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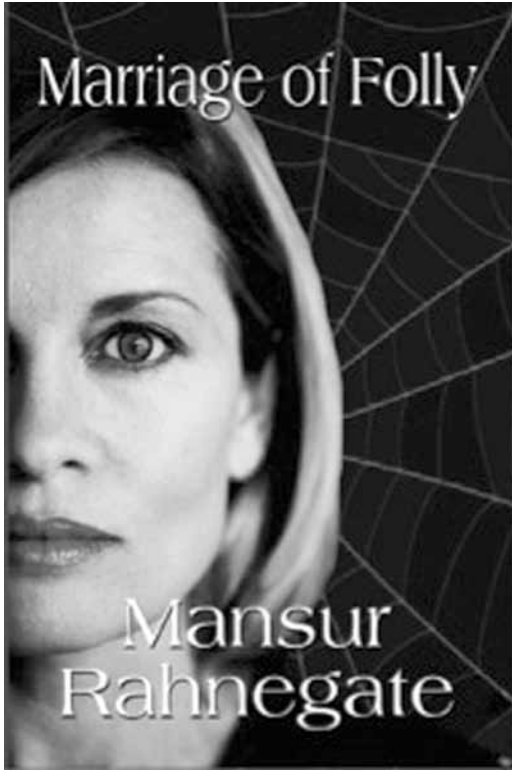
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## PUBLISHED BY

**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 (International)

Typesetting & Layout  
**TALIEH PUBLICATIONS**

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**Summer 2011**

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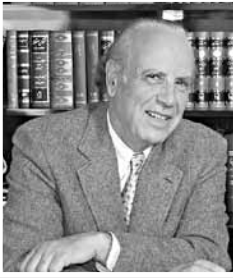
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## IMPORTANT NOTICE

All written submissions to Persian Heritage with the expectation of publication in the magazine must include the writer's name, address and telephone number. When an article is submitted we assume the author has complete ownership of the article and the right to grant permission for publication.



## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The summer issue of Persian Heritage magazine falls on the second anniversary of the Green Movement in Iran; a movement where the young and old took to the streets demanding, "WHERE IS MY VOTE!" As the world watched they were amazed to see such a peaceful demonstration. The image of Iran as a violent nation, over the past 30 years since the hostage taking, was suddenly replaced with an image that shocked most of the western world. The new image was that of brave, educated young and old men and women. Individually and as a group they were organized and committed to their goal and direction. They wanted to be heard, they wanted to be equal, they wanted to be free from the heavy and smothering hand of their government and they wanted their VOTE TO BE COUNTED.

The world watched and noted that these people came to the streets, not to revolt, not to destroy, but rather to rebuild, to regain their simple rights and to find out the results of the "FREE ELECTION!!?!?", since the results they anticipated had not come to pass. The world watched and as surprised and shocked at the organization and peacefulness of the people's demonstration they were more shocked and sickened at the reaction by the Iranian government as they witnessed their machine gunning, torturing and beating of the demonstrators.

It is hard to believe that two years has passed since those events. Many countries have followed in their footsteps. Some movements have been considered successful, such as Egypt, while others, in Syria, Bahrain and Yemen are not only unsuccessful but, have also resulted in the killing, beating, torturing and imprisonment of its citizens. It is interesting that we in the west, (supposedly nurturers of democracy) despite seeing the crimes unfold in front of our eyes, learn to ignore or are hardened to the injustices.

One night after a very long evening at the hospital I returned home at about 3AM. It was the eve of the British Royal wedding. I had no intention of setting my alarm to watch the event, but since I was already up I decided to tune in. Putting my personal feelings aside about the extravaganza I decided to dwell on the fact that two young people, in love, were about to be joined in marriage. They were building a foundation for their journey of life. Like the other millions who watched, I must admit I was mesmerized by the event and enjoyed the love and the

affection the two shared.

Many foreign dignitaries, dressed in traditional garb, filled Westminster Abby. When it was over I got up from the couch and went to prepare myself for the days work. I had forgotten about my sleepless night.

Suddenly, I felt a surge of emotions. The joy and pleasure I felt while watching the wedding were replaced with anger and sadness. I asked myself how countries, such as England and other super powers, enjoy these extravagant comforts that are so often brought about by the destruction and expense of another nation? And, how is it that some of the countries, that have experienced this, attended the event or watched it on television? How, I thought, can the entire world population in this 21<sup>st</sup> century not enjoy the same freedoms of the superpowers? How is it that I as an immigrant for forty-six years, have been allowed to practice these freedoms in a country different from the one in which I was born? They have given me the permission to disagree with the government and not fear for my life. Not only do I and we as citizens of these nations have the right to speak openly and freely but, so does their media. We all have the ability to speak our minds unless it would threaten national security.

WHY, WHY, WHY do the people in the country of my birth, not have these freedoms? HOW, HOW, HOW can I close my eyes and ears to their voices and their hunger for these freedoms. WHY, WHY, WHY does the world allow them to be beaten, tortured and imprisoned for their demands? HOW, HOW, HOW can it be changed?

How many images do we need to see before we are no longer hardened by the violence, but instead are moved to universal action? An image that I will never forget is that of Mrs. Setoudeh. She, a brave young lawyer who defended the human rights of others, was condemned to eleven years in prison for defending these rights. In chains, with hands and feet bound, she was escorted by two policemen and two police women to a disciplinary hearing in front of the Iranian Bar Association, for the revocation of her license to practice law in Iran. She placed her bound hands around the neck of her husband to kiss him goodbye. How can we stand by and allow another human being to be humiliated and physically broken down in this manner?

Not more than twenty-four hours later another image



was engraved into my mind. Mr. Sahabi, former minister, engineer and freedom fighter died at the age of 81. Most of his life was dedicated to defending human rights and freedom. This tour of duty was rewarded with more than sixteen years of imprisonment. His daughter, Mrs. Halleh Sahabi fifty-seven, also imprisoned because of her demonstrations in front of Parliament to "Ask for her vote" led the funeral procession, (she was released to attend the funeral). She carried her father's picture in her hand clutched to her chest. In front of so many people, government agents attacked her and beat her severely. She was carried off to a hospital where she was pronounced dead. The official cause of death, as reported by the government, was cardiac arrest resulting from emotional excitement. Was this a just ending for her bravery and sacrifice?

Yes, while I have been physically separated from Iran for forty-six years, my feelings for its people has never and will never be eliminated. I cannot close my eyes or turn a deaf ear to their problems, nor can or should any other Iranian living outside its borders. While we are not able to physically fight their battles we can defend them by letting the world know who and what Iran's people truly are. It is our duty to help restore these citizens back to the status for which they were once recognized. The harsh government now in power does not reflect their true

character. It is our duty to make the world know that Iranians are peace loving, hard working and educated people who want to thrive in the world in a manner they deserve.

It is my belief that through the hard work of Persian media and the hard work of families educating their children on Iranian culture, making them proud to be of Iranian ethnicity, that we are moving in the right direction. I cannot tell you how invigorated I am when a non-Persian comes to me and says, "Did you know the CEO of .... is Iranian? Do you know the doctor saving lives in Joplin, Missouri is Iranian? Do you know .... Invented the ....? Have you seen the video on Tehran? That is some city. I never knew it was a sprawling modern metropolis. And so on and so on. If we continue on our path of educating the world on Iran, its people and culture these infrequent question posed will become the norm. When that happens I dare to believe Iran, WILL SHINE AGAIN.

Shahrokh Alavi

## Do You Have a Hero?



**Persian Heritage magazine would like to begin featuring an Iranian man and woman in future editions of the magazine. Please submit your hero's story, with their picture, to Persian Heritage magazine via our email [mirassiran@aol.com](mailto:mirassiran@aol.com). Submissions will be reviewed, on the grandness of the hero's achievement, their efforts, individual sacrifice and impact their actions have had on another. If your hero is selected we will notify you, by email, of the anticipated print date. Please understand that submissions will not be returned and that Persian Heritage magazine retains the right to edit submissions for content and length.**

**RICH CONTENT**

Rich content and as usual good editorial! Thanks for giving an excellent coverage to my book.

*Ardeshir Lotfalian*

**WEAK INK AND SMALL FONTS**

Thank you very much for all your effort in publishing the *Persian Heritage* quarterly. As usual, I found the spring edition around with wonderful material.

However I would like to comment about the print of your publication.

A review of the older editions of the magazine reveals that the print was much better readable than your recent editions.

Although the quality of the paper has substantially improved, the weak ink and somewhat smaller fonts make reading difficult, even

for a young person like me.

I'm afraid your senior readers would have a much harder time enjoying your valuable articles.

Thanks very much for your time and attention.

With warmest regards,  
*Mort Shahmir*

**WINDOWS OF HOPE**

*Baa doroud va sepaas.*

It was beautiful. We need widows of hope to stay proud. Your *Persian heritage* is the window, which creates hope.

*Jaleh Radmard*

**WONDERFUL INTERVIEW**

Dear Editor:

What a wonderful surprise it is to read an interview of another successful Iranian, who would have gone unnoticed, for the most part, in this community, were it not

for Persian Heritage magazine. I speak directly to the spring issue that featured Professor Hakami. While he may not have ever been on the cover of the New York Times, etc. his accomplishments and offerings to society are unbelievable and his picture on the cover of this magazine is well deserved.

Thank you for continuing to educate the community and those of non Persian ethnicity. Too often we separate ourselves and divide our strengths. This is unfortu-

nate. Every group that came to the US to make a new life for themselves, has contributed to America's greatness, Professor Hakami is one of many that shows the world how really great we are.

*AI*

**AT TIMES TOUCHING**

*Merci doctor jaan; and HAPPY 16<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Your Article is articulate and at times touching. Zنده o paayandeh baashi.*

Baa mehr o doosti,  
*Jaleh Radmard*

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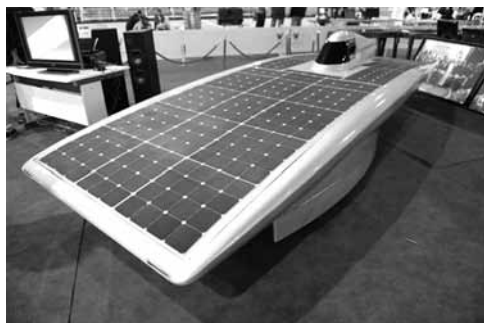
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## SOLAR CAR “HAVYN” UNVEILED IN QAZVIN

Source: ISNA April 4, 2011



Azad University of Qazvin’s solar car named “Havyn” (sunshine) was unveiled today at on the sidelines of the sixth edition of the RoboCup IranOpen 2011 competitions in Tehran.

