to America.

Knowing America was going to be a better place for his seven children, he made the decision to send all of us with my mother. Our trip here was an expe-

rience. It was an extremely emotional departure for me. I was very close to my father. I didn't know my father was not included in the plans to come to America until we were on the ship. I turned to my mother and asked where my dad was and then I saw him in his jeep on the shore. This was a depressing moment for me. I believe it gave rise to my interest in "post traumatic stress disorder" and "separation anxiety" and the havoc they play on one's life. The ship we were on had with two thousand American soldiers returning from the war in Southeast Asia. They had so many issues regarding the war. I found refuge in befriending the cook and spent most of my time with him.

Why didn't your father come?



He was established in Iran as a physician. My father did not become a doctor until the age of 55. You see, in 1919 there was a famine in Iran and he helped set-up soup kitchens, with an American team. He befriended Dr. Leland Rex Robinson and Mr. Wayne Sarka, who were members of the economic team from America. He begged them to allow him transportation to America to become a doctor. After he finished his undergraduate education at Alborz, with the help of Dr. Samuel Jordan, Mr. Sarka and Dr. Robertson arrangements were made for him to come to America.

What do you think intrigued him about medicine?

He finished grade school at 30! This was a stroke of luck for him. Both his parents died before he was seven. So he was raised by family and friends. One family, Morteza Aholi Khan and his wife had two children. They asked my dad to accompany the children to Dr. Jordan's school in Tehran. He was allowed, with condition that he complete two years per one year of attendance.

How did he get back to Iran?

The Minister of Health in Iran contacted him and asked him to return to Iran, so my parent moved to Tehran. Dad worked at Tehran University and later became Dean of the Medical School. Together, my parents started the first women's hospital at Tehran University.

When you finally arrived in the America and where did you dock?

We landed in Newport News, Virginia and then we went to Washington, DC.; we were helped by our former friends, the Maucks.

It was a real struggle for my mom alone with the seven children. But, she was determined. Living at the Maucks was wonderful. While there, we met Hajji Mohammad Namazi and his family. He held parties every Sunday for all the Iranians in the D.C. area. My mom took us every week so it helped our exposure to our Iranian culture. Later my mother returned to Iran and worked with Aid to International Development, as a nurse/midwife in Bakhtiari villages. My brother Cyrus and my sister Laleh went to Iran. I

stayed in Washington, D.C. by myself.

This must have been difficult?

It was, but my father had taught us to be independent.

Were you very close to him?

Yes, and I was close to all his other wives and children.

How many children in all?

Seven from my mom, five daughters and two sons, and ten children from the next marriage to Zangham.

How old was he when he passed away?

I think 99 or 100 and in 1971, in Tehran.

Let us get back to your life.

I got lucky in high school and discovered my latent sport talents. I began playing football at Western High School, Washington, D.C. It was my coach Fred Mulvey who was responsible for reinforcing my talents. One day he told me I had a good chance of going to college on a football scholarship but my academics and study habits weren't up to speed. He got me a scholarship to the Bullis Prep School, the prep school for the Naval Academy and West Point. Harry Deming was the coach of the football team. We had a wonderful winning season.

We played a championship bowl game, Silver Bowl, in Silversprings, MD., against the freshmen of University of Maryland. After the game, Harrison Nesbit, the coach from the University of Virginia came over to me and said, "Big boy you're coming to my university." I was given a four-year scholarship and from that point, things fell into place. I started taking premed courses and I received a number of sports awards. My proudest remains the All American Award. I still hold some records at the university. I am the only player in the Atlantic Coast Conference that finished as a top runner in America for three years in varsity football.

And after that what happened?

After my senior year, I went to Canada to play professional football for the Calgary Stampeders for one year. I needed tuition money for medical school. My salary was \$17,000, which was enough to cover it. I returned to the University of Virginia for medical school and graduated in 1963, and then went to Los Angeles County Hospital in Los Angeles, California for my rotating internship. I completed my residency at the University of California in San Francisco, California.

Why did you choose psychiatry?

