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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.**



## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Each time I sit down to write my editorial I get anxious. Will something else happen, in the world, that would be more appropriate to write about? Most of the times it does, but every September, since September 11, 2001, emotions and events in my life cause me to reflect back on how the world has changed since that horrific and tragic day. The events that unfolded on 9/11/01 did not only affect the lives of those who lost loved ones. Those events, like forceful waves affected the lives of the world ideologically, emotionally, physically and of course financially. They continue to ripple with each passing year, but those ripples rise again to a storm wave as September 11 draws near.

It would be ignorant for me to state that the anger sparked from those events is baseless for we all have reason to be angry at the animals that completed the physical task and the organizations behind it. I do not believe, however, that I should be considered ignorant in saying that much of that anger is directed at innocent people, those who became guilty by association rather than by fact. Surprisingly today, most of the world probably would not remember the names of the hijackers nor would they be able to remember their country of origin. They remember only that they were Moslem terrorists and that these mindless individuals completed their acts in the name of Islam. I remember the countries of origin, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt Yemen, NOT IRAN. But these criminal, misguided individuals could have also been from the United States, Germany, England, Canada etc. Is their origin as important as their mind set? Did their cause represent the majority of those practicing Islam, or are they as misguided by the words of the leaders they followed, as we are misguided by the incorrect labeling of Iranians, as terrorists? How or can these injustices be corrected or reversed? How hard can it be to educate ourselves with facts rather than fictions? How and why are we so ready to accept what we hear as truth rather than investigating and finding the facts for ourselves? We live in an "internet" world. With a few simple clicks of a mouse we can communicate with the world. But I fear we are often lazy and allow those, with their own, deeply rooted radical ideas to make decisions for us.

Constantly the public is reminded of the images of the hostage takers in 1979 and therefore they continue to be leery of Iranians. In June of 2009 the world saw a different image of Iranians unfold in the streets of Iran. It had to be reported, it was world news. The young and old sacrificed their lives and their freedom in protest against the suppressive government of Iran. As fast as those images appeared and began to change the world wide opinion of Iranians, they disappeared as quickly and with their disappearance their plight was forgotten. It is unfortunate that we, the public in general, are so easily manipulated. I guess it is because of the power of the media and our laziness to become disinterested in issues that seem not to affect us. We see the horrors and destruction of floods, hurricanes, earthquakes etc. While on the screen they draw our emotions, but when replaced by a new story they become a distant memory. Does anyone still think about the victims of these events, their plight is not over? Their lives are still in a state of disrepair. How many of us have already forgotten about the Chilean miners?

Some might say what I am about to write is "old news." Some might question the reasonableness of my feelings. But the events I will discuss happened to me and have had a profound affect on my life. I am certain many other Iranians have experienced the same thing. Perhaps, had I and others stayed focused on our disappointment on how we were treated, Iranians would today be in a different place. Instead Iranians, like a beautiful piece of fabric, are left with a stain almost impossible to remove.

I am proud citizen of the United States since 1975 and have traveled extensively with my U.S. passport. Every time I return from a trip and see The Statue of Liberty I recognize how lucky I am to have this citizenship. Yet on so many occasions I, as I am sure many of you, have experienced demoralization by customs officials. Since 1979 having Iranian origin has instantly caused some officials, at customs, to be less courteous and untrusting of my U.S. citizenship. With our open borders other ethnicities coming in and out of the U.S. for business, culture, education, vacation or to see loved ones do not face the level of scrutiny that we, as Iranians,



coming from that part of the world face. Cubans fled our enemy, Fidel Castro, yet they are welcomed without insult. And, though the U.S. has fought wars protecting this soil from the arms of communism etc. those seeking asylum from the Soviet Union, Vietnam, China or just to visit for whatever reason do not face the same level of scrutiny that Iranians face. Why is it that Iranians wether writers, scientists, artists, teachers, producers, students and just relatives go through such great lengths in order to visit the United States? It is because we have been linked to a terrorist group? Only we have the power to remove this stigma.

Recently I was reunited with a dear friend of mine, who I had lost contact with for thirty years. He called to tell me that he was in Canada. Without question I jumped on a plane to share a weekend visit. We, of course, were unable to catch up in two days, so I invited him to come to the United States to stay with me a while. He was very excited about the offer. I wrote a letter to the consulate stating that he would be my financial and personal responsibility while here. The trip was planned. Unfortunately, he called to tell me he was declined because of the Canadian visa he had, which allowed only one entry into Canada. I told him that he could leave from the United States. This also did not help since it would take too many weeks to obtain a visa to come to the United States. My heart is broken. I know, at this age I will never see him again. On another occasion, a dying mother was turned down from a request to see her children and grandchildren one last time. Why is it so difficult? Who is to blame for these insurmountable hurdles and hoops? What have Iranians, as a people, done to deserve this treatment? How long will this punishment prevail? When will Iranians be looked at without hatred and animosity? Why are those who seek to escape the oppression of the present Iranian government not given the same courtesy as the Cubans, Chinese etc?

I wonder who is to blame for this injustice that falls on the Iranian people. Is it because of Iran as a country or is it because of its rulers? Is it because of an order from the US government or just an uneducated reaction of hatred by an individual custom agent? Or, as I stated earlier is it our own complacency to such actions? I don't know the answer. I just know I want things to change!

It hurts my heart to see Iran and Iranians, a country and people, so filled with natural and individual resources fall, to a level lower than China all because of its location in the world. Iran is only second to China in the number of executions and has the highest amount of baseless holidays, the highest level of unemployment and the highest level of addictions.

The Iranian government had an opportunity to rule

its people with respect over the past thirty years, but instead chose to rule with a fist that is all too slowly weakening. Why have they not changed the shaking fist into an open hand reaching out to the world for friendship and partnership? I read the news every day hoping to see some hint that things are changing for Iran and its younger generation, but each day the news brings an ugly reality.

As I write this to you, it is the eve of the ninth anniversary of 9/11. With tears I remember those who lost their lives and those they left behind. With tears I cry over how different the world has become since that day. With tears I cry for the Iranians who were the first to light candles and extend words of sympathy to the United States on that ugly morning. With tears I think and wonder why we as a world cannot get along? As I wrote on the first anniversary of 9/11, I repeat those words again "Dictatorship, imprisonment, NEVER, friendship, kindness and respect, FOREVER.

*Shahrokh Alavi*



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**THANKS FOR YOUR EFFORTS**

Thank you, you are doing a wonderful job. I have always loved your magazine.

*Best regards, Amil*

**ON TARGET**

Your editorial was right on target. I have taken liberty of forwarding it to a number of friends for their better understanding of current situation in IRAN.

Your line "...So I will continue to pray every night, as I have done since the day I left Iran, that Iran will be spared from division and that the Iranian people, who I love, will live in peace and free from suppression...." brought tears to my eyes.

Thank you for speaking for so many of us.

*Respectfully, Hamid*

**OUTSTANDING**

God bless you for the medical and social services you provided to people all these years.

*J.R (SIDNEY)*

**WRONG AUTHOR**

Thanks for sharing the latest issue (# 58) of *Mirass Iran* with me.

Congratulations! I read it with interest and pleasure.

The poem on page 9 is not by Molavi. It was written by a talented Iranian a couple of years ago.

*Best wishes,  
Bahram Grami*

## *Dorood Bar Hame Dustane Irani, Instead of Salam*

I am not Iranian, but I learned Persian (not Farsi, as I have learned) because I have married into a Persian family. My wife is an artist and culture is a very important part of our life. I admire Persian poetry, love Persian music. I am aware of all the important cultural accomplishments of ancient Persia, which Europe has adapted. Hence I always try to persuade my Persian relatives and friends to be a bit more sensitive towards their language and try to keep it pure.

But I have learned I am fighting a losing battle, history proves this. Look at the strong influence French had during the rule of the French speaking Normans in England or Latin had on German during the early middle ages, when the entire clergy spoke Latin and the holy service was celebrated in Latin.

Nowadays, it is even worse. English takes over and has a strong influence on every European language. You Persians can be happy because for every Arabic word in your languages there exists a Persian word. But now, for several words in German there is no German word like "soft ware." Nor do we have a "rendevous" (French), we have a "meeting" (English) and nobody goes to a "Treffen" (German). On top of this the strong influence of the American media pulls in all this vulgar English impressions and they are used without thinking. Twenty years ago it would have been unthinkable to use such words, yet Rap music is hip with all the vulgarisms and our kids love it.

I am sorry to say that the high culture is not in the lead. People with a low level of education are in the major-

ity and hence the refined language is not en vogue. And as a conclusion the stronger (non) culture suppresses the weaker culture. Nobody besides some purists fuss about this. Why, because America is liked and the American way of life seems to be desirable.

On the other side, when I was a toddler in my home country, Hitler was in power as the spear head of a general nationalistic movement based on over exaggerated patriotism. He was the result of a weak aristocracy which lost power and has turned the countries into poverty in the aftermath (same in Italy ==' Mussolini, and in Spain ==' Franco). During this time it was forbidden to use foreign words. This approach is also not what we want, I assume.

But coming back to the problem of your beautiful language. Why is it that a (I assume small, more intellectual) group of Persians care about the purity of their language. It cannot be because Arabs do not have a high culture. They had a much higher culture than entire Europe in the middle ages. Greek, Persian and Arab philosophers, astronomers, poets and mathematicians were

competing on equal levels.