The solar car “Havyn” which seats one passenger is five meters long, 2 meters wide and 2.96 meters tall. It can travel up to 130 km per hour. It took 1.5 years for the team at the Research Center of Qazvin University to build the car.

The car is made of carbon fiber and fiberglass mold and weighs 160 kg. It has two wheels in the front and at the back.

The silicon solar panels, measuring 6 square meters, are installed on top of the car, and lithium-ion batteries are used to store the charge. Havyn has an “Inwheel” engine with 7.5.

## SADEGH HEDAYAT SIXTY YEARS ON

By Paul Sanford and Syma Sayyah

(Payvand April 6, 2011)



On 4th April 1951, just sixty years ago, Sadegh Hedayat, Iran’s most famous writers of short stories turned on the gas and ended his life in a flat in Paris. His life has intrigued many people and he has been the subject of many films and books.

Although still banned in Iran, Hedayat’s works have been translated into many languages

and the “Blind Owl” is considered among the ten most important surrealist works of literature in the world

At a meeting at the British Academy in London last week organized by the Iran Heritage Foundation, we had the opportunity to see a new film on Hedayat directed by Sam Kalantari and Mohsen Shahrnazdar, and also a very interesting talk by Dr Homa Katouzian, a world expert on Hedayat.

## TOURISM BRIDGES COOPERATION BETWEEN THE USA AND IRAN

Source: International Institute for Peace through Tourism

With the blessing of the Iranian Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization (ICHTO) Chairman, Hamid Bahjael, who is also Vice President of Iran, the American Iran Tourism Association, at the request of Mr. Hamid Reza Talebi and under the management of Mr. Talebi, is operating in Tehran as the first organization registered to exclusively further tourism relations between the US and Iran.

Hamid Bahael told eTurboNews (eTN) that all governments should forget political challenges when they talk about tourism relations. This is in line with the concept established long ago by Louis D’Amore of the International Institute for Peace through Tourism.

ETN has been a long-time supporter of non-political relations based on tourism. The American Iran Tourism Association in the US was established in Hawaii by Juergen Thomas Steinmetz, publisher of eTurboNews.

“It’s a big step forward to have this organization officially licensed and established in Iran,” Mr. Steinmetz said, “This is true pioneer work. Hamid reza Talebi, who had been an ambassador for eTurboNews in Iran for many years, has single handedly established this organization in Iran.”

The American Iran Tourism Association has been actively assisting Iranian visitors with questions regarding how to effectively apply for a US visa. The association has also established a one-on-one consulting session for future visitors to the US and is helping to find the contacts necessary to make a trip to North America a good experience.

The association is also assisting US travelers to Iran with all of their questions in order to overcome the challenges of traveling to Iran.

Steinmetz concluded, “I think this is a good start and shows how a private organization can make a big difference when it comes to relations between different people.”

The American Iran Tourism Association mostly relies on volunteers and receives no public funding. It is the hope of Hamid Bahjael and Juergen Thomas Steinmetz to increase tourism, further personal friendships, and foster a closer cooperation between their two countries despite these difficult times.

## BRATZ DOLLS NOW HAVE RIGHTFUL OWNERSHIP



It was a long battle, but for a small California toy company the wait was worth it. Mattel, Inc. who professed to be the owner of the Bratz doll (which was a billion dollar line) lost its battle. A jury decided that MGA Entertainment was the rightful owner of the Bratz line. MGA Chief Executive Isaac Larian, meanwhile, said the case has been a prolonged battle for his family. "It very well shows that in America, even huge corporations are not above the law," Larian told Reuters afterward. A federal jury in 2008 ordered MGA and Larian

to pay Mattel \$100 million, but a federal appeals court threw out that ruling last year. MGA then accused Mattel of gaining entry to toy fairs with false credentials to steal trade secrets and concealed evidence of these activities. The jury found Mattel misappropriated trade secrets from MGA and awarded MGA \$88.5 million in damages. The jury also decided MGA had interfered with Mattel's contract with designer Carter Bryant, but awarded only \$10,000 in damages to Mattel. Mattel is expected to appeal, but called the likelihood of a material change "doubtful." The shares of Mattel fell as much as 2.8 percent to a low of \$26.17 after the verdict was announced, before bouncing back slightly to stand 0.9 percent lower at \$26.70.



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# Iranian DNA

Source:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iranian\\_peoples#Genetics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iranian_peoples#Genetics)



**We now know, for sure and according to science, that the Kurdish, Azari, Arab, Baloochi, Turkman and so on, and all of us are mainly from one DNA, Indo-European, the same as the Central Asians. Azaries are pure Persians, not Turkic. The Kurds are ancient Iranians and not a separate minority and even in Khoozestan there is no evidence of Mesopotamian DNA in them. Now perhaps we get on with agreeing that we are all one people together and under one umbrella.**

population of the region.

A part from these two groups, the eastern parts of the Iranian Highlands generally reveal the highest frequency of R1a1, up to 35%, similar to Northern India, while Western Iran based on Iranians sampled (52 Samples from the western part of the country) appears to have had little genetic influence from the supposed R1a1-carrying Indo-Iranians. About 10%, is attributed to language replacement through the “elite-dominance” model in a similar manner which occurred in Europe and India. In this regard, it is likely that the Kavir Lut desert in the center of Iran

has acted as a significant barrier to gene flow.

Genetic studies conducted by Cavalli-Sforza have revealed that Iranians have weak correlation with Near Eastern groups, and are closer to surrounding Indo-Europeans speaking populations. This study is partially supported by another one, based on Y-Chromosome haplogroups.

The findings of this study reveal many common genetic markers found among the Iranian people from the Tigris to the areas west of the Indus. This correlates with the Iranian languages spoken from the Caucasus to Kurdish areas in the Zagros region and eastwards to western Pakistan and Tajikistan and parts of Uzbekistan in Central Asia. The extensive gene flow is perhaps an indication of the spread of Iranian-speaking people, whose languages are now spoken mainly on the Iranian plateau and adjacent regions. These results relate the relationships of Iranian people with each other, while other comparative testing reveals some varied origins for Iranian people such as the Kurds, who show genetic ties to the Caucasus at considerably higher levels than any other Iranian people, except the Ossetians, as well as links to Europe and Semitic populations that live in close proximity such as the Arab and Jews.

Another recent study of the genetic landscape of Iran was completed by a team of Cambridge geneticists led by Dr.

Maziar Ashrafian Bonab (an Iranian Azarbaijani). Bonab remarked that his group had done extensive DNA testing on different language groups, including Indo-European and non Indo-European speakers, in Iran. The study found that the Azerbaijanis of Iran do not have a similar FST and other genetic markers found in Anatolian and European Turks. However, the genetic FST and other genetic traits like MRca and mtDNA of Iranian Azeris were identical to Persians in Iran. Azaris of Iran also show very close genetic ties to Kurds.

Two Y-DNA Haplogroups are supposed to be connected with Iranic people, Haplogroup J2 and R1a1J2a: Haplogroup. J2, especially the subscale J2a, is frequently found among almost all groups of Iranic people. In comparison with the Haplogroup R1a1, J2 is not only restricted to Western Iranic populations, but is also found among northern and southern western Iranic populations, such as the Bakhtiaris and Mazanderani, and northern Iranic Ossetians. Despite its supposed origin in the fertile crescent, J2a is also found among Iranic populations in the east such as the Yagnobi which are of Soghdian origin as well as the Parsis of India. Besides the relatively high percentage among the Yagnobis in Central Asia, other Iranic populations tend to have a higher frequency of J2a when compared to neighboring Turkic populations. The relatively strong presence of J2a among Ossetians, as well as the Yagnobis, proves distant from the supposed Mesopotamian origin region of J2. They are carriers of this Haplogroup.

Azeris: Although Azeris speak a Turkic language (modern Azerbaijani language), they are believed to be primarily descendants of ancient Iranians. In the Indo-Iranian context, the occurrence of J2a in the Indian subcontinent is limited to caste populations, with the highest frequencies found among upper castes such as the Brahmins, as well as Muslims. Compared with R1a1, J2a shows a more conservative distribution, stronger limited to Indo-Iranian origin groups.

R1a1: Haplogroup M17, also known as R1a1, has been supposed to be a diagnostic Indo-Iranian marker. The highest R1a1 frequencies are detected in the Central Asian populations of Ishkashemi Tajiks (68%) and Pamiri Tajiks (64%), both groups being remnants of the original Eastern Iranian

# UNREST IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Brian Appleton

As far back as President Eisenhower back in the 1950's he recognized the danger of the military industrial complex in the USA and also the inherent instability fostered by American administrations backing puppet dictators in countries there of interest either from the stand point of oil and gas resources or militarily strategic.

For 30 years Mobarak kept power and wealth away from the Egyptian people who are the most populous in the region and his military got 2.5 billion dollars a year from the USA. Now that he has been ousted one wonders what the Egyptian people think of America, the country who kept the dictator in power for so long denying several generations from experiencing political freedoms and economic growth. What position should America take with the Egyptians now?

Iran saw the revolution of 1979 largely as a result of the USA keeping the Shah in power for 38 years. The CIA trained Savak. Every Iranian knows the role of the CIA in ousting Mossadeg and returning the Shah to power. Every Iranian knows that the US took over where the British left off in terms of getting the lion's share of the oil wealth away from the Iranian people and into the hands of the Seven Sisters. Stemming from the time of the US occupation of Iran during WWII and the subsequent decades of American supremacy in Iran, US citizens were not subject to Iranian laws.

Saudi Arabia, the US ally, is not a democracy and has no equality for women and although having the majority of the wealth in the region only has 25.7 million people of which 5.5 million are non-Saudis contrasted to 339,510,535 people in the Arab world most of whom live in poverty.