I don't know if you have ever heard of a writer called Howard Gardner but he wrote a book called, Frames of Mind. In the book he discusses seven intelligences that we may have: scientific, musical, spatial, linguistics, kinesthetic, inter personal and intra psychic. For some reason I found myself categorized in the last two intelligences. Because I liked to interact with people, I decided that psychiatry would be the best course for me. Once I decided to pursue this goal I loved the field. I went to the University of California, San Francisco to continue my studies.

I was drafted in 1963-1964. I was supposed to report to Oakland, California for submarine duty in Vietnam. I knew I would die on a submarine, so I called Washington, D.C. to see if I had any other options. I was told that I could put my name in a lottery and if chosen, I could go to a non-military division of the armed services. I was chosen to serve with the U.S. Public Health Service. I was stationed at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Washington, D.C. Following my military obligation with the U.S. Public Health Service I returned to the University of California, in San Francisco for a three year program at the Dr. Jung Institute in San Francisco. My experience there influenced my decision to study and understand post traumatic stress disorders.

With all this going on, how did you fit in marriage and children?

I actually fit in five marriages with my most recent, two years ago. I have five wonderful children: two by my first wife, two by my second marriage, and one with

my third wife, who lives in Norway.

When did you return to Iran?

In 1974, after the death of my brother Cyrus in Washington, D.C. I wanted to bring his body back to Iran to be buried next to his parents in Tus, near the tomb of Ferdowsi.

You went back to Iran?

Yes, in 1975. I closed my practice in the US and moved to Shiraz. I took a job at Shiraz University but it didn't work out.

I then went to Ispahan University and became the head of the Psychiatric Department. We lived there until the start of the Islamic revolution. It was an overwhelming experience. Martial law was in place and professors were divided by their allegiances. Thought I tried to remain independent eventually students began to confront their professors and emphasized Islamic ideology. Iran became a pressure cooker, so we moved to Tehran but I worked in Ispahan.

The atmosphere in Tehran was also changing. My son got involved with the *Komiteh* which I was against. So, I made the decision to send my family to America. We were unable to get visas. I asked my neighbor for help. The evening we were leaving, the Pasdars came to the house. They arrested me and took me off to the *majlis* for one month. It was the *Komiteh's* leading prison. They confiscated my wife's jewelry, emptied our bank accounts and told us it would be returned in five years.

How did they treat you in jail?

Amicably, I was never tortured. One of the guards and I would converse in English. I told him that my identity no longer belonged in Iran, and to please let me go. He refused and told me that we would have to remain in Iran and should go back to teaching for the next five years.

How did you pass the time in prison?

While in prison, I practice psychoanalysis. One of the prisoners came to me one night with his dream. He was about eighteen-years-old and arrested for having a bomb strapped to his motorcycle. He dreamed he fell from a ship. People in the boat kept throwing ropes to him but they were too short. The next morning he was put in front of a firing squad. I was fearful that I was going to be executed or imprisoned for a very long time.

Many of the professors I knew in Isfahan came and spoke on my behalf. Because of their support, I was finally released. Our entire family was so grateful.

And how did you eventually escape?

With the help of the parents of a patient, I was given a number to call to make the arrangements. It cost 400,000 toumans. Of course, I didn't have the money but offered the person my rugs car, etc. to meet the expenses.

We did three dry runs before the actual escape. My wife and children had no idea that this was happening. The guide first took me to a village near the Kurd-



ish border where I was transferred into a jeep. The terrain was too treacherous in Zahadan near the Pakistani border that I decided it would not be safe for my children and pregnant wife. So, we went another way through Turkey.

The departure date was the morning after the children's last day of school. I told my wife the night before. She was petrified. The children had no idea. We didn't want to tell them anything as we were afraid that they would talk to their friends. When we woke them at 4 a.m. they thought they were going on vacation.

We arrived at the first checkpoint. In the village, we transferred to another vehicle, that's when the children realized what was going on. There were many Iranians there, they told me to be careful. Apparently, the Turks were returning Iranian refugees to Iran, especially if they were politically involved.