So it must have something to do with this very particular form of Islam which nowadays shows it's ugly face to the world presented and towards the Arab language leaning Mullahs (by the way a political party in Holland has introduced a bill to the parliament to take the religious status of Islam away with the argument that it is an aggressive ideology which aims to control the world and not a religion).

Taking all this into account I think realistically one has to wait until a change in government occurs. Until then, do not waste your time and energy to fight a losing battle by trying to keep your language clean. But please never give up trying to influence your kids to learn Persian and softly lead them into Molana's and Hafez's poetry. Because your kids, like mine, will be pulled into the swamp of commercial America's "unculture" and then they will lose the sensitivity to enjoy Persian culture. So spread the word (I sound like a preacher) about this wonderful heritage of mankind to the people who surround you

*Ruze shoma bekker  
Ernst*

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Dear Dr. Ahkami,

I am also deeply troubled by what appears to be the war-like intentions of the USA and it's economically coerced allies against Iran. Iran is completely ringed by US military in every country on its borders and in the Gulf. As you say, the West is waiting for an excuse to attack Iran. The sovereignty and independence of Iran are at stake and are the very problem that the US has so much trouble accepting.

The US wants to control the world with its military might which is really the only power it has left. Witness how displeased the US administration was when Iran, Brazil and Turkey made a side deal on the uranium. Like the build up to the war on Iraq, a peaceful solution was not an objective of the USA nor is it now for Iran. The USA wants nothing less than restoring or reducing Iran once again to a vassal client state with a US puppet in charge with SOFA, etc where once again Americans will be first class citizens in Iran and Iranians second. It is Iran's misfortune to have the second largest

petroleum deposits in the world and access to that is more important to America than any civil rights which are being used as a pretext to make invasion more palatable to the American public. I believe that the Iraqi casualties so far are over 1.2 million. The destruction of non American life is a matter of indifference to Americans. Iraq also has the misfortune to have large oil deposits and now with an estimated trillion dollars worth of precious metals in Afghanistan, it will become

a desolate pit mine with a million crater holes after the greed of the multinationals is done there and moves on to the next feast leaving some elitist war lord puppet in charge of the Lithium with his small share of the ill gotten gains...

America will not be satisfied until Iran has a government which serves their interests which is access to petroleum and access to their market place to sell them American finished goods... that is what global economy really means; reducing all world populations into one consumer entity for giant multinationals to sell the same stuff to and along with that comes the end of indigenous culture and diversity. I see the stagnant lack of entrepreneurial ship and invention that is a result of the corporations running our lives in America which built its reputation on ingenuity. It is ironic that as bad as the Islamic Republic of

Iran (IRI) is that they recognize some of these issues of national sovereignty and maintaining an Iranian identity.

I agree with you that the main agenda and concern of the regime is its own survival at this point and the Iranian people be damned. So the Iranian people have two enemies, one within and one outside. You have raised another spectra, which is the dismemberment of Iran which I hadn't really focused on but in the past the CIA was trying to foment separatist movements in the two richest oil provinces Azerbaijan and Khuzestan by playing on ethnic separatism.

The USA only has its military might which is seven times larger a force than any other on earth to claim as unique and 3,000 military bases abroad, 50 in Iraq alone. We have become the 21st century Mongols.

The world has become a very different place from what I personally wanted. It is full of conservatives and far right religious fundamentalists on all sides. I have always felt that any foreign relations between two nations should be

based on policies which benefit the majority of the people in each nation and not serve only the interests of narrow elite. Every interaction must be a win situation for both parties or it is creating political instability. The worldwide struggle of the communists and the socialists was for a more equitable distribution of wealth which butted up against the capitalism of the West and created the Cold War which was a tremendous waste of resources and humanity and proxy wars fought by third

world countries on behalf of the super powers at a great loss of human life. The West didn't win the Cold War; the USSR just went broke first. It has come to the point where the consumer way of life is not environmentally sustainable. Like a giant snake in its death throws thrashing about for hunger, the giant furnace must be stoked at the expense of the "third world."

I would ask every American what they would do if they woke up one day in Iran and found themselves to be an average Iranian citizen saddled with the IRI regime and then I would ask them as an average American what they would do if they came to realize that their military industrial complex is actually a bigger and less benign form of dictatorship which makes war for a living.

Sincerely, Brian H. Appleton

## WAR ON IRAN!!

America will not be satisfied until Iran has a government which serves their interests which is access to petroleum and access to their market place to sell them American finished goods...  
that is what global economy really means, ...

**Brian H. Appleton**

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Dear Editor:

I have been recently receiving a great deal of e-mail with complaints about this administration's handling of the imminent strike on Iran by Israel. To this I have to say, that as a group we are ineffective with any other weapon except a pen. There was so much momentum established by the protests. Yet once we saw we made the news we again rushed back to our computers and started writing about what a great job we did and who was and wasn't there and who will be the next invitation we receive to a political fund raiser.

If we, as Iranians in this country, are in fear and against the present direction of Israel and Iran, then every day of the week we should be demonstrating in front of the White House and State

## *OK I Have to Say This*

Department. Large numbers make a statement. Writing to our "so called Iranian American politicians" to help out is a waste of time and energy. Why? Because they will also make deals and those deals will not include freedom as we want it for Iran.

Yes, it is a delicate matter, but in my heart if we are truly against a potential strike on Iran you have to play in the big league and counter with the same public coverage as the other side is getting. I ask that you, as the editor of the great *Persian Heritage* publication, get together with all the other editors and in lieu of printing one issue of all your publications commingle the

funds and take informative advertisements out in the NY Times, et al. Not accusatory or political positioning but strong and informative. If you were able to get all the editors of ALL Iranian-American publications in one room and if they put aside their egos and for once joined forces, not to march down a street or be invited to a party, we could show the White House, the world and the beautiful citizens of the United States that a war with Iran, by anyone, is despicable not to mention potential a catalyst for WW III.

Why are we so afraid to ask the big question, "is the nuclear issue truly the reason behind this strike?" No,

I think there is a greater plan! Why? Because if it was about nuclear proliferation why are we encouraging Hanoi to develop nuclear energy? And, why do we not propose to Iran and Israel the following.... Both nations give up nuclear capability with a guarantee by the US to protect them against any strike. If true peace in the ME is the actual goal it won't be from a divided Iran.

Thank you for listening. You can do with this piece what you want, but I really feel that there needs to be an end to small round table discussions that are simply a catharsis for frustrated ex pats. Take that energy and push forward. There is so much money and intelligence in this group that I am shocked by the actions of immaturity!

*Anonymous*

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This has been awarded for their outstanding tenacity and dedication in the promotion of human rights to students, artists, writers, scholars and in their success on reaching millions more through the media. WAALM's 'School of Cultural Diplomacy provides educational courses, study programs, seminars, research and strategies to promote international peace, learning, dialogue and human rights.

**IRANIAN HARDLINER JUSTIFIES SATELLITE AND INTERNET CENSORSHIP**

Iran's former culture minister, Mohammad Hosein Safar Harandi announced that if foreign satellites and sites threaten us, we must stop their spread by blocking them. Harandi said in a speech at Qazvin International University: "Where danger is felt from external satellites and sites, clearly we need to stop the spread of corruption through these waves by filtering them." While the former culture minister criticized Ahmadinejad administration of inconsistent cultural policies, he especially focused his criticism on the cultural policies adopted during the reformist government of Mohammad Khatami in the 1990s. He maintained that "deviations" in the arts occurred when the debate over "commitment versus expertise was put forth." He cited prominent Iranian filmmaker, Mohsen Makhmalbaf as an example of this deviation saying that to start with, he was a proponent of "Revolutionary art" but later changed his path. He condemned the attempt to draw upon the expertise of pre-revolutionary artists saying: "The result of such exchanges was that individuals like Makhmalbaf who subscribed to ideological art in the eighties, are now making films that are akin to pornography."

*Source: Radio Zamaneh*

**PERSIAN CARPET OF PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP WRAPS UP IN TABRIZ**

The Persian Carpet of World Peace and Friendship was unveiled Wednesday during a ceremony in the presence of several Iranian, foreign and UNESCO officials in Tabriz.

The project began at Tehran's Sadabad Historical Complex in 2008 and took two years to accomplish during which representatives of over 100 countries visited and symbolically tied a knot on the carpet, the Persian service of Mehr reported on Wednesday. "This



carpet is actually a means of promoting peace and helping place a high value on world peace and friendship and strengthening relationships among nations," said Sadabad director Eshrat Shayeq. "The 2 x 1.5 meter carpet will act as Iran's cultural Olympic torch that will travel through different countries to finally arrive and go on permanent display at UN Headquarters in Paris." So far, the book covering the lengthy process of weaving the carpet as well as notes inscribed by high-ranking international officials about the project in three different languages has been published," he added. He mentioned that Persian carpet weaving has been dormant and has not achieved its rightful status despite its worldwide fame and we hope these new ideas would help revive this traditional art. A ceremony is also being arranged to pay tribute to master carpet designers Mahmud Farshchian and Mirza-Taqi Khiabani in the near future, he concluded.

**(Report by Mehr News Agency; photos by Meghan Nuttall)**

**WEAVING PEACE IN TEHRAN**


A report by author & Tapestry Weaver, Meghan Nuttall

Easter Sunday I awoke to Tehran traffic outside my hotel window. Some wrestled the tangle of cars and pedestrians on their way to mass at the nearby Orthodox Church. I prepared for my own spiritual journey, the reason I had traveled through eleven time zones and half way around the world: to weave a knot on Iran's World Peace Carpet, a project sponsored by UNESCO and the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicraft Organization of Iran. For a tapestry weaver and author (my first novel was inspired by an Afshar tribal rug), tying a goodwill knot on this carpet, along with 700 others from 89 nations, seemed every bit as reverent as attending Easter Mass...