The invasion and occupation of Iraq by the Bush administration was done for oil and there are 30 permanent US military bases there now and they are seeking to have a total of 58 bases and although combat missions may be over there are no plans of abandoning these bases any time soon. This invasion was a self-serving act of aggression and imperialism as was the invasion of Afghanistan.

With a little investigative research it is clear that the motives for the invasion of Afghanistan were to secure a corridor for gas pipelines from Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to Pakistan and the Indian Ocean. Now that the US Geodetic aerial survey started by the USSR has been completed, it is confirmed that there is over one trillion dollars worth of rare earth metals and precious metal deposits including the largest amount of Lithium in the world and so I do not see the USA ever leaving again. In

fact is the beautiful land of Afghanistan destined to become blighted and pocked by pit mines and mine tailings along with bomb craters?

So where am I headed with this information? Well what do we do if we oppose the US administrations foreign policies? What if we do not want to be a party to imperialism and what if we consider like I do, the phrase "American interests" an obscenity because it is used to justify treating the third world like a resource and ignoring the needs of its humanity to have a decent living standard and human rights and freedoms as well as national sovereignty and control over their own resources and political destinies.

The imperialist policies of every empire there has ever been from the Mongols to the Americans are doomed to failure in the long run. Even America had a revolution against the British Crown and their mercantilism in 1776. So most American citizens are opposed to tyranny although they enjoy the fruits of their government's policies, which help keep tyrannies in place.

So how do we make the world a better and more equitable place where the needs and aspirations of the people everywhere are addressed rather than the needs of an elite? How do we stop the world from being plunged into bloody civil wars and revolutions like the one in Libya? I think part of the answer is that foreign policies should be designed to benefit the majority of the people in another country and not just an elite. There has to be a win-win situation for the majority if revolutions are to be avoided. A more equitable distribution of the wealth is how to achieve political stability and how to fight terrorism. That is what will make the world a better place to live in and it doesn't have to be achieved by force, communism tried that and failed. It takes more enlightened leadership and real statesmen and a greater system of checks and balances between representative governments and the multinational corporations who seem to have usurped all the power. It takes an overhauling and reformation of the United Nations and then giving it real empowerment so that no one or two countries can force it to acquiesce to their demands and endorse and legitimize their imperialist acts. ■





# Middle East: Troubles of the Past, Promises of the Future

Sousan M. Alemansour  
Attorney at Law (California)

When the febrile Middle East Revolutions give way to cogent contemplation of the fate of the future, the need for formation of a democratic region will take center stage. To achieve this goal, serious effort at détente will assure political and economic stability, growth and advancement.

To be sure, one reason the heterogeneous Middle East has failed to advance where others succeeded is its application of religious laws to banking, civil and criminal activities. Since not all of the citizens are followers of one unified belief, such application has left the population isolated, resentful and polarized. This choice has proven volatile, exclusionary and grossly detrimental to the Middle East's economic advancement. Educational institutions, either voluntarily or by way of government intervention, participated in exclusionary practices endorsed by religion. Social institutions and government agencies limited availability of opportunities to select groups, such as women and religious minorities, and thus foreign investment and cultural exchange suffered. While India, Turkey and the European countries advanced, the Middle East lagged behind.

The Middle East is now at a crossroads. The need for a reformed approach is axiomatic to its survival. The fate of the "Middle East" is in concatenation with that of the world and, within the region, with that of Israel and Iran.

The future framework for a successful Middle East must be grounded in democracy. There must be transparency in policies, accountability in conduct, guaranteed security and compliance with international laws. While everyone agrees that the right to vote is an essential ingredient of a democratic society, it is by far not the only ingredient. Separation of church and state is vital. Independent executive, legislative and judiciary are es-

sential to the proper working of a society. The right against unreasonable search and seizure is fundamental to human dignity. The right to fair trial and the right to counsel are crucial to human freedom. The eternal verities of freedom of expression, of the press and of religion guarantee social balance and harmony. Without these fundamental principles, chaos will reign and then force will set in.

One thing is certain: a religious framework has not succeeded in advancing the Middle East, socially or economically. Religious laws are inherently preferential. There are no provisions in any religious prescription that declare equality of rights for all, considering the variety of followers. Men and women are treated unequally and believers and non-believers are treated differently. Unequal treatment of those equally "created" is a prescription for failure of any policy.

Point in fact, in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the application of religious prescription has proven utterly discriminatory to women and to religious minorities, paving the way for mass emigration. Because of the unequal treatment of citizens, foreign investment has all but stopped, thereby leaving the state unable to implement advanced economic measures, in turn, leaving the young and educated unemployed. Add to that, Iran's misplaced support of *Hezbollah*, while believing that somehow *Hezbollah* is instrumental in managing or protecting its foreign affairs. Clearly, such support further isolates Iran from its Arab and Israeli neighbors.

Further west, in Israel, with a loose claim to democracy, the main ingredient is its limited ability to host multiculturalism under the banner of a Jewish state. When the other countries of the Middle East, including Iran and the North African countries, discriminate against their Jewish citizens, Israel welcomes them.

Make no mistake! Israel's derogation of the rights of its non Jewish citizens is on par with the Islamic Republic's. Avigdor Lieberman's introduction of a vote on *allegiance or loss of right to vote* is noteworthy. With a reputation for having joined the now outlawed Kach party, Lieberman's speech at the 2010 United Nations declared that peace with the Palestinians is "decades away." Clearly, Israel's lack of creativity in resolving its regional issues with its Arab neighbors contributes greatly to the instability of the Middle East, and further drives underground the Arab youth poised for militancy.

But, there is a silver lining in the political posturing of these two countries; found in the unique format of their governing systems.

The Iranian constitution is one attractive element of its government with functioning executive, legislative and judiciary powers. Iran also has other political entities, such as: assembly of experts, guardian council, expediency discernment council, supreme council for national security, and city and village councils. The system is rather complicated, but its intent appears to be the creation of a system of checks and balances. For example, the guardian council assures compatibility and conformity of various bills and legislation with the Islamic cannon, while the expediency discernment council assists in resolving differences between the *Majlis* and the guardian council. The president is the head of the government and there is a unicameral legislature with some 290 publicly elected representatives, serving four year terms. Though its independence continues to remain in doubt, the judiciary defines and enforces legal policies with an eye toward compliance with the *Sharia* law. A peculiarity of this system of governance is the venerable *supreme*

leader.

By comparison, Israel does not have a constitution, but it does have a system of laws that govern how the government is structured. Israel has a judiciary, legislative and executive branch, though its president is largely a ceremonial figure. The members of its parliament, *the Knesset*, are elected in nation-wide elections from party lists. The head of the party that has the best chance of forming a coalition is then chosen by the President to attempt to form a government. One apparent peculiarity of this system of governance is the number of political parties it entertains, presently standing at more than a dozen parties with seats in the Knesset. One attractive component of the government of Israel is its judicial system, which consists of secular courts and religious courts, which cater to members of their respective sects; this principle stands true for the Muslim and Christian citizens of Israel.

So, while Ms. Tzipi Livni, leader of Israel's Kadima party, may believe that the International Community should form a universal code of democracy for the Middle East, as disclosed during her recent BBC interview, her idea falls short of workability. History of the Middle East reflects that involvement by the International Community is met with resistance, skepticism and mistrust. Point in fact until and unless Israel is ready to resolve its border problems with Palestine, the International Community is without any power to move the peace negotiations into peace treaties.

The optimistic view is that the elements of the framework for democracy already exist in the Middle East, as evidenced by the political systems of Iran and Israel. Perhaps these two countries can facilitate a meeting of the Middle East regional governments to sketch a model framework. The International Community can assist in facilitating the meetings through logistical support, presentation of ideas or offering of services, as needed or requested. In the end, it falls on the shoulders of the individual countries of the region, not the International Community to affect their own political and economic stability, growth and advancement and to formulate workable solutions to common problems.

I have a dream. ■

## SOTHEBY'S SETS RECORD FOR AN ISLAMIC WORK OF ART AT AUCTION WITH £7.4 MILLION SALE.



The Shahnameh or 'Book of Kings' is the Persian national epic and the folio in ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, depicts Faridun in the guise of a dragon testing his sons and was completed at the royal Safavid atelier circa 1525-1535. Photo: Sotheby's.

Today, Sotheby's London established a new record for an Islamic work of art at auction when an illustrated folio from the Shahnameh made for Shah Tahmasp of Persia, universally acknowledged as one of the supreme illustrated manuscripts of any period or culture and among the greatest works of art in the world, sold for the outstanding and well above estimate sum of £7,433,250. This exceptional illustrated leaf saw competition for almost 10 minutes from no fewer than seven bidders, both in the saleroom and on the telephones, and finally sold for nearly four times pre-sale expectations to an anonymous bidder on the telephone (pre-sale estimate: £2-3 million).

## MUSICIAN REVIVING FORGOTTEN IRANIAN INSTRUMENTS



Source: Mehr News Agency, (Apr 14, 2011)

An Iranian musician is reviving some Iranian instruments, which have been forgotten over time. Majid Nazempur has remade the instruments to be showcased in a collection at the National Museum of Iran, he told the Fars News.

A number of the instruments are currently on show at the museum, he added. He said that the instruments are categorized in the families of the oud and the harp and no modern people have yet heard the sound of these instruments.

Nazempur is also trying to recompose musical pieces that were performed on these instruments in Iran about a thousand years ago.

"I would like to premiere these compositions that would be very close to the music performed a thousand years ago," he noted.

Nazempur has authored "5000-Year-Old History of the Oud" in three volumes, first of which will be published by the Iranian Academy of Arts in the near future. The book shows that oud has its origins in Persia. It also introduces outstanding performers of the instruments. Nazempur was a member of the jury of the Oud and Buzuq Competition, which was held in Damascus in August 2009.

# 30 Years Later, Praise for and Words from Former Iran Hostages

BY JEFF BARON, STAFF WRITER, AMERICA.GOV, WASHINGTON

Washington - When hundreds of young Iranian activists took over the U.S. Embassy in Tehran in November 1979, the U.S. diplomats there thought they would face an uncomfortable but brief incident in a period of tense relations between the two countries.

After 444 days, the crisis ended - a painful period for the hostages, their families and the United States, but one that the former hostages say ultimately proved far worse for Iran, where conservative Islamic hard-liners used the crisis to eliminate moderate voices in positions of power.