I called my sister, Dr. Lailee Bakhtiar, whose husband was Turkish and had family in Istanbul. We stayed with her husband's family for six weeks until we could make arrangements with the U.S. Embassy to get to our passports and visas to return to America.

Once you arrived back in the States, how did you live?

I was blessed with many friends and they all came through. The Kessler's allowed us to stay in one of their townhouses. We stayed there for three months while I updated my medical license. A good friend of mine, Dr. Massi suggested that I get into hospital administration.

I took a job in Albuquerque, New Mexico as head of the Psychiatric department at the Lovelace Medical Center and Heights Psychiatric Hospital's psychiatric departments. With the advent of HMO's the hospital closed and I moved back to Virginia. I was there for the 100th year of the University of Virginia Football Celebration; it was 1988.

Mr. Harry Davenport, a man I had not seen for forty years, started to speak with me. He lived in Charles Town, West Virginia. He asked me what I wanted to do and I explained I wanted a simple life, acres for horses and no traffic. Before I knew it, we were off to Charles Town where we have lived ever since. I worked at East Ridge Health Systems as a psychiatrist.

Can you tell the readers how

your name got back in the news regarding football?

My son called me about a year ago after he received a call from a woman in New York, saying I should call her back. Her name was Natalie and she was calling me from ESPN. Each year they pick a former player from the All American Football Team, to become a member of the Alumni Football Hall of Fame. The award was developed by the Football Writers Association and started in 1957. I was chosen to be a candidate for the 2006 rooster. The criteria for winning the honor deals with your achievements for fifty years after leaving the sport. I was the first foreign born to become an All American and the story of my life was very interesting. I had to go to Orlando, Florida, for the award show, Regis Philbin was the host. It was a very proud moment for me and my family.

What made you get into football?

I found my inner strengths on the football field. In many ways, it defined me physically and mentally. It was also a great avenue for me, as a foreign born, to be accepted in America.

Can you tell us the happiest moment in your life?

I am not certain it was the happiest moment but my deciding moment was when Tom Hunter, then Dean of the University of Virginia's Medical School, called my name to pick up my medical diploma. I remember throwing my hat so high in the air. I knew it would be my greatest personal accomplishment and laid the foundation for my future. I always wanted to be a doctor and it was now a reality. Happy moments in my life are definitely my marriages and the birth of my children.

Is there something you would like to say to our readers before we end the interview?

The most important things one can have in life are goals, faith and determination! I was fortunate to have the opportunity to be in America, a country that in spite of its sometimes political mistakes, is truly the land of opportunity. It is a place where one can realize their dreams. Opportunities here are extensive and it truly should remain a role model for the entire world.

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SUFI WINE

Sufism added a new dimension to the meaning of wine. Wine was no longer a mere intoxicating drink; wine became an expansive symbol which helps describe the goal of the seeker – an altered state of consciousness where internals merge with externals, lovers unite with beloveds, particulars combine with universals, and that which is below joins with that which is above. In short, wine becomes a symbol for the ineffable merging of inner and outer realities. The Sufis employed the provocative drinking terminology of the libertine to describe the intoxication of spiritual union. Abu Nuwas says, “Crust and poor is every hour that sober I must go.” Hafez says, “Any lover offered night-transforming wine/ Betrays love by not worshipping drunkenness.” It’s difficult to contextualize the Sufi’s use of the libertine’s drinking terminology. This is where things get slippery because the intoxication Hafez is extolling suggests wine drinking, lovemaking, drunken lovemaking, and divine union. The Hafez gambit is to defend against attacks to the first three with the last while simultaneously substituting literal for symbolic, exoteric for esoteric. On the mundane level, such ethical distinctions between devout and libertine are possible; however, from the ultimate view of union with the divine, intrinsically all four states are indistinguishable; each already contains the meanings of all the others. As Shimmel explains, such Sufi terminology complicates Hafez, poem, “It may be difficult for a modern reader to appreciate this multi-faceted quality of Hafez’s poetry. However, one has always to keep in mind that the Persian spirit was at that point deeply permeated by Sufi thought and thus by the belief that the divine presence is felt in the different manifestations of life. The rose that blooms in the garden points to the eternal rose...” (222).