Weaving Peace in Tehran Click here to read the rest of this essay about Meghan Nuttall's journey to Iran in spring 2009 to weave on their first World Peace Carpet.

*Author Meghan Nuttall Sayres seated at the World Peace Carpet beside Head Weaver Jafar Shahabi and Museum Curator Fahimeh Naderinajad in the Saad Abad Historical Complex, Tehran, Iran*





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# HISTORICAL KINGDOMS AND DYNASTIES

(AS REPORTED BY WIKIPEDIA)

*From the list of countries in chronological order of their statehood we pulled Iran, first on the list..*

*Nation-building is a long evolutionary process. It is therefore practically impossible to come up with a single date for a nation's "birth" in most cases. However, most nations have accepted some dates in their respective histories as their symbolic starting points. This is usually done more for nationalistic pro-*

*paganda than for scientific reasons. For many ancient and medieval nations these starting points are usually the dates when a nation was mentioned in a written document for the first time or simply a date from their national mythology.*

**Date: 3300 BC**

**Nation: Iran (Persia)**

*In Europe, this often coincides with the ruler's conversion to Christianity. For post-colonial nations, starting with the United States, the beginning of statehood is usually considered to be the date when independence was declared, granted or recognized.*

*The situation is further complicated by the confusion between the terms nation (generally considered an ethnic or cultural grouping) and state (an independent political entity). (These two words are commonly used as synonyms.)*

The first state consisting all of western Iran was founded by the Proto-Elamite with their capital at Susa & Anshan which lasted from around 3200 BC to 2700 BC and had a significant influence on later Iranian dynasties, they were followed by Elam (2700 BC-550 BC) and Indo-European Medes who created the first Iranian empire, which encompassed all of Iran and lasted from 728 to 550 BC, Cyrus The Great, founded the first Persian Empire, the Achaemenid Empire in **550 BC** (the Achaemenids had ruled Anshan for about a century before that).

The Achaemenids conquered the neighboring Mesopotamian Civilization, and was the world's first super-state, stretching from Greece to India. Persia was conquered by the Greeks under Alexander the Great, Arab Islamic Caliphate and the Mongol Empire with subsequent reunifications afterwards. The last

reunification of Iran happened in 1501 by the Safavid dynasty. Iran was referred to in the West as Persia until March 21, 1935 when it was officially recognized as Iran which has been the local name. The modern Islamic Republic of Iran was established on **February 11, 1979** after revolution toppled Pahlavi dynasty. Iran has had roughly the same geographical boundaries since its inception and has been using Persian as the official language in addition to Iranian calendar as official calendar as well as the name of Iran for the nation since Median Empire

In the fifth century B.C., Darius the Great of the Achaemenid dynasty called the Persian Gulf "Draya; tyā; haca; parsa; Aitiy", meaning, "The sea which goes from Persian". In this era, some of the Greek writers also called it "Persikonkaitas", meaning the Persian Gulf. Claudius Ptolemaeus, the celebrated Greco-Egyptian mathematician/astronomer in the second century called it "Percicus Sinus" or Persian Gulf. In the first century A.D., Quintus Curtius Rufus, the Roman historian, designated it "Aquarius Persico" – the Persian Sea.

Flavius Arrianus, another Greek historian, called it "Persiconkaitas" (Persian Gulf). During the Sassanian dynasty and the time of the Prophet Muhammad and the 4 caliphs, the name invariably used was the "Persian Sea". This was continued by the Umayyads and Abbassids, while during the Ottomans used either "Persian Gulf" or "Persian Sea". At the Twenty-third session of the United Nations in March-April 2006, the name "Persian Gulf" was confirmed again as the legitimate and official term to be used by members of the United Nations.

## Tabriz Traditional Bazaar



The Tabriz Bazaar is one of the main trade centers on the Silk Road which is located in the city of Tabriz in East Azerbaijan Province, northwest Iran. During the 34th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Brasilia, the bazaar was registered on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Photos by Mahsa Jamali, Mehr News Agency



The ancient Persian government was very much like the modern American government. It appears to have been even psychologically similar. It might be said that the ancient Persians were the prototype of modern Americans.

In 2002, I delivered a paper at the Iranian Studies Conference in Bethesda, MD, entitled, “David and Darius: Ancient Internationalism.” (This paper is presently being translated into Farsi, and will be available for Persian readers eventually.) I noted the way in which imperialists managed their foreign subjects, and how Darius greatly expanded on some precedents set by the early Jewish king, David.

Ultimately, Darius set the standard for wisdom in international management. He encouraged active participation of the foreign groups in central Persian affairs, no matter how geographically remote in the empire that foreign group happened to be. Of course, there is that famous story of the first Miss Universe contest, which Ahasuerus (Xshayarsha, or Xerxes) held in order to find a new queen to replace Vashti. (The story is in the Book of Esther, in the Hebrew “Old Testament.”) Xerxes encouraged each of the 127 provinces of

the empire to send to Shushan their most beautiful young woman, from whom he would select the next Shahbanou. This was a rather creative way of soliciting the genuine interest of each ethnicity from Hindustan to Ethiopia. And it surpassed the tactic of Solomon, who made multiple wives of the different ethnicities under his rule. Instead, Xerxes put all the glory on one. That way, he gave more meaning to ethnic beauty in each. (That the winner happened to be a Jewish girl is no doubt incidental.)

The Persians had even managed to tolerate a pestilential people they found in their midst, the Medes, without genocide, without enslavement, nor assigning them any too humiliating a status, indeed. The Persians were simply artists at social management. And one might even say that Zoroaster was an example of religious management. He

took what was before him, and made it more efficient, effective, and valuable to Persian people. His was the zenith of that Persian talent of doing a cultural “make-over” on whatever comes before that synthesizing Persian mind.

But Darius presented some of his own innovations, his own tricks of the imperial trade. And these have been matched only by modern American ingenuity. Beyond Xerxes’ appeal to the pride of women, Darius appealed to the prowess of men. He brought in skilled labor from every part of the vast realm. He wanted everyone to participate, and in a sense, to own, a piece of the imperial cities, a literal piece. “I made that,” would be the pride of every ethnicity in the empire.

Indeed, Darius represents one of the most avid architects in the history of the world. There were various royal

taken in as a fixed (i.e., annual) tribute. Darius was known as an exacting tradesman, or, businessman, according to Herodotus (III, 91), whereas Cyrus had been known as having the kind heart, and being occupied with “plans for the well-being” of the people, always. However, one must note that 1,120 talents of silver is a fraction of that which David had amassed some five hundred years before—7,000 [Babylonian] talents of “refined silver,” from his personal fortune, and another 10,000 from the people, for the one simple, rather small building, the temple of God at Jerusalem. (IChron.29:3-7). Cyrus had operated on no fixed revenue, but gifts only. Darius needed more financial security, for the empire was much larger, and growing. Darius was also was a great lover of law, and, more importantly, of publishing the law, in writing, so that

those required to abide by it were fully informed of it. He employed permanent boards of judges in the provinces, and they were comprised of natives, not superimposed Persians, in most cases.

In the matter of non-idolatrous, communicative statuary, the Persian version was marked by stunning innovation of style.

## PERSIANS: The Prototype Americans

DAVID YEAGLEY

apartments and palaces built at Sadrakai, Semiramis (on the Middle Euphrates), Babylon, Pasargadai, Persepolis, Susa, Agbatana, to mention but those known to date (and not to mention the first international highway billboard in history—Behistun, 520 BCE.) Darius amassed wealth and materials from provinces all over the empire, and then brought in specialists to work their finesse and wonders on buildings, interior design, and statuary (--which always educational, functional, and instructive of historical record, and never idolatrous, never for religious worship).

Silver was the apparent metal to be had, for all are listed as contributing some amount, anywhere from as low as 150 Babylonian talents, to 360 talents of Hindustan gold dust, valued at 4,680 Euboic talents. In total, the figure is some 1,120 talents of silver, apparently

The Persians found world precedent distasteful. The ancient Babylonian and Assyrian intent in statuary was always intimidation and overwhelming threat, or, more plainly, it was designed to bully the beholder; but this was abandoned for the superior Persian style. The new Persian style was about grace, natural ascendance, and beauty—an appeal to the soul, not the baser emotion of fear. At Persepolis, for example, the reliefs on the “stairway to the throne” are clearly not designed to impress with muscular tension, or to intimidate with superior physical strength. The exposed legs and arms are almost tubular, smooth as possible, and so stylized as to eliminate muscular definition altogether. Even the definition of the ankles is completely lacking, (as in almost all Persian relief). The figures are amazingly “modern” in their appearance, almost 20th century, if

elements of simplification, abstraction, and symbolism can be understood in the elite grandeur of the impressions thus created. The archers in the palace of Susa, in relief—yet somehow on highly colored enameled tile, are most decorative. They stand in the distinct Persian posture, and display no exposed arms or legs, but rather, elaborately decorated robes and quivers. The eastern staircase of the Apandana (from the time of Xerxes, 486-465 BCE) depicts some Babylonians bringing tribute to the emperor. They are not presented as oppressed, but as standing in the Persian posture, in the modernized style, and fully robed.