The U.S. State Department used the 30th anniversary of the 52 hostages' release to honor them as heroes and to hear the thoughts of five prominent former hostages. The event in a standing-room-only auditorium at the State Department in Washington also paid tribute to others involved, including the hostages' families, Canadian officials who sheltered six American diplomats and engineered their escape from Iran, members of the U.S. military who died in a failed rescue attempt and negotiators who finally secured their release.

The former hostages who came together for a panel discussion led by Andrea Mitchell, the chief foreign affairs correspondent for NBC News, said they knew they faced a serious situation in November 1979, a few days after the U.S. allowed the deposed Shah of Iran to enter the United States for medical treatment.

L. Bruce Laingen, the senior U.S. diplomat in Tehran in 1979, recalled that he was at a meeting that morning at the Iranian Foreign Ministry with officials of the provisional government that had taken control after the downfall of the shah. At the end of the meeting, the embassy's chief of security, Alan

Golacinski, reached him with word "that things were happening on the other side of town," Laingen said. He tried to enlist the aid of Foreign Ministry officials, but they were helpless - and in short order, they were out of power.

John W. Limbert Jr., the embassy's political officer at the time, said the takeover didn't seem so serious at first - and, from what its planners said in later years, it wasn't meant to be. He compared it to "a 1970s-style sit-in. Some of us remember those days: We marched into the university president's office, we drank his Scotch, we rifled his files, smoked his cigars, we issued some brave communique and we marched out. ... That's what it appeared we were dealing with."

Even as the takeover continued for days - with the support of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and other Iranian hard-liners - Limbert said most of the hostages thought it would end soon. "All we could say was, 'This thing can't go on. Somebody, some adult, is going to get in the middle of it, will fix it and will set things right,'" Limbert said.

David Cooke, a young vice consul in 1979, had his doubts. He said he reminded his co-workers about the capture of a U.S. ship by North Korea 12 years earlier. That incident, like the embassy takeover, occurred near the beginning of a U.S. presidential election year, and the 82 captured sailors weren't returned until after the election. "The election-year cycle just freezes the ability of people to do things," he said.

Cooke's prediction proved accurate: Although a few captives were released quickly, 52 remained as hostages for 14 months, until the day Ronald Reagan took the oath of office to succeed Jimmy Carter as U.S. president in January 1981.

The time passed in different ways for different hostages. Laingen and two colleagues spent all but the final few weeks being held at the Foreign Ministry. Among those captured at the embassy, some were beaten or faced other forms of torture, such as mock executions, the former hostages said.

"Being in prison for 444 days, whether you are, quote, 'treated well' or 'treated badly,' is horrendous, and no matter how you look at it, we were imprisoned and treated badly even if we were not tortured," said Barry Rosen, the embassy's press officer. "Some were not tortured, some were tortured. Just being there for 444 days in darkness and isolation, that's enough for anyone."

Rosen said being cut off from news of the outside world was difficult. He and Lieutenant Colonel David M. Roeder spent two months in a cell outside Isfahan, and their captors provided them a bit of reading material from the Washington Post: the advertisements of boats for sale. Roeder, a boater, used the ads as inspiration, and each afternoon he would put himself and Rosen on the waters of the Chesapeake Bay - in their imaginations.

What they couldn't imagine, the men said, was the importance the hostage crisis had assumed in the United States and the concern Americans had for their fate. Cooke said their captors "would tell us occasionally that this is a big thing in the United States, and on the news every night the newscasters start out with 'This is day 132 of the hostage crisis in Iran,' and we frankly didn't believe them."

Limbert said the truth began to sink in only when the hostages' plane to freedom landed on a cold, snowy early morning in Frankfurt, Germany. "We pull up to the terminal, and there





I'm delighted to share ideas from Growing Up Global with the Persian community.

Many of you are some of the most globally-minded people found anywhere.

Some of this was by choice, and for others, it was forced by the necessity of leaving your homeland. It's amazing to think that just one or two generations ago millions of Iranians had never met a person from a different continent or race; and today we are successfully integrated into diverse cultures all over the world. Now that we have a sense of global citizenship, we want our children to thrive in a globally connected world.

I wrote Growing Up Global to offer a toolbox of resources and ideas to begin that process - and now it is taking off in schools, at work and in conversations at dinner tables. Particularly for the Persian community, I share stories from my own family's experience as new immigrants to the U.S. during my childhood and ways we navigated our Iranian identity along with our new American one. In the end, we make peace with the juxtaposition of values, beliefs and cultures through a lens of global citizenship, and this has been one of the greatest gifts we are passing along to our children.

Below is an article I wrote that was just posted on PBS Parents. What has been your experience in connecting with the larger world, and in navigating across cultures? Has your family (or children's schools) tried any of the ideas from Growing Up Global? I'd love to hear your comments and experiences! Thank you!!

\*\*\*\*\*

My family is lucky to live in a neighborhood with dozens of school-aged kids, where a lemonade stand often springs up on a clear day. Most parents passing by will try to stop, if only because we know our own children will be itching for an entrepreneurial moment soon themselves. We tip more generously when the proceeds will benefit charity. Increasingly, the six- or eight year-olds might be earning quarters to cure cancer, rebuild Haiti or buy school supplies for kids across

# How Every Child Can Grow Up Global

BY HOMA S. TAVANGAR, AUTHOR



town or in a country whose name they can barely pronounce.

The example of children mobilizing for a cause beyond their circumstances demonstrates their readiness to embrace a global mindset. With encouragement and good examples at home and in their community, qualities like compassion, generosity, and practicing the Golden Rule become standards they wish to strive toward, and which put substance behind what it means to be a global citizen.

The notion of global citizenship becomes clearer when I recall the ethic, "Be a friend to the whole human race." Friendship is a universal value - it's important to everyone, and it can be fun. Envisioning this on a wider scale ("to the whole human race"), discussing it, and practicing it in daily life serve as simple, yet powerful tools for raising a new generation to be well-adjusted and peaceful, and ultimately,

successful and happy.

## WE LEARN WHAT WE SEE.

As a parent, your own willingness to try a new food, learn about another faith, genuinely befriend diverse colleagues and neighbors, or embarrass yourself trying to express ideas in a different language will leave an impression on your children, and they'll be better for it. We're more plugged in than ever, but not necessarily more connected. So, striving to be a friend to the whole human race - starting at home - can be a huge challenge, but also makes a great gift for our children, and an awesome adventure.

To get started with your own family, try one or more of these ideas - in whatever way works best for your own circumstances and interests:

Spice up dinner and a family-friendly movie. Rent Ponyo or My Neighbor Totoro, gorgeous animated films for age four and up from Japan, and continue the theme by serving sushi or tempura veggies with green or herb tea, and Pocky snacks (available in most ethnic grocery stores). Try similar pairings with other excellent, family-friendly films like The Cave of the Yellow Dog (Mongolia), The Legend of Roan Inish (Ireland),

Don't Forget Your Persian Heritage! Subscribe Today!

Alamar (Mexico/Italy), Children of Heaven(Iran), and many more. Make time after the movie or the next day to talk about the film. This sort of discussion can launch powerful uniting, connecting, and learning between parents and children - for a lifetime.

Play! Playground games, table games like chess and checkers that transcend language barriers, and especially sports from soccer to tennis can open a door to the world. During the four years in between the World Cup and Olympic games, follow youth tournaments, learn about top teams and the heroes of your favorite sport in various countries, root for them, learn about the places and cultures they came from, or donate grown-out equipment to a sister team in a needy community. Unplug and move it - like kids all over the world do.

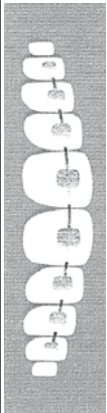
Celebrate! Experiencing new celebrations helps ease into profound learning about a culture or belief system, for any age. Some of my children’s most memorable times with friends have been during a Hanukkah celebration, midnight mass, dinner during Ramadan or Eid, Diwali and Ayyami-Ha parties. Kids don’t usually realize they are dispelling prejudices commonly carried into adulthood, because they’re having so much fun. If you must, invite yourself. Unless there is a tradition or space restriction, the answer usually is YES!

Dedicate a weekend to a continent (or country). Travel to South Africa, Egypt, France or China might be out of your family’s budget, but you can dedicate a weekend to “exploring” these cultures - within driving distance. For example, find a concert or street fair from that country in a nearby city and anchor the weekend around that event. Then enjoy the cuisine, an art exhibit, shopping, and a movie from that culture for an unforgettable adventure. In preparation, learn a few phrases in that language, find countries that speak it on a map, download their popular music, or read a book set there. When you’ve made this sort of effort for one or more countries, chances go way up that your children will actually make it there. By high school they could apply for travel or language scholarships through organizations like Rotary International, AFS, and the U.S. State Department’s NSLI-Y. ■

## “Our Summer in Tehran”



American filmmaker Justine Shapiro took her young son Mateo to Tehran where they spent the summer with three Iranian families: a religious family with ties to the government; a cosmopolitan, secular family; and a single mom who is an actress. The result is a fascinating film that shows everyday life in Tehran, with stories and images unlike anything we are accustomed to seeing in the news media. Justine Shapiro is a former host of *GlobeTrekker*, the adventure travel series on PBS, which took Justine to over 40 countries around the world. In addition, she co-produced and co-directed the film *Promises* (2001), for which she received an Academy Award nomination for Best Documentary and won two Emmy Awards. *Promises* features seven Israeli and Palestinian children living in and around Jerusalem. With remarkable balance and a compelling blend of pathos and humor this film moves the conflict out of politics and into the realm of the human.



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# Is AHMADINEJAD ISLAMIC ENOUGH FOR IRAN?

**Why the Iranian president's latest fight with the supreme leader could be his last?**



BY ABBAS MILANI

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(c) The Washington Post, APRIL 29, 2011

Ayatollah Khamenei, the supreme leader, pointedly refused to meet with any of the invited guests and even left town during the festivities. Ahmadinejad and Mashaei also played a key role in the much-celebrated temporary return to Iran from its permanent home in London's British Museum of the Cyrus Cylinder, a small clay cylinder inscribed with words considered the first declaration of human rights in history. Ahmadinejad has openly praised Cyrus on numerous occasions, including when the cylinder first arrived in Iran.