Although wine remained scandalous as a literal intoxicant, a tradition arose in which wine became a Sufi symbol for what is

beyond “conceptual thought.” The Sufi tradition of using wine as a fundamental symbol goes at least as far back as, Umar Ibn al-Farid (1181-1235 CE) who was the most famous Arab Sufi poet. “Umar Ibn al-Farid composed the mystical “Wine Ode” (“al-Khamrigah”) that establishes the intoxication from wine as the symbol of an ecstatic state of union:

We quaffed upon the remembrance of the Beloved a wine wherewith we were drunken, before ever the vine was created.

The moon at the full its cup was; itself was a sun, that a crescent moon passeth round; how many a star gleams forth, when that wine is mingled!

And, but for its fragrance, never had I been guided into its tavern; and but for its radiance, never had the mind’s imagination pictured it... (Glassé 221).

The use of wine is symbolic because the wine causing “drunkenness” was imbibed “before even the vine was created.” All of the astrological bodies “sun,” “moon,” “crescent,” “full moon,” and “stars” emit the “radiance” which will allow the mind’s imagination to picture a state of light or illumination. “Fragrance” or “light” leads the seeker to the tavern, the location of union, the place where ego is transcended, the place of meeting the Saki or love.

Love then awakens the desire for union, and the wine’s drunkenness eliminates the obstacle to union – the ego. Only egoless, limitless, timeless union can introduce the non-dual experience:

And my spirit was distraught with love for it, in such a manner that the twain were mingled together in unification, and not as body is permeated by another:

“Tis a soul and no wine there, when Adam is reckoned my father, but a wine and no soul there, when the vine thereof is

reckoned my mother.

Now the subtlety of the vessels is really consequential upon the subtlety of the inward truths, and the inward truths augment by means of the vessels.

And the division truly has taken place, while yet the Whole is one: our spirits being the wine, and our corporeal shapes the vine...

Then let him weep for himself, whose life is all wasted, and he not in all his days the Wine taken part or portion (Glassé 221).

In the passage, we find the traditional Sufi Language of "wine", "cup", "tavern," and "drunkenness." The excuse for drinking is associated with "the remembrance of the beloved." The experience of drinking like the experience of love transforms the dualities of "sun" and "moon," "wine" and "vine," "Adam (father) and "mother (vine)," spirit and corporeal shapes, the inward truths and outward realities, the temporal and universal, worshiper and Allah, "lover" and "beloved" "in such a manner that the twain were mingled in unification." Here we find the mystical language of paradox, "And the division truly has taken place, while yet the whole is one." Here again the body under the literal or symbolic influence of wine has become the tool of spiritual practice. The intoxication leads the lover to appreciate the "mystical" beloved which can be signified by man, woman, ideal, or Allah. Homein explains the Sufi implications of wine in this way, "The wine naturally came to symbolize the eternal love flowing between God and his worshipers, and Sufi manuals often cite wine verse to allude to this intimate relationship (42). Murshid Inayat Khan, on the other hand, expresses the specific relationship between the individual and wine as being unique:

The word OEwine, is often used, and according to the mystic, each person drinks a wine peculiar to himself. Hafiz pictures the whole world as a winepress, and every person takes that wine which is in accord with his own evolution. The wine of one is not the wine of another. He wishes to impress the idea that every person, whether evolved or ignorant, whether honest or dishonest, whether he realizes it or not, whether he has great belief or no belief at all, is in every case taking a certain wine. It is the type of intoxication produced by that particular wine which is his individuality, and when a person changes, he does so by drinking another wine. Every different kind of wine changes the outlook on life, and every change in life is like taking a different wine ("Shams-ud-Din Mohammed Hafiz.").