The Audience of Darius, in the Treasury Chamber of Persepolis, is perhaps the greatest work to be considered. Here is depicted a Median guard, standing behind the throne, with the stylized anatomy. There is apparently another Mede, standing immediately in front of the throne, in a slightly bowed posture before the emperor. He also displays the stylized legs. The Persian

figures are again all fully robed. The impression is one of elite perfection, the absence of superfluity, and the utility of grandeur. The preëminence is not derived from a preponderance of detail, intimidation, or the depiction of physical superiority; rather, the truly imperial evolves from superior concepts, superior ideas, and superior purpose.

In terms of Persian art, then, not only do we find a new, modern style, suggesting even the principles of 20th century art, we also find an innovative purpose for it. Formerly, the war and intimidation depicted in art was to celebrate the victory of the powers which ordered such records. The Akkadians, the Old Babylonians, the Assyrians, the Egyptians, all aggrandized their victories for future generations. The Jews, however, made only written records, and recorded both their victories and defeats. The Persians made no artistic record of either victories or defeats, but rather, depicted the superiority of the emperor, in sublime simplicity. After

all, if the emperor was the messiah, the mahdi, appointed of the Almighty, then aggrandizement of military oppression would have been most inappropriate. The simple beauty of Persian relief is a testimony to a superior spirit.

In a way, Persian culture was actually superior to the modern American ethos. Persia was like an adult gentleman, whereas America has always been a lusty adolescent. As historical irony would have it, modern Persians have found a home in the West, particularly in America, their ideological descendent, and now it remains for Persians to bring some cultural maturity to the American scene. Are they up to the task? Can they work their magic in someone else's house? Their genetic coding commands superior style.

I have a Persian friend who put it succinctly. "I first moved from Iran to Sweden. Sweden was difficult. But then I came to America. America was a piece of cake. I love America." Of course. It felt more like home. For the Persians, America is a déjà vu.

## *Best Wishes to Persian Heritage*

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# ORIGIN OF PRE-IMPERIAL IRANIAN PEOPLES

BY DR. ORIC BASIROV

## INTRODUCTION

As late as the closing decades of the 4th century B.C., the Iranian peoples were still the largest and the most widespread group within the great Indo-European family; this position must have been held for thousands of years by their nomadic ancestors, and was not relinquished until well into the Roman period; during those distant millennia, they roamed the vast, limitless Eurasian steppes as pastoralist riders and charioteers; towards the end of the second millennium B.C., some of them, lured by the great civilizations of the Indus valley, Elam, Mesopotamia, and Asia Minor, moved southwards and made permanent settlements; it didn't take very long for one group of these settled people, the Medes, to form the first of the four Iranian empires, and less than 500 years for the Persians, to become the absolute masters of the known world; their nomadic ancestors, however, continued to roam the steppes, unopposed, for a very long time; it was not until the 5th century A.D. that the invading Turkic tribes pushed them out of their homelands into central Europe and further west; by then, of course, vast numbers of them had merged with eastern Europeans to form the core of the modern Slavs; the rest were eventually assimilated in western Europe, especially in France; the intention of this paper is to give a broad outline of the history and the culture of these fascinating warriors, who for many thousands of years remained the undisputed masters of the steppes; throughout their long nomadic history, they are known to us by a variety of names, both native and foreign.

The article below is by Dr. Oric Basirov. This originally appeared in the CAIS (Circle of Ancient Iranian Studies) venue and was part of the CAIS series of lectures at SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies) on April 26, 2001.

The version printed below is different in that it has embedded photographs and captions used in Kaveh Farrokh's lectures at the University of British Columbia's Continuing Studies Division and were also presented at Stanford University's WAIS 2006 Critical World Problems Conference Presentations on July 30-31, 2006.

## THE AIRYAS

We owe a great deal to these pre-historical Iranians, one of whom, i.e. Zoroaster, is generally regarded as the first of the great prophets, and the earliest of the great thinkers; his people, in the holy texts, are referred to as Airyas, and their homeland, believed to have been somewhere in Eastern Iran, as Airyana vaejah; the word Ariya, noble, is also attested in the Inscriptions of Darius the Great and his son, Xerxes; it is used both as a linguistic and a racial designation. Darius refers to his Behistun inscription (DBiv.89) as (written) in Ariyan; he and Xerxes state in their surviving texts in Naqsh-e Rostam (DNa.14), Susa (DSe.13), and Persepolis (XPh.13): (adam) P-rsa, P-rsahy~ puça; Ariya, Ariya ciça; meaning: I am Persian, son of a Persian; an Aryan, belonging to the Aryan race.

We meet this word again in Pahlavi literature, and in many Sasanian inscriptions, coins, seals and other documents; it is attested in Pahlavi as *r*, meaning noble or hero; as *īrān*, Iran; as *īrān-Shahr*, meaning the Iranian Empire; as *īrān-vez*, meaning the mythical original land of the Aryans; as *an'īr*, meaning non-Aryan, barbarian; and as *an'īrān*, i.e., barbarity and ignobility. The earliest reference to this word in an Iranian context, however, predates Zo-

roaster and is attested in non-Gathic Avesta; it appears as *airya*, meaning noble; as *airya dainhava* (Yt.8.36, 52) meaning the land of the Aryans; and as *airyana vaejah*, the original land of the Aryans; this term, it seems, was adopted in remote antiquity by Iranians as their national identity; hence other peoples were called *Anairya*, meaning non-Aryan, probably a derogatory racial designation like the other, more familiar, similar terms, such as, Greeks & barbarians, Jews & Goyim, Arabs & Ajams and Germans & Welsh. The fact that Iranians, Indians, and probably some Europeans also called themselves by this name, suggests that the word *Airya* may have been an old native designation for the racial group now called Indo-European, Indo-Germanic, European, Caucasian, or simply, White; it was indeed adopted in the middle of the 19th century as a collective designation for the above racial group and their languages.

## THE SAKA

It seems that both nomadic and sedentary Iranians referred to themselves as *Airyas*; gradually, however, this word became a self-imposed designation for the settled Iranians only, who began to refer to their nomadic cousins in the East, i.e., Zoroaster's people, as the Saka, and some of those further west as

SKUDRA; the Saka probably did not call themselves exclusively by this name, some may have retained the use of the term *Airya*.

Many Saka tribes left the northern steppes intermittently to settle permanently in Central Asia, modern Afghanistan, and Persia; these tribes are the direct forebears of the imperial Western Iranians, the Medes, Persians and lastly, the Parthians.

Once converted to Zoroastrianism, however, such became their religious significance, that by the middle of the 1st millennium B.C., the centre of the faith was neither in the homeland of its founder, nor in any of the adjoining Eastern Iranian regions; it was firmly established on the western side of the great salt desert, amongst the people now called Western Iranians; from then onwards, Eastern Iran fades into the background; we now deal almost exclusively with Western Iran, and until very recently, were not even aware of the fact that Eastern Iran had played such a vital part in the genesis of the Iranian empires, and their great national faith; most scientific facts, such as, the recorded history and Near Eastern archaeological data, especially a large volume of deciphered inscriptions, relate to the four great Western Iranian empires of the Medes, Persians, Parthians & Sasanians; there is only a small volume of classical sources, and more recent archaeological data, which also deal with the nomadic Iranians of the northeast, i.e., those Saka warriors who remained in the steppes, and were never completely subdued by the settled Iranians of the imperial period; these warriors remained, nonetheless, a very formidable en-

emy of their settled cousins; not only did they conquer and rule the Median Empire for 28 years in the 7th century B.C., but they also defeated and killed Cyrus the Great, founder of the Achaemenian Empire, in the following century; a generation later, they were still engaging Darius the Great in many hard-fought battles; two hundred and fifty years later, however, they became the saviors of the Iranian culture and religion, and political integrity; they gradually pushed the Macedonians out of the Iranian homeland, and formed the Parthian Empire, which lasted for another 500 years.

The nomadic Iranians of the north western steppes, however, especially those settled in Europe, are extensively covered by the classical writers; they are also attested in a very large number of archaeological excavations in Eastern Europe; these Iranian peoples are known in the West as Cimmerians, Scythians, Sarmatians, Alans, and finally Ossets; it must be emphasized that all these names refer to the successive migratory waves of the same people, who probably called themselves by a name derived from the word Airya, as the Alans did, and the Ossets still do.

### CIMMERIANS

The earliest recorded nomadic western Iranians are the Cimmerians; they make their first appearance in Assyrian annals at the beginning of the 8th century B.C., where they are referred to as Gimmiri; they came down from modern Ukraine, and conquered eastern Thrace, and most of modern Turkey, being pushed westwards by another nomadic Iranian people, the Scythians (see below); they left behind a wealth of archaeological material, including a vast number of mound-burials in western Asia Minor; they later allied themselves with the Medes against

the Assyrian Empire; the word GIMMIRI is attested in the Old Testament (Genesis I.x.), as GOMER, (the name given to one of Japhet's sons (see below, Scythian/Ashkenaz).

### SCYTHIANS

This is by far the most important, and enduring designation given by the classical sources to the nomadic Iranians of the steppes; the name refers to the entire non-sedentary Iranians, both in the West, and in the East (the Saka). Greek records place them in southern Russia in the 8th century B.C., however, recent archaeological evidence testifies that they, Cimmerians, and other Steppe Iranians may have been there far earlier. Greek geographers of the 4th century B.C. also credit the Scythians with inhabiting the largest part of the known world (map Red 16).