The actions of Ahmadinejad and his alter ego may seem innocuous enough, but they have deeply angered the conservative clergy. In any country, such faint praise for a past ruler of international, even Biblical, stature would have been normal. In Islamic Iran, it is considered something akin to sedition. In the first days of the Islamic revolution, key clerical figures in the regime, particularly the infamous Khalkhali – a favorite disciple of Khomeini, who appointed him head of the revolutionary courts – went on to call Cyrus a “Jew boy” and a “sodomite.” Now, Ahmadinejad was spending millions to bring the Cyrus Cylinder back to Iran and praising its value and singularity. Meanwhile, in spite of an increasingly louder chorus of critics, some from the highest echelons of cler-

ical power in Iran, Mashaei continued to wax eloquent about Cyrus, Iranian nationalism, and Iranian Islam.

What appeared as cause for a minor irritation has now morphed into one of the biggest challenges facing Iran's leaders since June 2009's contested presidential election. This new rift within the Islamic regime has appeared while the leaders of the Green Movement continue to be under house arrest and show no sign of compromise. Even Ali Hashemi Rafsanjani, the powerful cleric, has refused to fully rejoin Khamenei's camp. Every indication is that serious economic hard times are ahead for the regime. There is open talk of Ahmadinejad's impeachment; Akbar Ganji, the well-known and usually reliable dissident journalist now residing in the United States, has alleged that the Ahmadinejad team worked with European Union to prepare the list of Iranian officials banned from travel for complicity in human rights abuses – a list he alleges is composed only of Khamenei's allies, and includes no one from the Ahmadinejad team. According to Ganji, the president has sent a team of reliable aides to open secret negotiations with the United States and the EU. Other sources inside Iran allege that the president's team was trying to steal documents from the Intelligence Ministry to blackmail other leaders.

The crisis came to a boil about 10

days ago when Ahmadinejad fired the minister of intelligence – the second cleric he has fired from that position in less than two years – and Khamenei resisted the move. A few weeks earlier, Ahmadinejad had fired the foreign minister, another Khamenei ally. Instead of trying to solve the crisis behind closed doors, as has been his wont in the past, this time Khamenei wrote a letter, pointedly not to the president, but to the dismissed minister, and reappointed him to his post. There is absolutely no constitutional provision that allows him to unilaterally appoint a minister.

Although a majority of members of the parliament have written an open letter to Ahmadinejad asking him to comply with Khamenei's egregious breach of the constitution, the president has hitherto refused to accept the leader's interference. He has refused to attend cabinet meetings and has yet to make a public comment about the decision. Either Khamenei must cave and allow Ahmadinejad to fire the minister – yet another major blow to his authority – or Ahmadinejad might have to go, creating a political crisis just when the regime least can afford it. Of course, if Ahmadinejad caves, he will be more vulnerable to his many foes, and that can only add to the political instability in the regime.

So what kind of game is Ahmadinejad playing? Why the sudden surge

of Iranian patriotism? And why the public fight over the Intelligence Ministry? Some see the moves as part of his calculated effort by to prepare for the upcoming elections by creating some distance from Khamenei and the clerical regime. According to this theory, Ahmadinejad knows how reviled the clergy are in Iran and is keen on either challenging them or at least distancing himself from them. His decision to dismiss the minister of intelligence simply brought what had been a mere confrontation to the point of explosion.

Another key question is why Khamenei and his allies in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) have decided to pick this fight now. On the one hand, Khamenei and the IRGC have been increasingly tightening the political screws, and ruling more and more through brazen force. But more crucially, with the economy heading toward a crisis – the central bank just announced that the inflation rate for foodstuffs is 25 percent, another official announced the real unemployment to be near 30 percent and an influential member of the parliament declared that government economic statistics are either kept secret and those made public are all unreliable – and with the continued winds of democracy blowing in the region, Khamenei seems to be preparing to sacrifice the president and blame him for the financial calamities faced by the country. But will Ahmadinejad go down without a fight?

While most of the Middle East region has been risking life and limb for the sake of a democratic future, in Iran, different factions in the regime have been busy debating the virtues of the ancient Persian King Cyrus the Great. Neither side brings any new historical insight, but it hasn't been an exercise in mere navel-gazing – in Iran, debates on ancient history have been a high-stakes affair. Today, the question is whether the Islamic Republic should pay closer attention to the country's pre-Islamic Iranian heritage; the answers recently offered by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad threaten the collapse of the current regime.

The dispute itself is nothing new.

For decades, if not centuries, the twin enigmas of Iran's identity and the nature of Islam in Iran have bedeviled Iranian scholars and politicians alike. Iranian identity is bifurcated, split between the pre-Islamic traditions of Zoroastrian and Manichean millennium before Islam, and the Islam-influenced developments of the last 1,300 years.

But there has never been a consensus about which side of this bifurcation should be privileged. Even in the first centuries after the arrival of Islam in Iran, though Iranians had a decisive role in formulating Islamic laws, governance, and literature, there was considerable tension between Arabs and Persians: The former routinely referred to the latter with the pejorative moniker *Ajam*. Some Arabs (and some Iranians) even questioned whether Shiism – the dominant sect in Iran today – qualifies at all as a legitimate branch of Islam, arguing that it was actually a thinly disguised form of Iranian nationalism. Indeed, many scholars have pointed out that key ideas singular to Shiism in the Islamic world – like the concept of a messiah (*mahdi*), and millenarian optimism – are in fact a reincarnation of pre-Islamic Iranian ideas and concepts drawn from Zoroastrian and Manichean philosophies.

Negotiating these tensions has long been a requirement for any Iranian regime. The shahs of the Pahlavi era, seeking to blunt Islam's role in public life, accentuated the pre-Islamic age. The grandest example of that campaign came in 1976, when the shah spent several hundred million dollars to celebrate 2,500 years of Persian monarchy in a tent-city he specially erected outside Persepolis, the capital of ancient Persia. He even changed the national calendar for the occasion, away from one of Islamic origin to one that claimed to have its genesis in the age of Cyrus, the ancient Persian king praised in the Old Testament for freeing Jews from their Babylonian captivity (though the change lasted only two years).

But when the Islamic regime came into power in 1979, it attempted to obliterate the Persian pre-Islamic past

and emphasize only the Islamic component. It was an agenda that required some heavy cultural lifting, to say the least, in a country where people still routinely decried the "Arab invasion" of a millennium past, and practiced with pride and care a language that had survived the era of Arab imperialism. Ayatollah Khomeini, the Islamic Republic's founder, made Iran's pre-Islamic Persian holidays a special target: He derided Nowruz, the Iranian New Year celebration held on the first day of spring, as a "pagan" festivity.

Iranians, for the most part, resisted the regime's ambitions in this regard. The popular response has been to insist on even more ostentatious celebrations of traditional Persian festivities and support for campaigns to "purify" the language of any Arabic words and names. And just a few years ago, during the days of Mohamad Khatami, Ahmadinejad's reformist predecessor, an Iranian scholar published a five-volume treatise chronicling the two centuries of fierce fighting by Iranians before they accepted Islam, contradicting the regime's official history that Iranians accepted Islam eagerly and as soon as they had heard its message.

It is this sort of national pride that Ahmadinejad and his closest advisor, Esfandiar Mashaei, have been tapping into with their recent calls for an "Iranian Islam." They have made Iranian nationalism a pillar of the Ahmadinejad government, repeatedly and profusely praising pre-Islamic Iranian grandeur.

Rather than neglect Nowruz, Ahmadinejad marked the occasion this year by inviting 20 heads of state to Persepolis – once so reviled by Shiite clerics that in the early days of the revolution Sadegh Khalkhali, a hard-line judge, tried to have it bulldozed (he was stopped by angry locals). Though Ahmadinejad gave in to heavy criticism and decided against having his celebration at the ancient site, he refused to heed the threats and advice of conservatives and held it in Tehran. It was rightly seen as a direct challenge to the clerical authorities. ■

GUEST COMMENTARY:

# A Perfect Storm in the Middle East

BY YAHYA KAMALIPOUR

Taken from: The Times of Northwest Indiana, Posted: March 8, 2011

Speaking at a recent international security conference, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said: "The region is being battered by a perfect storm of powerful trends." This raging storm, fomented by the autocratic governments' suppression of basic human rights, needs and freedom expression, has been brewing underground for decades.

It has so far toppled the autocratic rulers of Egypt and Tunisia, divided Sudan, and is now raging in Libya and gaining momentum in Bahrain, Yemen, Jordan and elsewhere in the Middle East.

As an avid observer of the global events, especially of the Middle East, I am simultaneously worried, mesmerized and hopeful.

Worried, because the domino effect of the uprisings and the savage military response of the self-aggrandized dictators, such as Moammar Gadhafi, could potentially result in unprecedented exodus, killings, displacement, civil war and monumental crisis in the Middle East.

Mesmerized, because citizens of so many countries have, for the first time, in a spontaneous fashion begun shouting their feelings about their unelected and suffocating regimes.

Hopeful, because the Middle Eastern youths,

awakened by the free flow of information via the Internet and social networks, are demanding for the long overdue political change which could result in democracy, peace, freedom and prosperity.

Regardless of the course of events, one thing is for sure: The non-elected, self-serving and forever dictatorial regimes must go, sooner better than later.

I believe the Internet has empowered people, especially youths, and invigorated the democratization of communication and information throughout the world. In today's interconnected and interdependent global environment in which information flow is no longer unidirectional but multidirectional, rapid and interactive.

As the recent crisis and popular uprisings in the Middle East (i.e., Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Libya, Tunisia, and Yemen) have illustrated, the new communication technologies are empowering citizen's aspirations for freedom, democracy, human rights, and prosperity. Hence, the autocratic rulers can no longer limit their citizens' access to information or silence their voices.

The old days in which governments could confiscate tangible information materials (i.e., newspapers, books, pamphlets, cassettes,

films and photos) are dead. Now, all you need to know is invisibly floating in the air that we breathe -- untouchable and vital!

Reportedly, more than 60 percent of the Middle Eastern countries are 30 years or younger; hence their transformative and promising revolution for change has just begun.

Aided by the new digital technologies, the information revolution has ushered in an unprecedented political revolution which should change the face of the Middle East forever. A hopeful and relatively peaceful revolution in which the new digital media and citizen journalists are playing the long forgotten responsibilities of the old media: informing the uninformed and functioning as people's watchdogs over the corrupt public officials and ruthless dictatorial regimes.