This passage is an excellent example of the "mystical" use the symbol of wine in such a radically different way than anywhere in the West. The wine Inayat Khan is describing is no earthly vintage, but rather a complex, extended metaphor describing a philosophical ontology. The "whole world as a wine-press" which doles out a different wine and intoxication to each person according to his or her "evolution" suggests that each individual experiences intoxication but at a different level than all others. Thus, although the inevitability of drinking of the wine of experience is obligatory for everyone, only the phenomenological experience of the drunkenness or ecstasy is different for each individual depending on how "evolved" that individual has become. Here the discourse of the libertine and that of the Sufi share some of the same terminology. For this reason, the Sufis are frequently treated with the same disdain as the libertines by the clerics. Such is the intricacy of Sufi wine.

For the fundamentalist clergy Hafez, as his sobriquet suggests, is viewed as the master of the Qur'an and, therefore, a master of religion as well. From the clergy's point of view, Hafez employs wine solely as a symbol for the union with Allah. The wine mentioned is never conceived as real wine, and the drunkenness is always understood metaphorically. Therefore, all the wine drinking, tavern going, and Saki love is interpreted metaphorically as language employed to offer everyday graspable imagery by which ordinary people may begin to comprehend the egoless, limitless, timeless aspect of the non-dual experience of union with God. Like the many allegorical interpretations of the Song of Songs, Hafez, works can be used from the pulpit for purely religious points concerning divine love.

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Can you inform the readers about your personal background including your education?

I was born in Kabul, Afghanistan on August 6, 1958, the same day, though years later, as the bombing of Hiroshima. Interestingly enough the sadness that day brings to so many seems to be my birthright. While I was born into a very loving and caring family and community, I always felt sad and lonely and felt as if I lived in a cave. I escaped through my interest in art, sculpting, painting and poetry. These three elements allowed me to test my imagination and free my soul.

So, you were interested in art at a very early age.

Yes

Where did you pursue your art education?

I took art classes in Afghanistan with Master Ghalam Mohammads Mimangi and won an award from the Ministry of Culture. I then went to Moscow to pursue my artistic studies in sculpture. My professor, Pavel Ivanoch Bandrinko was truly the father of my art education in Moscow. I then went to Pakistan for one and one-half years. It was very lonely. Eventually I returned to Kabul for a visit. My father took me to a social event in town where I met my wonderful wife, who was studying to be a doctor. Later we moved to Kassel, Germany, where we were married and still live. I have two wonderful children, my son is in law school and my daughter is an artist and hopes to become a physician.

You suffered from significant health issues; can you please tell us about them and how, if at all, they affected your life and work?

I suffered five cerebral strokes and have back problems. They have affected my ability to work quickly, but I still put in sixteen-hour days. I am fortunate to have a very loving and caring wife who looks after me.

Besides painting, how do you fill your day?

Interview with

BERAHNA MASSOUM

Afghani Sculptor and Painter

SHAROKH AHKAMI

Berahna Massoum has been introduced to *Persian Heritage Magazine's* readers through his writings, poetry and art. In this issue, we share the wonderful experience of our interview with him giving us a personal glimpse about the person and his crafts. *Persian Heritage Magazine* would like to thank Mr. Berahna Massoum for his time and participation in this interview as well as being an active participant in the preservation of our culture, arts and heritage.



I teach sculpture and anatomy at the university. My students are PhD. medical doctors and artists who range in age from 20 to 85. I also exercise, travel and take great enjoyment from the audience who attend my exhibition. It is my hope that I project to them the true me, a person who suffers turbulence inside but one who is filled with love for humankind. I feel one of the main goals for me to accomplish with my art is to have my audience interact with my work.

Coming from another country, did you find teaching in Germany and elsewhere difficult?

Of course, it was a bit difficult because each country has its own individual ideas and culture. As an artist, however, you have the ability to bridge those differences through your work. My years of hard work and education in my field helped me through the difficulties. This is most prevalent in my calligraphy. I use the work of Ferdowsi, Hafez and Omar Khayyam, the great Persian poets to bridge the gaps.

What artistic style do you follow?

In sculpture, I follow realism and symbolism, but I also like microscopicism and psycho realism, which gives one the opportunity to see realism through psychotherapy. It allows the painter, and hopefully the audience, to see beyond the surface of the subject. One should be able to see the psychological influence and thoughts of the subject. I have been considered the pioneer of this artistic medium. In microscopicism, one looks closely with a magnifying glass. I do this to show the audience the scope of molecules.