Like other Iranians, these nomads probably called themselves by the generic term "Airya"; this is testified *inter alia* by the native name of their descendants in the present day Europe (see below); it seems, however, that they, or at least some of their powerful clans, also called themselves "SAKA" in the East, and SKUDA, or SKUDRA in the West. SKUDA is believed to be related to the German word "SACHS", meaning a type of throwing-dagger which the eponymic Saxons used to carry and shoot with; indeed, it is possible that like the historical Saxons, the Skuda derived their name from their ability to shoot. [cf. Franks]. Their first appearance in recorded history is again in the Assyrian annals, where they chase the Cimmerians, their own kinsmen, first out of Europe, then out of Asia Minor into the Median territory; in the 7th century B.C. they allied themselves with the Assyrians, and attacked the combined forces of the invading rebellious Median vassal king, Khshathrita (Phraortes in

Greek, Kashtariti in Akkadian) and his Cimmerians allies; the Assyrians repelled the Medes, killing Phraortes, and routed the Cimmerians; the real victors, however, were the Scythians; for the next 28 years, now allied with their erstwhile enemy, the Cimmerians, they ravaged most of the Ancient Near East, including Media; later they allied themselves with Khshathrita's son, the Median emperor, Hvakhshathara II (Cyaxares in Greek, Uaksatar II in Akkadian), and the Babylonian king, Nabopolassar, taking Nineveh in 612 B.C. and destroying once and for all the mighty Assyrian Empire. (beginning of the Kurdish calendar)

The Scythians were called by the Assyrians Ashkuza or Ishkuza (A/I/-k/gu-za-ai); as with the Gimmiri, this word also appears to have found its way into the Old Testament; one of Gomer's (Gimmiri) three sons, in Genesis I.x.12, is called Ashkenaz, which has given us the modern Hebrew word, Ashkenazi.

The Scythians were known by the Achaemenians, as SAKA and SKUDRA, by the Greeks, SKYTHIA, by the Romans, SCYTHIAE (pron. SKITYAI), which has given us the English word SCYTHIAN; they lived in a wide area stretching from the south and west of the River Danube to the eastern and northeastern edges of the Taklamakan Des-

ert in China; this vast territory includes now parts of Central Europe, the eastern half of the Balkans, the Ukraine, northern Caucasus, southern Russia, southern Siberia, Central Asia and western China.

We know a great deal about their physical appearance; they were long-headed giants with blond hair and blue eyes; this well-known fact is attested by various classical sources, and by their skeletal and other remains in numerous archaeological excavations, which give a fairly detailed description of these ancient Iranians; recently, a large number of their mummified corpses were discovered in western China; these mummies, which are extremely well-preserved in the arid conditions of the Taklamakan desert, are now on display at the museums of Khotan, Urumchi, and Turfan in Sinkiang; they are dressed in Scythian costume, i.e., leather tunic and trousers, and are usually displayed in the sitting position, exactly as described by Herodotus; what is extraordinary apart from their northern European features, however, is their gigantic heights, well over two metres as they are now, in spite of the natural shrinkage expected during the past thousands of years.

The Scythians, and other early steppe Iranians are believed to have been the first Indo-Europeans to use domesticated horses for riding (as op-



Sohrab and Gordafarid

posed to eating); this theory has acquired fresh credibility after the recent discovery of horse skeletons at the Sredny Stog archaeological culture, east of the River Dniepr, a well-known pre-historical Scythian site in eastern Ukraine; these bones were identified as belonging to bitted, therefore, ridden horses dating to 4000 B.C., at least 2500 years older than the previously known examples.

More recent excavations east of the Ural Mountains credit them also with the invention of the first two-wheeled chariot; such mobility, naturally, turned them into a formidable fighting force; they never willingly fought on foot, and used armor both for themselves and their mounts; they also developed the famous steppe tactic of faked retreat, and the “Parthian shot”, shooting backwards while on mounted retreat; this tactic, named after their well-known descendants, the Parthians, requires an amazing skill and balance in the saddle, and a dazzling co-ordination of eyes, arms and breath without the support of stirrups.

In this unique pastoralist equestrian warrior society, women fought alongside their men; not only they were held in an equal status with men, but also periodically they actually ruled them. This so called upside-down society both fascinated and horrified the male dominated Greek culture; later, the Romans expressed the same horror, when they encountered the Celtic and Germanic female warriors. Greek writers called the fighting Iranian women they met in the Ukrainian steppes, the Amazons; later Greek sources placed them further east, in northeastern parts of Iran.

This incredible social equality, at such an early age, is irrefutably attested, not only by a host of classical writers, but also by a wealth of archaeological evidence; in many mound-burials in the former Soviet Union,

it is by no means unusual to find remains of women warriors dressed in full armor, lying on a war chariot, surrounded by their weaponry, and significantly, accompanied by a host of male subordinates specially sacrificed in their honor; nonetheless, these young Iranian warriors, as evidenced by the archaeological remains of their costumes and jewelry, do not seem to have lost their femininity; they remained “feminine as well as female” as a great contemporary German scholar puts it.

Archaeological excavations also testify to the amazing skill of these people in making jewelry; some of the finds are so dazzling in quality and advanced in technique that it is hard to imagine that they are produced by an unsettled, nomadic culture; we are indeed very fortunate that these early steppe Iranians practiced elaborate funerary rituals and interred their treasures with their dead in huge impregnable burial mounds; hence, the vast majority of the steppe Iranians’ artifacts known to the learned world is attributed to the Scythians. As it has been emphasized throughout this paper these two names probably refer to the same people, who, in all likelihood, called themselves by a name similar to the word Alan.

Herodotus, who has devoted most of his Book IV to Scythians, is the earliest source on Sarmatians, whom he refers to as a branch of the Scythians; by the 3rd century B.C., the Sarmatians (Greek SARMA-TAI), had replaced Scythians in Europe, and settled in western Ukraine, the Danube Valley and Thrace.

The earliest known reference to the Alans (Greek ALANOI, Latin ALANI), however, is not until the mid 1st century A.D; it appears that by then the Alans, in turn, had taken the place of the Sarmatians in Eastern Europe; both these Iranian peoples are frequently

mentioned in Greek, Roman, and Byzantine sources as late as the middle of the fifth century A.D.

Alans, with an identical etymological origin with the word Iran, are extensively covered, especially by Ammianus Marcellinus who states inter alia, that “Almost all of the Alans are tall and good looking, their hair is generally blond” (AM, XXX,2,21); they once ruled a vast territory stretching from the Caucasus to the Danube, but were gradually driven westwards by the invading Huns; however, unlike their predecessors the Cimmerians, Scythians and the Sarmatians, the Alans did not vanish from the history; indeed they settled in the Byzantine Empire and Western Europe, playing a vital role in the subsequent European affairs; nonetheless, one finds it very odd that they are not given the full credit they truly deserve for being an important force in medieval Europe.

Rostovtzeff, the great Russian expert in Iranians of the steppes, once complained that “In most of the work on the period of migrations, the part played by the Sarmatians and especially by the Alans in conquest of Europe is almost ignored; but we must never forget that the Alans long resided in Gaul, that they invaded Italy, and that they came with the Vandals to Spain and conquered North Africa”; one can easily

sympathise with the frustration of the great Russian scholar; unlike various German tribes and Slavs and hoards of Huns, Avars, Magyars and Bulgars, who dominate the historical literature dealing with the early Middle Ages, the Alans hardly receive a mention; yet, they were in fact the only non-Germanic people of the migration period to make important settlements in Western Europe, and for many years dominated the affairs of the late Roman Empire.

In 421, soon after their arrival in Constantinople, the Alan general, Ardaburius (Ardapur), fighting for the Byzantine emperor Theodosius, defeated the army of the Sasanian Emperor, Bahram V, and took the fortified frontier city of Nisibus; after several more victorious campaigns in Italy he was made consul for the year 427; his son, Asp-r (aspwar, Saw-r), in 431 commanded a large army against Vandals and Alans in Africa, and was made consul for the year 434. Asp-r’s son, Ardaburius (named after his grandfather) was also made consul in 447; in 450 when the emperor Theodosius II died, Asp-r was offered the imperial throne by the senate of Constantinople; he declined the throne, but gave it to his subordinate, Marcian.

In 451 Attila the Hun laid siege to Orleans the capital city of the Alans in central Gaul; their new king, with the



Beauty-of-Loulan

remarkably Modern Persian name of Sangiban, successfully defended the city, and with the help of his Roman and Visigoth allies pushed Attila to Chalons in eastern France; in the famous battle of Chalons Western Eu-

rope was saved from the ravage of the Huns.

From the mid fifth century A.D. onwards, Alans, now fully Christianised, gradually lost their Iranian language, and were eventually absorbed into the population of medieval Europe; as late as 575 one still comes across Iranian names, such as Gersasp in southern France, and Aspidius (Aspapati, Asppat) in northern Spain, and of course the word Alan itself, which is still a very popular name in western Europe.

Alans are credited for importing into western Europe their steppe tactics of warfare; these include never fighting on foot out of choice, having armor both for men and their mounts, and most significantly, the practice of tactical fake retreat; these Iranian steppe tactics were passed on to the Bretons, Visigoths and later, to the Normans, who used the fake retreat at many battles in-

cluding the Battle of Hastings.