In order to cling to power, dictators may bribe their citizens, arrest and jail them, or even kill them, but the reality is that their efforts will ultimately prove useless or temporary. But suffocated, ignored and abused for too long, the youths of the Middle East have voiced their wishes loudly and clearly. They simply want democracy, freedom, accountability, jobs and a hopeful future!

The Genie is out of the bottle. We can no longer turn

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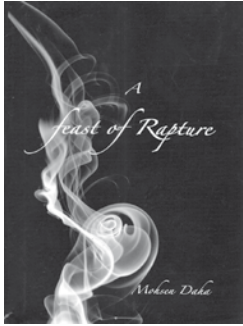
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the clock back. ■  
*Yahya R. Kamalipour is professor and head of Purdue University Calumet's Department of Communication and Creative Arts, and editor of the newly released book, "Media, Power, and Politics in the Digital Age: The 2009 Presidential Election Uprising in Iran." The opinion expressed in this column is the writer's and not necessarily that of The Times.*

## A FEAST OF RAPTURE

Mohsen Doha

(Ketab Corp. 2010)



Mr. Doha should certainly be considered a modern and contemporary poet. His poems are written in sentences similar to the lyrics of pop music rather than an ancient opera. Because of this, he will be attractive to younger readers. In reviewing a book of poetry I randomly open the pages and read the selection. More often than not, I have to pick another

and another to write a review. With this poet I had an immediate feel for his style and intentions.

He sets the stage, decorates it, tells the story and always leaves you with the desire to read another.

## MEDIA, POWER, AND POLITICS, IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Edited by Yahya R. Kamalipour

(Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Ltd. 2010)

At first glance this would not be a book one would pick up to read unless he or she were in the political field and needed to know the ins and outs of political machinery. But the book's pages and information live up to the intended audience described in the Introduction. The book is not written in technical terms. It is easy to read and this makes it an accessible tool for those outside of "politics for a living."



In reading the chapters I was surprised how much he discusses applies not only to the Iranian political system but also how their elections impact the rest of the world and vice versa.

It is a historical collection of facts that can make the politics of Iran and the surrounding Middle Eastern community more understandable to the west. What is the most important element of the book is the education the "non techy" will receive on how much the media and technology of the modern world impacts the direction and destiny of an election and/or country. One of the most interesting parts of the book was his discussion of Iranian women's influence and role in the democratic practice.

In closing it is a book that I strongly suggest one read if they have even the slightest interest in understanding the new movement in Iran and how it was molded by the media.

## Omar Khayyam's Statue to Be Installed at Madrid University



SOURCE: FARS NEWS AGENCY

Madrid University is due to unveil a statue of the celebrated Persian philosopher, astronomer, mathematician, and above all poet, Omar Khayyam, in Spain's Complutense University is set to unveil a statue of Omar Khayyam in an effort to honor the world-renowned Persian polymath and poet.

The Madrid University will install the statue during a ceremony on May 18, 2011, which is annually celebrated in Iran as the **Khayyam Day**.

Iran's cultural attaché Amir Pourpezeshk and Complutense Vice-Chancellor for Culture and Sports Juan Manuel Alvarez discussed the idea of installing Khayyam's bust in a meeting held on April 5, 2011.

"As an art expert, I can say that the statue is an outstanding work, which perfectly portrays an Iranian luminary," Alvarez said, expressing hope that installing the bust will help the expansion of long-term cultural cooperation between the two countries.

Khayyam, whose full name is Ghiyad ad-Din Abul-Fat'h Umar ibn Ibrahim Khayyam Neyshaburi, was born in Neyshabour, Northeastern Iran on May 18, 1048.

Khayyam was among the first generation of Muslims well-known and eminent outside Iran, specially in Persian-language speaking countries, through translation of his works, the most effective of all was Edward FitzGerald's translation of Rubaiyat (quatrains) of Omar Khayyam in 1859.

Khayyam also contributed a major role in several reforms in and perfection of the Persian calendar basically taken from the Hindu calendar known as Jalali calendar which is the Iranian current calendar. ■



**“The only difference between me and these people is my place of birth, and this is not a big difference.”**

*Howard C. Baskerville*

Salute to this brave and courageous Iranian patriot and hero from America

## HOWARD C. BASKERVILLE, An Iranian Hero From America

His life and legacy has been prepared for non-Farsi speaking recipients.

Joseph J Zamiri

Howard C. Baskerville (April 10, 1885 – April 20, 1909) was an American teacher in the Presbyterian mission school in Tabriz, Iran, who died fighting for Iranian democracy. He has been called the “American Lafayette in Iran.”

Baskerville was born in Nebraska. Both his father and grandfather were Presbyterian ministers. He was graduated in 1907 from Princeton University.

In the fall of 1907 Baskerville came to Iran as a missionary. He took a position in the American Memorial School, a

missionary school, in Tabriz. There he taught English, history, and geometry to mixed classes of boys and girls, and also served as tennis coach and riding instructor.

In the spring of 1909, during the Constitutional Revolution of Iran, he decided to raise a volunteer force to defend constitutional democracy. Despite attempts to discourage him by the American consul in Tabriz. He led about a hundred volunteers attempting to help defend the besieged city against Qajar royalist troops fighting for Mohammad Ali Shah. Baskerville was shot and killed by a sniper while leading a group of student soldiers to break the siege. He was 24 years old.

Baskerville’s funeral was attended by thousands, where he was eulogized by Iranian patriots. He was buried in the Christian Armenian cemetery in Tabriz. Tabriz fell to the besiegers five days after Baskerville’s death.

Many Iranian nationalists revere Baskerville. Schools and streets in Iran have been named for him. There is a bust of him in Tabriz’s Constitution House bearing the legend “Howard C. Baskerville—Patriot and Maker of History.”

A Persian carpet with his picture woven on it was made by the carpet weavers of Tabriz and meant to be sent to Baskerville’s mother in America (but was never sent) in recognition of his courage and sacrifice.

Source: [http://www.jadidonline.com/images/stories/flash\\_multimedia/Baskerville\\_tabriz\\_test/bas\\_high.html](http://www.jadidonline.com/images/stories/flash_multimedia/Baskerville_tabriz_test/bas_high.html)



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Ultimately Khomeini's government came to accept and celebrate the Shahnameh because it holds such an important place in the hearts of the Iranian people. For instance, Sandra Mackey closely recalls a tribal celebration of the Shahnameh she attended which was sponsored by the Islamic Republic.<sup>31</sup> Official state newspapers frequently provide readers with current-day plays, books and musicals that focus on Shahnameh stories.<sup>32</sup> In the interest of maintaining power, the Islamic Republic of Iran reluctantly embraced the Shahnameh, much to the appreciation of Iranian society. Once again, private reception has trumped public reception. In the past, images of the Shahnameh were used as a motivation for public action, whereas today the Shahnameh is once again a source of common heritage and shared history.

In the response to the Islamic Republic instituting a theocratic Muslim government, Iranians began to leave Iran proper and migrate to other parts of the world. Today, the United States contains the largest population of Iranians in the world outside of Iran proper, with approximately 500,000 Iranian-Americans living in Los Angeles alone.<sup>33</sup> As exiles in a foreign country, Iranians are forced to construct a double identity in the space where they live. "Exile, displacement, or migration," writes Zohreh I. Sullivan, "provoke stresses that intensify cultural fault lines... [such as] the collapsing of distinctions between identities, or the reification of imaginary pasts."<sup>34</sup> For a people who find themselves thousands of miles away from their homeland, the Shahnameh provides the Iranian diaspora community proof of their common history. In a technologically advanced world such as today, when a person can connect to someone thousands of

# *On the Shahnameh*

## **The Last Part (Three)**

**By: PAUL KUHNS**



miles away, how does a thousand year-old text survive?

Olga M. Davdison and Dick Davis are two scholars whose work on the Shahnameh has contributed significant strides in making the epic available to Western audiences. However, as Cameron Douraghy pointed out, "There is a growing rift between the 'Guardians of the text' (academia) and the younger, popular audience."<sup>35</sup> The sheer length of the epic can sometimes be a detractor for potential readers, and the story itself is multi-layered and nuanced. Though young audiences are aware of the epic's importance to their parents' generation, Iranian-American youth have difficulty relating to the themes of the Shahnameh. It is no surprise, then, that Douraghy and two fellow Iranian-Americans decided to create *Tales from the Shahnameh*, a privately published graphic novel first introduced in 2003.

*Tales* introduces Ferdowsi's epic to a generation which has grown up with many of the modern amenities associated with life in the United States. Information is now readily available to anyone with an internet connection, and mobile connectivity has taken access to unprecedented levels. Douraghy, who grew up reading American comic books such as *Thor* and *Superman* in Iran, began the project as a way to help familiarize Iranian-American youth with the action and adventure prevalent in the Shahnameh. "The hope is," stated Douraghy in a phone interview, "young people will be attracted to the format. Once they familiarize themselves with the main characters, they may become interested in reading the text and reaching a better understanding of what it means to be Iranian."<sup>36</sup> He adds that the venture is not profitable, but money is not the main issue. "When you grow up in



*On the Shahnameh*

a world separate from your roots,” he emphatically stated, “it’s too easy to forget where you came from and who you are.” In the face of marginalization due to technology, global economics, and the mass consumerism that it produces, Tales of the Shahnameh is an attempt to ensure the survival of the epic by giving the consumer precisely what they want: an abbreviated version, replete with colorfully illustrated tales of adventure and war. And while some would consider Tales to be superficial in this aspect, it is nevertheless an attempt to foster a sense of identity amongst a population which finds itself disconnected from their physical homeland. However, in order to understand what meanings the Shahnameh holds for Iranian-Americans today, it is necessary to take a closer look at precisely how the exile community feels about the epic.