Do you know of any other artists who follow your style and technique?

Artists should be collaborators, not followers. They should be searching for something better by using something already practiced and come up with new ideas of expression.

How has Afghanistan influenced your art?

It infiltrated every part of my body. It is obvious when you look at my work that I am a Persian-speaking person. But, I must also add that the negatives things I see happening in my country have also affected me – especially the mistreatment of women. These behaviors come from religious fanaticism.

Who and what were your biggest influences in art?

Besides my teachers, I must say poetry and the love that surrounds me.

litical borders were achieved between an ancestry and culture we closely share. It made me so sad and broke my heart.

So, obviously you see and feel a close connection to Iranians, how?

This question is the same as asking two brothers, who have the same mother, why and how they are connected. Like two brothers, Iranians and Afghans are born from the same mother, Persia. Afghanistan is a country that is home to a variety of ethnic, racial and religious cultures under one sky. Most should know that we were, at one time, all linked together like a chain, by common denominators, heritage, language and culture, not to mention we are all Aryans. We should not be misguided by those who benefit from our divisions. It is time that we reunite ourselves. I wrote a poem once about our separation and to this day, it causes me great sadness.

Do you think this separation is only between Afghans and Iranians or is it all over the world?

I do not know the answer to this question, but we must try to understand that the science and art do not have borders; if they did, the world would weaken. So, why is it always necessary to speak to people about the necessity of borders, especially

those with the same heritage? In fact, the only thing that divides Tajikistan, Iran and Afghanistan are these man-made geographical borders. As a people, we remain proud of our heritage and I hope that this factor will soon reunite us. All the world really needs to exist and grow is to be good humans and be kind to one another.

You do not believe in borders between Afghanistan and Iran, but do you have any borders in your artwork and how do you define art?

For me art is holy and love; love does not have a distinct definition. Whoever wants to define love does not know real love. When art is put into the cat-



How did you become interested in Persian Heritage Magazine?

I have always been in love with Persian culture and the influence it has had in Iran, Tajikistan and Afghanistan. This is the heritage of my ancestry and I welcome it into my soul. My first introduction to Persian Heritage Magazine was a very painful experience. I remember being in New York City, looking all over for the magazine. I asked an Afghani friend of mine if he knew where I could get the magazine. He turned to me with surprise and dismay on his face and replied, “Why do you want to read a Persian magazine when you are an Afghani?” This shocked me. It was a realization for me that po-

egory of politics, it becomes smeared and loses its purity. Art should not have borders, yet politics have created them. Of course, there are differences of style in art styles around the world but regardless of choice of style; each form demonstrates the feelings, pains and joy of humanity. There should be no existence of animosity as in geographical and political borders. Take a look at Egyptian, Persian, Greek, Assyrian and Buddhist ancient art when they come next to each other and mix. For example, Greco-Buddhist art, the influence of Mithraism, Zoroastrianism and how their customs have penetrated the west. Again, it is not art that has created borders, but rather politics and politics will continue its ugly course of separating cultures and humanity. If it cannot be accomplished by propaganda it will be done by missiles. Fighting amongst ourselves creates additional hatred, causing us to run from one another. Art, humanity and love, on the other hand, have the power to bring people together.

How is western and eastern culture reflected in your art?

My eastern roots can be found in my Persian culture and language. The eastern specification in my recent work is obvious – it unconsciously penetrates my work.

As an Afghani, how do you feel about living in Germany?

I have two different feelings as an Afghani living in Germany. Sometimes the actions of the Afghanis and Iranians make me tremble and ashamed. I get angry and disappointed by their malicious and vicious behavior. On the other hand, I am so proud of so many. Even though I have lived away from Afghanistan for three decades, I continue to promote my culture and heritage. Like others in my position, we work hard for humanity. Those who embrace their ethnicity and culture and use it in appositive manner will be the ones who carry their heritage forward. Of course, in every part of the world you will find individuals whose actions will try to break your pride and

dignity and teach the world to hate us as a group.