Alans are also credited with teaching western Europeans the still popular sport of hunting on horseback with hunting dogs; a famous breed of medieval hunting dogs was called Alan (med. Latin Alanus) which, according to a 19th century authority on the history and origin of canine breeds, "derived originally from the Caucasus, whence it accompanied the fierce, fair haired, and warlike Alani"; the town of Alano in Spain to this day bears two Alan dogs on its coat of arms.

**OSSETS**

Fortunately for us, the Huns could not push all the Alans out of their homeland; their descendants, known as Ossets, are the only Iranians who still live in Europe; they call their country "Iron", which is a variation of Alan, Iran, as well as Eran. Eran was the name of the

Iranian Transcaucasia before it was lost to the Russians in the 19th century and subsequently renamed Azarbaijan.

Ossets are mostly Christian, speaking Ossetic, or as they themselves call it "Ironig", or "Ironski", which is classified as an Eastern Iranian language. Ossetic maintains on the one hand, some remarkable features of the Gathic Avestan, and possesses on the other, a number of words, such as, thau (tauen, to thaw, as in snow) and gau (region, district) which are remarkably similar to their modern Germanic equivalents.

This modern Iranian nation, still provides a physical link between the Indo-Europeans of the East, and those of the West, that is, most people of Europe; such a romantic link, it will be remembered, had already been established thousands of years ago by their blond and blue-eyed ancestors.



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**BOOK REVIEWS**

**SCHOLARS AND HUMANISTS**

**Iraj Afshar and Touraj Daryaee**

(Mazda Publishers 2009)

This book contains some of the correspondence between Sayyed Hasanm Taqizadeh, and Iranian scholar and politician and Walter Bruno Henning, a notable German Iranologist, who lived in England to escape the Nazi Germany.

The book gives the reader the insight into how these two men thought and processed the events of their time. The correspondence within, however, is only a small portion of their exchange, as so much was lost. Those who love this type of history will be impressed with the pages. Unfortunately the individuals who need to learn about Iran and Iranian people are unlikely ever to pick up this treasure.



**MEMOIRS OF THE ACTOR  
IN A SUPPORTING ROLE**

**A play by Bahram Beyzai**

(Mazda Publishers 2010)

If you are looking for a message of hope this is not the play to read. On the other hand if you are looking to read something extremely well written filled with truth, not hope than you will embrace these 114 pages. While the book does not offer hope for a bright future it does give us pause to reflect how much we have failed in the past.

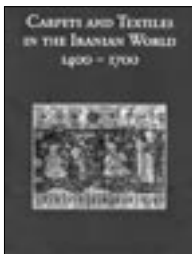


**CARPETS AND TEXTILES  
IN THE IRANIAN WORLD 1400–1700**

**Edited by Dr Jon Thompson, Daniel Shaffer and Pirjetta Mildh**

(2010 The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford University, in association with the Bruschetti Foundation for Islamic and Asian Art, Genoa)

Carpets and Textiles in the Iranian World 1400–1700 is a generously illustrated and meticulously produced scholarly compendium of diverse papers on the general theme of the history of carpets and textiles in the Iranian sphere. In the most significant contribution to academic carpet studies since Oriental Carpet & Textile Studies II (1986), Dr. Jon Thompson, Prof. Walter Denny and Christine Klose address certain important theoretical questions relating to carpets in the 15th century and later. Their subject matter overlaps to some extent, although all three adopt rather different points of view. A fourth paper, by Jessica Hallett, devoted to Safavid carpets, refers to original documents to survey the fashion in Portugal for ‘oriental’ carpets during the 16th and 17th centuries, a notable gap in our knowledge. Wider academic interest in textile themes is reflected in papers on the Pan Asian art historical background by Yolande Crowe, on Persian costume by Jennifer Scarce and the late Patricia Baker, on Safavid textiles by Mary McWilliams



and Beata Biedronska-Slota, on the use of fine goat hair in early Persian and Indian carpets and textiles by Steven Cohen, and on the Indian Ocean and international textile trade by Willem Floor and René Bekius. The book stands as a fitting tribute to the life and pioneering scholarship of May H. Beattie.

**IRANIANS ON THE SILK ROAD:  
MERCHANTS, KINGDOMS AND RELIGIONS**  
**Authors Touraj Daryaee, Khodadad Rezakhani,  
and Matteo Compareti**

Publisher: Afshar Publishing, Beverly Hills, California (2010)

An excellent new book has been published pertaining to Iranians and the Silk Road.

This informative text focuses on the role of the wider Iranian peoples who inhabited a wide swathe of territory in Central Asia along the ancient Silk Road. Iranian peoples such as the Sakas, Bactrians, Soghdians, Persians, Khwarazmians and Parthians played a crucial role in the trade and transport of goods from China and India to the Eastern Mediterranean. They were also responsible for the spread of ideas, especially the religions of Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Buddhism, Nestorian Christianity and Islam throughout Asia.



The text is a standard reference source for those seeking a clear and informative synopsis of Iranian peoples’ contribution to the development of trade and religious life in the time span of the first millennium BC and the first millennium AD.

Dr. Matteo Compareti obtained his PhD from the University of Naples, L’Orientale. He specializes in the art history of Iran and Central Asia. His latest publication is ‘Samaracanda Centro del Mondo – Proposte di Lettura del Ciclo Pittorico di Afrasiyab, Minesis, 2010’. Readers are also referred to Dr. Compareti’s article posted on Iranian.com entitled ‘Soghdiana: Iranian Culture in Central Asia’.

**FERDOWSI, A CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY**

**A. Shapur Shahbazi**

(Mazda Publishers 2010)

Do not let the subtitle “A Critical Biography” turn you away from reading this book. It is not critical in the negative sense, just a bit more honest. What the author attempts to do, and does so for the most part, is to provide the reader with more insight into Ferdowsi’s life and times. While Ferdowsi is, to most Iranians, a savior of Persia, he was a man who had his own short comings and difficulties. While most who have written about him avoid these shortcomings (or they were lost in the translation,) this author and book gives the reader an additional perspective.



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An Interview with

**Shahrnush Parsipur**

**Author**

**By: Brian Appleton**

*Shahrnush Parsipur, Author, Recently Received an Honorary Doctor of Letters (Litt.D.) Degree from Brown University, One of Eight Candidates Shahrnush Parsipur, an Iranian-born novelist whose books, though popular, has seen all of them banned in her native land and has been imprisoned for her writings four times, once for nearly five years. The IRI found her dealing with issues such as virginity from women's perspectives, un-Islamic.*

*Brown conferred honorary degrees on Nobel laureate Nelson Mandela and seven other distinguished candidates during its 242nd Commencement exercises, Sunday, May 30, 2010. The eight candidates included author Shahrnush Parsipur. The charge d'affaires at the Embassy of South Africa in Washington was present to accept the degree on Mandela's behalf.*

*Parsipur's writing career began in 1974 with the publication of her first novel, *The Dog and the Long Winter*, in which a tradition-bound young woman encounters the revolutionary activism of her brother and his friends. Parsipur's later works, such as *Touba and the Meaning of the Night* (1989) and *Women Without Men* (1989), explore the condition of women in Iran. A bestseller in Iran, *Touba*, like many of Parsipur's books, remains banned. In all, she has written 13 works of fiction and memoir. Translations of some of Parsipur's stories appear in *Stories by Iranian Women since the Revolution* (1991) and *Stories from Iran: A Chicago Anthology* (1991).*

*Imprisoned by both the Shah's security agency and the Islamic Republic in turn, the author now lives in exile in Northern California. Ms. Parsipur was the first recipient of the International Writers Project Fellowship from Brown University in 2003-04. She also has received a Lillian Hellman/Dashiell Hammett Award from the Fund for Free Expression.*

***Where were you born?***

I was born in Hafezi Hospital and our house was in Amirieh.

***How many siblings do you have?***

I had three brothers and one sister. One brother and my sister are still living. I got along well with all my siblings. I was the oldest.

***Tell us about your parents.***

I loved both my parents. They were beautiful.

***I can see from your photos of her that she was a very beautiful woman. Tell me the most beautiful memory you have from childhood?***

I was a girl of four or five years old, when my mother came in and announced that the doctor said she was pregnant. At that moment, I saw that my mother's hands were so brilliant and beautiful. This was one of the most beautiful things I had ever seen in my life then and since.

***Who was the most important person in your childhood?***

My mother's mother was the biggest influence in my life. She was a dervish and a poet, very silent. She was reserved and did not enjoy superficial activities...she would stay close to the door at parties and leave after 30 minutes. She was a practicing Sufi. She told me a lot about mysticism and many stories about mystics.

***Did your family approve of your writing?***

My father was a poet, my grandmother was a poet and my aunt was the poetess, Lobat Volah.

***What was your most dramatic childhood memory?***

When I was one year old I was kidnapped from right in front of my door by a strange woman, my nanny ran after her for one kilometer and saved me but the kidnapper got away.

***I noticed in your novel *Touba****

***and the Meaning of Night, that you wrote a lot about two decadent old Qajar princes given the names Gil and Feraydun Mirza and their debauchery and how they justified it with intellectual dishonesty. Did you have some direct experience with the old royalty? I wonder in Touba, how much of the story is autobiographical?***

This story is more or less the story of my grandmother, Touba, but at the same time is really a fiction. My mother was the daughter of Prince Zahir Soltan descendant of Abbas Mirza, son of Fath Ali Shah...unlike Fath Ali Shah he was a nationalist and fought against the Russians and was well loved by the people. My father was Ali, son of a doctor. He was first a judge and then a lawyer. He didn't like sentencing people to death and so he didn't like being a judge and became a defense attorney instead.