A survey conducted amongst Iranian-Americans today sheds further light onto familiarity with the Shahnameh and its meaning(s) today. Of 58 responses, ninety percent owned at least one copy of the Shahnameh, with forty percent owning more than one. Although Iranian-Americans find themselves far from their country, they still maintain a close relationship with the thousand-year-old epic. When asked how they were introduced to the text, eighty-eight percent responded that it was through family members that they first became acquainted with the Shahnameh. The text is still very much alive and appears to be an integral aspect of the Iranian family dynamic. Most importantly, when asked to give certain themes of the Shahnameh an importance value of between 1 and 5, “Lessons in ethics/morality” received the highest

average rating (see figure 1). Iranian-American families still recognize the intrinsic value of Ferdowsi’s epic not only for identity-formation, but also for exempla of how one should live.

Like many countries in the Persian Gulf region, Iran suffered from political instability throughout much of the twentieth century. Governments frequently called upon the Shahnameh to legitimate their hold on political power, whether it was Reza Shah Pahlavi emphasizing the epic’s pre-Islamic glorification of kingship, or the Islamic Republic using the Shahnameh as a tool for building identity vis-à-vis the West. On the other hand, the private sector utilized revolutionary themes of the Shahnameh during the Constitutional Revolution, and Iranian families today still look to the text for lessons in morality, making the Shahnameh an integral aspect of identity-formation. While public entities typically miss the point of the Shahnameh, and thus use it to gain/maintain a hold on Iranian power-politics by reinterpreting the text for their own means, the private sector adheres to the epic for its fundamental and unchanging commentary on the fleeting nature of power and the ambitions that drive men. Examination of the Shahnameh and its various meanings in the twentieth century will produce a better understanding of the Iranian psyche, which may prove critical in an increasingly uncertain and myopic world.<sup>37</sup>

**NOTES:**

31. Mackey, *The Iranians*, 65.
32. “Sohrab Killing in Bookstores,” *Iran Daily*, Dec. 24, 2007; “Mirkarimi Plans Film on Shahnameh,” *Iran Daily*, Jan. 17, 2008.
33. “Living in Tehrangeles: L.A.’s Iranian Community,” *NPR*, June 8, 2006.

34. Zohreh T. Sullivan, *Exiled Memories: Stories of Iranian Diaspora* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 206.
35. Cameron Douraghy, interview by author, Las Cruces, NM, March 18, 2009.
36. Cameron Douraghy, interview by author, Las Cruces, NM, March 18, 2009.
37. William O. Beeman, “Success in U.S. Iranian Negotiations Depends on Cultural Knowledge,” *New American Media* website, Retrieved April 24, 2009 from [http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view\\_article.html?article\\_id=c56d06f40a2d770aa66d420a45b270e8](http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view_article.html?article_id=c56d06f40a2d770aa66d420a45b270e8)

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## ***Passion, Drive Pay Off for Iranian Bikini Designer***

**TALA HADAVI**  
**(VOA MARCH 24, 2011)**

Fashion design is very competitive, especially if you are a young designer. But passion and a relentless drive can overcome a lot of obstacles. Those qualities have made Iranian bikini designer Tala Raassi a success - two pieces of cloth at a time. Tala Raassi has come a long way since the days she used to cut up her mom’s leather jackets to make clothing for her dolls.



“I never thought that you could have a career in fashion, because all Iranian parents say you have to either be a doctor, engineer or lawyer. I always thought I wanted to be a lawyer, because I talk a lot and somehow I always find my way,” Raassi said. Raassi left Iran in 2000, after receiving 40 lashes for wearing a mini-skirt. But the past 10 years have not been that much easier - the young designer has had to hustle for every bit of success. She earned a degree in business management, but she also had to file for bankruptcy twice. Then - she got the break of a lifetime. Last year, she got a call from the Miss Universe pageant.

“My line is about freedom. I believe fashion showcases a woman’s freedom. And Miss Universe thought that was a good slogan for them. So they asked me to sponsor it, but it was very expensive, we had to find investors to cover the costs. I had to make 400 bikinis in only two months,” she explained. “But it was a great experience for me.”

Still, Raassi says she is not ready to expand. She runs her small business with two interns and an assistant. “I am my own army. I do all of my own marketing, all designs, all patterns, I go to Colombia myself to pick my own fabric. I do it all on my own,” she adds.

While Raassi has only been back to Iran once since she left, she says she is still proud to be an Iranian Muslim. “But just like all women around the world can wear whatever they want, so should an Iranian woman. Clothes are something that empowers women,” she states. “When I wear dressy clothes I feel confident. I think women are beautiful and should be celebrated.”

And while her work reflects that celebration of women’s beauty, she says it also reflects her belief in women’s strength. It’s a strength she sees in herself - and in her business.

“My goal is to become an icon, a role-model for all women that want to do something,” she said. “Whether it’s in fashion, becoming a doctor or even becoming a mother, they shouldn’t let anything stop them.”

Raassi calls her company “DARBEDAR” – Farsi for “door to door”. And she says if she has to go door to door to make it a success ... then that is what she will do. ■

Nader Shah was the ruler of Iran in 1736-47. He rose from obscurity to control an empire that briefly stretched across Iran, northern India, and parts of Central Asia. He developed a reputation as a skilled military commander and succeeded in battle against numerous opponents, including the Ottomans and the Mughals. During Nāder's campaign in India, and several years after he had replaced the last Safavid ruler on the Persian throne, the elimination of much of the Safavid family effectively ended any real possibility of a Safavid restoration. The decade of Nāder's own tumultuous reign was marked by conflict, chaos, and oppressive rule. Nāder's troops assassinated him in 1747, after he had come to be regarded as a cruel and capricious tyrant. His empire quickly collapsed, and the resulting fragmentation of Iran into several separate domains lasted until the rise of the Qajars decades later.

Born in November 1688 into a humble pastoral family, then at its winter camp in Darra Gaz in the mountains north of Mashad, Nāder belonged to a group of the Qirqlu branch of the Afšār (q.v.) Turkmen. Beginning in the 16th century, the Safavids had settled groups of Afšārs in northern Khorasan to defend Mashad against Uzbek incursions.

The first major international political event that directly affected Nāder's career was the Afghan invasion of Iran in the summer of 1719 that resulted in the capture of Isfahan and deposition of Shah Solṭān Ḥosayn, the last Safavid monarch, by the autumn of 1722. After the fall of Isfahan, Safavid pretenders emerged all over Iran. One was Solṭān Ḥosayn's son Ṭahmāsb, who escaped to Qazvin, where he was proclaimed Shah Ṭahmāsb II. He led a resistance movement against the Afghans during the 1720s. The Russians and Ottomans saw the Afghan conquest as their own opportunity to acquire territory in Iran, so both invaded and occupied some land in 1723. The following year they signed a treaty in which they recognized each other's territorial gains and agreed to support the restoration of Safavid rule.

Around this time, Nāder began his career in Abivard, an Afšār-controlled town just north of Mashad. He made himself so useful to the local ruler Bābā 'Ali Beg



## NADER SHAH

### PART ONE

**Professor Ernest Tucker**  
Source: [Kaveh Farrokh website](#)

The article below is by Professor Ernest Tucker and was originally posted in the Encyclopedia Iranica, on August 15, 2006. Kindly note that version printed below is different in that in the Encyclopedia Iranica in that it has pictures, maps and captions not seeing in the Encyclopedia Iranica version.

that he gave Nāder two of his daughters in marriage. Due to internal tribal rivalries, Nāder was not able to become Bābā 'Ali's successor, so he vied for power with various upstart military chiefs in northeastern Iran who had emerged in the wake of the Afghan invasion.

In the mid 1720s, Nāder played an important role in defeating Malek Maḥmud Sistāni, one of that area's main warlords, who had set himself up as the scion of the 9th-10th century Saffarid dynasty. Nāder was his ally for a while but soon turned against him. His role in suppressing this usurper brought him to Ṭahmāsb's attention. Ṭahmāsb chose him as his principal military commander to replace Faṭḥ 'Ali Khan Qajar (d. 1726, q.v.), whose descendants (the founders of the Qajar dynasty) blamed Nāder for the murder of their ancestor.

With this promotion, Nāder assumed the title Ṭahmāsb-qoli (servant of Ṭahmāsb). His prestige steadily increased as he led Ṭahmāsb's armies to

numerous victories. He first defeated the Abdāli (later known as Dorrāni; q.v.) Afghans near Herat in May 1729, then achieved victory over the Ġilzi (q.v.) Afghans led by Ašraf at Mehmāndust on 29 September 1729. After this battle, when Ašraf fled from Isfahan to Qandahar, Ṭahmāsb became finally established in Isfahan (with Nāder in actual control of affairs) by December 1729, marking the real end of Afghan rule in Iran. In the wake of Ašraf's defeat, many Afghan soldiers joined Nāder's army and proved helpful in many subsequent battles.

Three months before the Mehmāndust victory, Nāder had sent letters to the Ottoman Sultan Aḥmad III (r. 1703-30) to ask for help, since Ṭahmāsb "was made the legitimate successor of his esteemed father [Solṭān Ḥosayn]" (Nāseri, p. 210). Receiving no response, Nāder attacked the Ottomans as soon as Ašraf was defeated and Isfahan reoccupied. He waged a successful campaign during the spring and summer of 1730 and recaptured much territory that the Ottomans had taken in the previous decade. But, just as the momentum of his offensive was building, news came from Mashad that the Abdāli Afghans had attacked Nāder's brother Ebrāhim there and pinned him down inside the city's walls. Nāder rushed to relieve him. (This distraction came at just the right time for the Ottomans, since in Istanbul the Patrona Halil rebellion, which led to the deposition of Aḥmad III, broke out in September 1730.) Nāder arrived in Mashad in time to attend the wedding of his son Rezā-qoli to Ṭahmāsb's sister Fāṭema Solṭān Begum.