I have to ask you, why you are introduced as a German artist in Germany rather than an Afghani artist now living in Germany?

I have been struggling in the German-artist-circle trying to introduce my culture to the Europeans. This has helped me gain a position as a responsible artist. I am a founding member of the art organization in Kassel and I am an active member in the state of Hessen. I am also fortunate that the German media has taken a liking to me. You know as the Zoroastrians say, “If one does not



have any fanaticism and only has good thoughts, behavior and good speech you will progress in your work.”

You are the only significant immigrant from Hessen, how did you achieve such a level of success?

I think it is because of my academic achievement and quality of my work—Germans respect this.

Besides sculpture and painting, what else do you do in the creative sense?

Poetry and calligraphy; I use poetry as a means to express my feelings and

calligraphy allows me to share beauty. I have loved calligraphy since my childhood, especially Persian calligraphy.

To date, how many exhibits have you had?

Many throughout the world, but the most were in Germany. I look forward to someday exhibit in Israel, Australia, Turkey China and Japan.

Have you ever returned to Afghanistan since your exile?

No and do not believe I will until I know that they open their arms for me and my artwork or at least tolerate both. It would be hard for me to live in an environment of extremes, left or right. I am so saddened by the viciousness and destruction in Afghanistan. For example, the destruction of the giant Buddha sculptures. This did not just belong to Afghanistan it belonged to the world. Afghanistan’s history has been turbulent with many changes of government and rulers. Afghanistan needs to change its foundation and this can only be accomplished through education, knowledge and tolerance. The people must be motivated to change and become an independent productive nation. How can one be motivated when they continue to live in fear and lack deserved freedoms?

What do you miss most about Afghanistan?

I miss the culture, but it is hard to miss things when there is so much sadness; yet I remain proud of my people and its heritage. I pray that my people will soon be able to enjoy their rights and freedoms. I would like to add, however, that even though I have these freedoms in Germany, I remain homeless in my heart.

It is very interesting to me that you are into Buddhism and it is reflected in your style of art, how did this happen?

When the Greeks occupied Afghanistan, they realized the importance of our culture. Additionally, the people of the

land resisted being taken over and losing their identity. So, in the end you had a mixture of both cultures. There is the school of Ghandahara, which I must say was incorrectly spelled in a Persian Heritage article. It was written as Ghandahar. Just for your information, the northeastern central part of Afghanistan was the center of civilization of Ghandahara. I had the opportunity to meet with the Dalai Lama and he told me that it is not important to be a Buddhist, but more important to practice being a good person, showing love and tolerance towards all of humanity.

What are the real duties and obligations of an artist in society?

A true artist is in love with art and love. A true artist should be a responsible human being and must understand society and protect its heritage. Look at the work of Persian Heritage magazine and how carefully it chooses its writings to preserve its heritage. You need to determine what is valuable.

How are you inspired?

I have to tell you, I take it from nature, beauty, pain, ugliness and love. All are inspirations.

What are your thoughts on the suppression of women in Afghanistan?

These are injustices that should not exist and I try to make this clear in my artwork.

Could you tell us any of your pleasant memories?

Of course, my family first of all and then my achievements. I try, always, even though it is difficult at times, to think about sweetness.

Do you have a message for our younger readers?

Yes, they must always work hard in life, be aware of the world situation and

study technology. It is technology that that will eventually remove the borders of the world. Always be proud of your ancient culture, but not so proud that it blinds you from going forward in a productive direction.

There is always discussion among Iranians as to who owns an artist or writer, what are your thoughts?

No one should own anyone. When you create borders, it is usually destructive, divisive and gives rise to arguments. One must think of these great people as coming from one civilization, with the world as their beneficiary. Learn from their contributions. Do not destroy their contributions by putting a border around them. That is what has happened in Iran, Afghanistan and Takjistan and we should be all working to reunite them once again. We have to get past all of this religious fanaticism and become one; after all, we all share a common culture and language.



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