We went to live in Kharamshahr from my 5th grade until 9th grade. After that I went to school only part time because I worked. I worked for the water and power company of Khuzestan until age 20. Our high school only had science not literature. Dad said I had to marry or work if I was not in school. It was unusual for women to work in those days in Iran.

***When did you start writing?***

I loved literature starting from the age of 8 years old.

***What did you do after age 20?***

I worked for a pharmaceutical company for 8 years and went to Tehran University and got a degree in Sociology. I started writing when I was 12. I tried to write some short stories.

***Who is your favorite writer? I know you told be Sadegh Hedayat was an influence on your writing and everyone else's in modern Iran.***

My favorite writer was Dostoyevski. I am "Dostoyevski's daughter."

***Which of Dostoyevski's novels did you like the best? Brothers Karamozov, The Idiot, Crime***

***and Punishment, The Possessed, The Gambler? What in particular did you like about Dostoyevski?***

Each and every book of Dostoyevski, in a way has affected me somehow. Yet the important points of *The Possessed* are in my head. Straverogin has turned into a part of my personality and character. Dostoyevski, in my understanding, opens a door to the dark side of the world. With him you can go to the very depths of the events. The strange thing that I have noticed most recently that has mystified me is his passion for the hegemony of the Slavic race. I must say that it was a great blow to me because I did not think that someone like him could be prejudice.

***What other writers do you like who have influenced your work?***

Sadegh Hedayat from Iran, Mark Twain from America, Gabriel Garcia Marquez from Latin America and many others.

***I noticed a similarity to Marquez in your magical realism style especially in Women Without Men.***

***Did you always write in the magical realism style? Why did you choose this style? Like other Iranian writers and film makers, were you using symbolism to avoid censorship? Were some of the characters in your novels based upon real people you knew?***

There is an innate tendency in me towards magical realism. I think this style should be called the method of One Thousand and One Nights. Marquez also has imitated this method from One Thousand and One Nights. Of course I also use symbols to conceal matters. Yes, some of my characters in my books are derived from real people.

***What was the first story of yours that got published?***

I published my first story at age 16 in Etalat Banavan. It was a story about a young man who couldn't decide between two girls. I wrote my first novel, *The Dog and the Long Winter* when I was 20. Then

I didn't write for 8 years. I lived with my boyfriend for one year and then married at 21. We were married 7 years. He worked at NIRT and produced Daijan Napolon. I left from Tolid Daroo (pharmaceutical company.) Then I worked at NIRT. I started as a typist then became producer. My program was Barnameh Zanheye Roostai (Rural Women's Journal.) I produced that for four years. It was a weekly program.

Then I resigned in 1974 from my job because two poets were executed: Gole Sorkhi and Daneshian. This helped spark the revolution. They were against the Shah's regime. They were rebels and very famous. I was not opposed to the regime but I was opposed to these executions. As a result of my resignation in protest of these executions, the Savak arrested me and I was in prison for 54 days in Evin.

***You got divorced?***

Yes, I got divorced and moved to France in 1976 and studied Chinese language and philosophy at the Sorbonne and wrote my first novel; *The Dog and The Long Winter*. I had it published in Iran. It was successful but the revolution stopped it. After 4 years, in 1980 I returned to Iran. I looked for work and it was impossible. In 1981, my entire family went to prison. My brother had given some communist journals to my mother and asked her to destroy them but she had forgotten them in her car. Apparently someone saw them there and reported it to Savama. I had no political affiliation with the Tudeh. I was socialist and had a strong belief in democracy and I liked Bakhtiar.

***You were imprisoned twice why and where?***

I was in jail for two months. They released me with bail. I wanted to leave the country but I would have forfeited the bail. Since it was based on my aunt's house, I went back to prison so that my aunt wouldn't lose her house. The IRI regime imprisoned me in Evin and Ghezal Hesar. They couldn't figure out what I was. I wasn't communist, I wasn't a prostitute. I wasn't married. I worked and so they didn't understand me. I didn't pray. Out of 700 women prisoners, I was the only one who didn't pray. They didn't like that. I went to prison two more times. Both times were for writing *Women Without Men*. They didn't like

my writing about virginity. It was not portrayed graphically and was very innocent but they said it was un-Islamic.

**Did you write while you were incarcerated?**

I wrote half of Touba in prison. They confiscated the manuscript and after one year they gave it back but I burned it because I felt that I had been subjected to self censorship and had not really written it the way I wanted it to be so I rewrote it later after I was out of prison. I also wrote Blue Reason in 1989 about the period of the Iran Iraq war. I have two translations of it. I can't decide which is better. I am still trying to get it published in English.

**You had one son from your marriage. Tell us about motherhood?**

I love my son very much. Unfortunately in recent years for several reasons I have to live far from him. This is a problem that saddens me very much.

**Which of your novels do you like the best?**

I like them all.

**How did you like Shirin Neshat's movie based on your book? How did you like acting?**

I liked her interpretation. They told me to act so I did.

**Well I think you played your role as a Madame, quite convincingly. What are you writing these days?**

I write for Radio Zamaneh and my Autobiography.

**Why did you come to California?**

I came to California because there were so many Iranians here. Only two of my 13 novels have been published in English. I get no royalties because they were published by university presses.

**How is it you never remarried?**

I married my work.

**Did you write any more novels after you left Iran?**

I have written three novels in America that have all been published in Farsi and have been very successful.

**But only three of your novels have been translated. Are you looking to get more translated and published in English?**

Yes, I am very interested in getting them published in English too.

**Would you like to go back to Iran some day if the government changes?**

Of course, if there is a place for me in Iran, I would go back. But notice there are 14 million people living in Tehran now. My relatives are mostly dead or have left.

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## So long friends....

Majid Kafai

*How quickly seventy years went by  
Add five to it  
And behold  
How your life has gone with the  
wind....*

*In these days  
The days are cold and empty  
The nights very dark  
There is no passion in my head  
No love in my heart  
No fun and enjoyment in my life*

*Since long  
I see that Devil in front of our home  
That Devil  
Which easily takes away your life  
and mine.*

*He hints to me in different ways that  
Your cup is filled up  
It is time for you to leave this nest  
To leave this house.*

*All that desire and lust  
Which one day I had  
They are all gone  
As well as that ardent love  
And that beautiful sweetheart  
Alas  
All flowers have now withered  
Alas  
That colorful note-book is closed.*

*Father and mother have passed away  
Sister and son too  
And those friends  
Who were my companion and sup-  
porter.*

*It was like a dream  
The gone with the wind life  
Alas is finished  
That job that challenge that work  
That friendly warm gatherings  
Laughter jokes and good times  
All those romantic murmurs*

*Alas  
They are all gone  
They are all over.*

*Look  
Whatever joy which was there  
Has now vanished  
And from the fire of youth  
Only smoke remains in the chest  
and in the eyes.*

*Alas  
That roaring river has dried up  
That river which was always full of  
pure water  
The water of hope, love and desire  
And now that dried up waterway  
Has become ugly  
And its muddy face*

*Is covered with many stones  
and chips  
Which are reposing in it's untidy lap.*

*Time has come for us to leave  
To leave this fabulous palace  
The palace of life  
In which*

*Are beloved ones resided  
Alas  
They have all left the house  
And have become silent*

*Alas  
They have died  
The way a candle dies in the passage  
of winds*

*And in these days  
What remains from them  
Is just an image a reminiscence  
A far away souvenir .*

*In a couple of days  
Grave will be  
My lasting resting place  
But before I go  
I would love to say  
So long  
To my friends.....*

## PARIS-BASED PAINTER IRAN DARRUDI TO ESTABLISH MUSEUM IN TEHRAN



Iranian surrealist painter Iran Darrudi, who lives in Paris, recently transferred all her works to Iran to establish a museum in her homeland. She also plans to set up a foundation to pursue her works in Iran, the Persian service of ISNA reported.

"I have brought all my works, including nine tableaus, to Iran," she said. "I want to set up a large museum and dedicate the artworks to the Iranian people."

"I will pursue my goals together with the members of the board as long as I am alive," said Darrudi, who celebrated her 74th birthday.

"Persepolis" is one of Darrudi's special works painted on a door that once decorated the entrance to the bedroom of her Paris home. Depicting a rain of flowers on a part of Persepolis, the work will be showcased at a gallery in Tehran. It is to be auctioned to raise funds for establishing her museum and foundation.

She had trouble transporting "Persepolis" to Iran due to its large size and had to ship it by truck. "It is not appropriate for this tableau to be in a private home, so I insisted that it should be unveiled in Iran. I hope a cultural organization will purchase the work to keep it in Iran, because the tableau belongs in this country," she said. She said that if the tableau doesn't sell in Iran, it will go under the hammer in a foreign auction.

*Mehr News Agency, Tehran; photos by ISNA*

# Iran: Whose History Is It Anyway?

MEHDI BAGHERNEJAD,

TEHRAN

SOURCE: MIANEH



Farabi on Iranian stamp

There is increasing concern among Iranians that their cultural icons are being claimed by other nations in search of an identity. Persian-speaking poets, scientists and thinkers from days gone by are routinely claimed as national heroes by modern states like Uzbekistan and Kazakstan, on the basis of geography.

When the head of Kazakstan's National Academy of Arts, Arystan Beik Mohammadi, visited Tehran in February, he announced that the 10th century scholar Abu al-Nasr al-Farabi was a "Kazakstani" because he is believed to have been born in what is now that country.