Nāder spent the next fourteen months subduing Abdāli forces led by Allāh-Yār Khan. To commemorate his victory over them, he endowed in Mashad a waqf (pious foundation) at the shrine (see ĀSTĀN-E QODS-E RAŻAWI) of Imam 'Ali al-Rezā (d. ca. 818, q.v.). Nāder's personal seal, preserved on the waqf deed of June 1732, showed his unremarkable Shi'ite loyalty at that time: *Lā fatā illā 'Ali lā sayf illā Du'l-Faqār / Nāder-e 'ašr-am ze loṭf-e Haqq gōlām-e hašt o čār* (There is no youth more chivalrous than 'Ali, no sword except Du'l-Faqār (q.v.) / I am the rarity of the age, and by the grace of God, the servant of the Eight and Four



[i.e., the Twelve Imams].” (Ša‘bāni, p. 375; cf. Rabino, p. 53). Ṭahmāsb took Nāder’s absence in Khorasan as his own chance to attack the Ottomans and pursued a disastrous campaign (January 1731–January 1732), in which the Ottomans actually reoccupied much of the territory recently lost to Nāder. Sultan Maḥmud I (r. 1730–54) negotiated with Ṭahmāsb a peace agreement that allowed the Ottomans to retain these lands, while returning Tabriz to avoid angering Nāder. Three weeks later, Russia and Persia signed the Treaty of Rašt, in which Russia, trying to curry favor with Persia against the Ottomans, agreed to withdraw from most of the Iranian territory it had annexed in the 1720s.

When Nāder learned that Ṭahmāsb had relinquished substantial territory to the Ottomans, he quickly returned to Isfahan. He used the peace treaty as an excuse to remove Ṭahmāsb from the throne in August 1732 and replace him with Ṭahmāsb’s eight-month-old son, who was given the regnal name ‘Abbās III. Now regent, Nāder resumed hostilities against the Ottomans. After a decisive round of victories, interspersed with short excursions to quell uprisings in Fārs and Baluchistan, he signed a new treaty in December 1733 with Aḥmad Pasha, the Ottoman governor of Baghdad. It marked an attempt to reinstate the provisions of the 1049/1639 Ottoman-Safavid Treaty of Qaṣr-e Širin (Dohāb), since it called for the restoration of the borders stipulated at that time, a prisoner exchange, and Ottoman protection for all Persian ḥajj pilgrims. The Ottoman sultan would not ratify it, because disputes persisted over control of parts of the Caucasus, and so intermittent hostilities continued.

In March 1734, Šāhroḳ was born to Rezā-qoli and Fāṭema Begum. Šāhroḳ thus formed a direct link between the lineages of Nāder and the Safavids—an important basis for Šāhroḳ’s eventual right to rule. The choice to name his grandson after Šāhroḳ b. Timur (r. 1409–47) revealed Nāder’s growing interest in emulating the conqueror Timur (r. 1369–1405). There followed another series of Ottoman-Persian battles in the Caucasus, and Nāder’s capture of Ganja (q.v.), during the siege of which Russian engineers provided assistance. Russia and Persia then signed a defen-

sive alliance in March 1735 at Ganja. In the treaty, the Russians agreed to return most of the territory conquered in the 1720s. This agreement shifted the regional diplomatic focus to a looming Ottoman-Russian confrontation over control of the Black Sea region and provided for Nāder a military respite on his western border.

By the end of 1735, Nāder felt that he had gained enough prestige through a series of victories and had secured the immediate military situation well enough to assume the throne himself. In February 1736, he gathered the nomadic and sedentary leaders of the Safavid realm at a vast encampment on the Moḡān steppe. He asked the assembly to choose either him or one of the Safavids to rule the country. When Nāder heard that the molla-bāši (chief cleric) Mirzā Abu’l-Ḥasan had remarked that “everyone is for the Safavid dynasty,” he was said to have had that cleric arrested and strangled the next day (Lockhart, p. 99). After several days of meetings, the assembly proclaimed Nāder as the legitimate monarch.

The newly appointed shah gave a speech to acknowledge the approval of those in attendance. He announced that, upon his accession to the throne, his subjects would abandon certain religious practices that had been introduced by Shah Esmā‘il I (r. 1501–24) and had plunged Iran into disorder, such as sabb (ritual cursing of the first three caliphs Abu Bakr, ‘Omar, and ‘Oṭmān, termed “rightly guided” by the Sunnites) and rafz (denial of their right to rule the Muslim community). Nāder decreed that Twelver Shi‘ism would become known as the Ja‘fari madōhab (legal school) in honor of the sixth Imam Ja‘far al-Šādeq (d. 765), who would be recognized as its central authority. Nāder asked that this madōhab be treated exactly like the four traditionally recognized legal schools of Sunnite Islam. All those present at Moḡān were required to sign a document indicating their agreement with Nāder’s ideas. Just before his actual coronation ceremony on 8 March 1736, Nāder specified five conditions for peace with the Ottoman empire (Astarābādi, p. 286), most of which he continued to seek over the next ten years. They were: (1) recognition of the Ja‘fari madōhab as the fifth orthodox

legal school of Sunnite Islam; (2) designation of an official place (rokn) for a Ja‘fari imam in the courtyard of the Ka‘ba [Perry, 1993, p. 854 and “Ka‘ba,” in EI2 IV, p. 318 vs. Lockhart, p. 101] analogous to those of the Sunnite legal schools; (3) appointment of a Persian pilgrimage leader (amir al-ḥajj); (4) exchange of permanent ambassadors between Nāder and the Ottoman sultan; and (5) exchange of prisoners of war and prohibition of their sale or purchase. In return, the new shah promised to prohibit Shi‘ite practices objectionable to the Ottoman Sunnites

Nāder tried to redefine religious and political legitimacy in Persia at symbolic and substantive levels. One of his first acts as shah was to introduce a four-peaked hat (implicitly honoring the first four “rightly-guided” Sunni caliphs), which became known as the kolāh-e Nāderi (EI2 X, p. 797, pl. CXIII), to replace the Qezelbāš turban cap (Qezelbāš tāj; EI2 X, p. 788, pl. C), which was pieced with twelve gores (evocative of the twelve Shi‘ite Imams) Soon after his coronation, he sent an embassy to the Ottomans (Maḥmud I, r. 1730–54) carrying letters in which he explained his concept of the “Ja‘fari madōhab” and recalled the common Turkmen origins of himself and the Ottomans as a basis for developing closer ties.

During this negotiation and subsequent ones, the Ottomans rejected all proposals related to Nāder’s Ja‘fari madōhab concept but ultimately agreed to Nāder’s demands concerning recognition of a Persian amir al-ḥajj, exchange of ambassadors, and that of prisoners of war. These demands paralleled the provisions of a long series of Ottoman-Safavid agreements, especially an accord, drawn up in 1727 but never signed, between the Ottoman sultan and Ašraf, the Ġilzay Afghan ruler of Persia (r. 1725–29). At the end of the 1148/1736 negotiations, both sides approved a document that mentioned only the issues of the ḥajj pilgrimage caravan, ambassadors, and prisoners because of disagreement over the Ja‘fari madōhab concept. Although no actual peace treaty was signed at that time, mutual acceptance of these other points became the basis for a working truce that lasted several years.

*to be continued*

# Bijan Pakzad

## Passed Away

COMBINED SOURCES



The world has lost an icon. Bijan Pakzad passed away on April 18, 2011 at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center at the age of 67. Bijan suffered a stroke on Thursday evening.

Bijan was born in Iran on April 4, 1944. His father was a wealthy industrialist. After attending boarding school and studying design in Switzerland and Italy he moved to the United States in the early 70s. Along with his delicious talent in clothing design and color he had a huge ego that allowed him to market himself in an unusual and successful manner. He starred in his own advertisements and appeared on billboards and in magazines next to his celebrity clients.

While his main residence was Beverly Hills he also had residences in Malibu, New York, Milan and Florence. In 1976 he launched the House of Bijan on Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills, CA. His boutique was by-appointment only, but anyone could make an appointment. There was no need to be a celebrity or show financials prior to entering the boutique. And for this reason along with his vibrant personality the House of Bijan helped make Rodeo Drive the world-class shopping destination. Though his prices are “over the top,” his clients respected his quality and the exclusivity he offered them. It is said that he dressed over 40,000 clients. Included in the list are former President Carter, Usher, Michael Eisner, King Juan Carlos of Spain, George H.W. Bush and President Obama. According to his son he even has a picture of all five living presidents wearing

his suits.

Besides fashion Bijan is also noted for his fragrance collection and named one DNA in honor of his three children. The bottles he created for the perfume were unique and well known. They were a circular flacon that allowed the perfume to fill two cylinders when the bottle was half empty. Apparently this design defied gravity. Because of that one of them is a part of the Smithsonian Museum’s collection.

He was also known for his interest in cars. His collection included a mustard colored Bentley Azure with black interior, a black Bentley Azure with yellow interior, a Rolls Royce Drophead Coup, a yellow Ferrari 430, a black Mercedes-Benz SLR McLaren and a Bugatti Veyron. When one of these was parked in front of the boutique you knew Bijan was in.

His design and name also donned a Colt revolver. In 1980 he designed the gun with a leather handle and in laid the cylinder with 56 grams of 24 karat gold. The case was made of Baccarat Crystal lined with mink. His name was engraved on the cylinder. It is reported that one of the guns went for \$50,000 at an auction.

Bijan was not without awards including the FiFi *Most Successful Men’s Fragrance* in 1988, FiFi *Best Women’s Fragrance Package* in 1988, FiFi *Men’s Fragrance of the Year Specialty Department Stores* in 1997, FiFi *Best National Advertising Campaign – Men’s in 1997*, 1995 IgNobel Chemistry Prize and in 2010 the Otis College of Art and Design, *Otis Legend Award*.

“I love Iran,” says Bijan. “It is the best. The art, culture and history. All of it. Who cares about how chic Napoleon’s bedroom is, because when you sleep in your own bed, it is the best. I mean that you can appreciate other things, but mine is always the best.”

His eccentric personality, with its entrepreneurial spirit, has impressed even the most judgmental of Los Angeles and New York’s upper crust. “My advertising is something that elevated my persona and gained recognition in the right places,” he says. “However, my reputation only spread at the high rate it did because of the way I am able to sum up the man and his fashion needs. I study the man, understand his profession. I combine his age, the shape of his body, his budget and, above all else, know his lifestyle. Most don’t have this ‘it’ ability to formulize a fusion of style and energy for the client, and it isn’t something you can put on paper like a math formula.

“I am blessed. I don’t have do-overs. See it, do it, no regrets. From age 15, I was always going forward and fortunately, always it all worked out.”

He is survived by his three children Daniel, Nicolas and Alexandra and a sister Shanaz; brothers Fara, Fari and Cyrus and one grandchild.

While he ran with the wealthy Bijan was never a snob. No one was denied access from his boutique as long as they made an appointment.

He along with his personality and contributions to the world and design will be missed. ■



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