This sparked a furious front-page rebuttal from the Tehran Emrouz daily, which

is close to Tehran mayor Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf.

Hassan Bolkhari, director of the Art Research Centre, part of Iran's National Academy of Arts, also responded, asserting that al-Farabi flourished as part of the Persian cultural world, and was thus an inseparable part of Iranian history.

The dispute was only the latest expression of Iranian resentment at other nations "misappropriating" their cultural icons.

One of the best known examples of this is the 13th-century mystic poet Jalaluddin Rumi, born in the Khwarezmian state that encompassed modern Iran and parts of Central Asia. He ended up in Konya in western Turkey, where his tomb is visited by millions of people every year. His poetry was in Persian, but the Turks claim him as their own.

Other figures from the greater Persian cultural world of the Middle Ages include Ibn Sina, perhaps better known as Avicenna, one of the founders of modern medicine. Born in the then great cultural centre of Bukhara, now a provincial town in Uzbekistan, Ibn Sina is claimed variously by the Uzbeks, the Tajiks, the Turks and the Arabs.

The 10th century all-round scientist Abu Rayhan Biruni and mathematician Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi, who developed algebra in the 9th century and whose name gives us the word "algorithm", have also been posthumously turned into citizens of modern Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

Over on the western side of Iran, the two Persian prophets Mani and Zarathus-

tra are claimed by Iraqis and Kurds, respectively.

Iranian officials react to all this by saying their culture is being encroached on by others.

Hassan Bolkhari argues that "foreigners are trying to hijack Iranian identity". He uses the term "cultural invasion", an expression coined by Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

"Examples of this cultural invasion include claims that Rumi is Turkish, Farabi is Kazak, and Avicenna is Uzbek, as well as calling the Persian Gulf the 'Arabian Gulf'," said Bolkhari. Critics say the Iranian government is not doing enough to address the problem.

Saman Heydarai, an archaeology student in Tehran, says Iran's rulers have failed to defend their cultural heritage internationally. Another factor, he said, is that modern Iran has not yet resolved the question of whether its identity is national or Islamic, and this colours the way cultural matters are prioritised.

"Contrary to its own propaganda, the Cultural Heritage Organisation doesn't make much of an effort to register and promote many of the country's historical figures and national heritage sites," he said.

As an example, Heydarai cited 13th-century Persian poet Nezami Ganjavi. While it has traditionally been held that Nezami was born in Ganja, a town in present-day Azerbaijan), some Iranians now believe he was really born in the village of Tad in the Iranian township of Tafresh.

"Azerbaijan has made Nezami into an Azeri. Yet no efforts are made to publicise



Abu-Nasr-e-Farabi

the site in Tad," said Heydarai. "Ganjavi's home is on the verge of ruin, and many Iranians are unaware that his home is even in Iran.

"This is at a time when hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent every year on renovating religious sites in Iran, and even on places of pilgrimage in Iraq and other parts of the world."

Mahjoob Zweiri is a professor of modern Middle Eastern history at the University of Qatar. Of Jordanian origin, he lived and studied in Tehran for many years, and explains that disputes over cultural ownership stem from the fact that the geographical borders of today simply did not exist hundreds of years ago.

The Persian cultural world extended eastwards across Afghanistan into India, northwards into Central Asia, and westwards to include parts of the southern Caucasus. The thinkers and writers of that time - many of them multi-talented scientists and poets - often moved around and ended up a long way from their birthplaces.

In places like Central Asia and Azerbaijan, the creation of "national" poets and other historical figures stems from the deliberate Soviet policy of equipping the

USSR's constituent republics with a sanitised version of history, complete with their own approved cultural icons. This policy was carried over into the post-Soviet states as they embarked on nation-building and sought historical legitimacy. Thus, Ganjavi has been incorporated into the historical narrative of modern-day Azerbaijan.

Many of the figures whom Iranians regard as their own are also described by blanket terms such as "Muslim scholars," or even portrayed as Arabs because some of their works were written in Arabic, the language of religion and science of the day.

Iranians are dismayed when the likes of Ibn Sina are presented as Arabs. The well-known Tehran University professor of philosophy, Gholam Hossein Ebrahimi Dinani, sees this as a part of an "Arab plot" to rewrite Persian history.

"Many of these scientists produced works of literature and science in both Persian and Arabic," he said.

Zweiri points out that

until Islam's golden age came to an end with the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate in 1257, Baghdad was the centre of science and knowledge. At that time, "Arabic culture" was a much broader and all-encompassing concept.

He argues that such disputes over cultural legacy are a feature of societies in search of an identity, based around historical events or figures that support this.

When an article about Rumi's tomb in Konya appeared a year or so ago on the Iranian website Tebyan, one of the comments posted expressed regret that the poet's grave was not in Iran.

Yet as Rumi himself said, "When we are dead, seek not our tomb in the earth, but find it in the hearts of men."

About the author: Mehdi Baghernejad is the pseudonym of an Iranian journalist based in Tehran.

This article is an abridged and translated version of the full original text published on the Farsi pages of Mianeh, with editorial adjustments agreed with the writer made to provide clarity for English-language readers.

### Islam & The Mental Immune System

Our beliefs and ideas make us who we are and the qualities of those beliefs and ideas determine the kind of person we are. We shield and fiercely defend our beliefs and ideas for good reason: without both integrity and internal harmony, the mind becomes disorganized and even dysfunctional. While our inborn immune system fights off viruses and bacteria that aim to kill us, another immune system, the mental immune system—MIS—gradually formed after birth, protects the mind and takes every measure to keep the mind's ideas and beliefs on the same page. In general we inherit our opinions. We are the heirs of habits and mental customs. Our beliefs, like the fashion of our dresses, depend on where we were born. We are molded and fashioned by our surroundings.

*Amil Imani & Dr. Wafa Sultan*

### HOW TO STAY YOUNG

1. Keep learning. Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever. Never let the brain idle. 'An idle mind is the devil's workshop.' And the devil's name is Alzheimer's.
2. Enjoy the simple things. Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath.
3. Surround yourself with what you love, whether it's family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge.
4. Cherish your health: If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.
5. ALWAYS REMEMBER: Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.

### THANK YOU

#### FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF PERSIAN HERITAGE

**Dr. Mehdi Saghafi** (Parma, Ohio)

**Dr. Ali Khojasteh** (Columbia, Missouri)

**Dr. Mehdi Ahmadi**

(Murray Oncology Associates, Kentucky)

**Dr. David Yazdan**

(Ocean Neurosurgical, New Jersey)



Farabi on Kazakhstan currency

#### About Mianeh:

*Mianeh is a new independent web-based initiative run as a project by the Institute for War & Peace Reporting (iwpr.net) the award-winning non-profit media development organisation that works across the globe to platform local voices and promote international learning and engagement. Mianeh aims to be an open space for ideas, news and debate where writers in Iran can reach out to each other as well as to those outside the country who are interested in learning more about the vibrant and dynamic society that is Iran today.*

It was deadlly cold outside. I put my coat on so not to catch another cold. The wind though still was blowing hard, was not as hard. I looked around. The whole length of the empty street was stretching before me. I had no choice but to walk and face the possible dangers of the road, such as the falling branches off the oak trees or some other unpredicted disaster.

Finally, with a sense of insecurity, I started to walk past the school, which was already closed. There was no living soul in sight. My watch indicated the time: 2:30 pm.

The rush -hours in D.C., were disaster hours, so I rushed toward my car. Finally, after I put the school's fences behind me. I joyfully said: "There, it is, thank God, that is my car."

I tried to be as fast as I could, got the key out, unlocked the door, jumped behind the wheel, locked the door again, and turned the engine, in a wink I was ready to run away from that weary neighborhood.

I took a deep breath to recuperate. Suddenly, a strange feeling of chill and anxiety came over me. Perhaps my extra sensory perception warned me to be alert to something unexpected and unknown. When I was about to leave, someone knocked the car's window. I jumped up, out of fear. There he was, standing behind the window, with a dirty smile. I could detect his dirty teeth through the spaces of his lips. I pulled myself together not to scream. Here we are again, am I facing another distress? I swallowed the words, which were about to come out of my mouth.

He was a short, heavysset young man with deep dark skin, keen eyes and kinky hair. How I felt that moment, only the God knows.

I tried to control my emotion and stay as cool as I could. "What do you want, what's the mater?" I asked him beyond the closed window. He couldn't hear me, but with body language (turning his hand around) he was trying to say "pull your window down."

"Why? Why?" I said, with discomfort. "Open the window, I'll tell you why," he shouted. I pulled the window down hesitantly. "Come out, and see it," I heard his rough voice. "To

## *Kiss me, Farewell*

part two

**MAHROKH (MIMI)  
POURZYNAL**

see what?" I questioned him, with the tone of anger. "Do you know that you got a flat tire?"

Like a coward, who tries to show bravery, I jumped out of the car, to see what was going on? We were face to face then. He tried to calm me down by showing his concern. He was right, I had a flat tire how and why? It was all right when I left, did the children do it?" I asked myself. "Please don't worry Mam, I'll take care of it. Just open the trunk and give me the tools and leave the rest to me. I'll fix it in no time."

"No, No, thanks, I'll call my insurance," I answered. "At this time? It's too late, the telephone booth is far away. It takes at least two hours for the towing truck shows up. Trust me and lean upon me."

He finally, convinced me to agree with him. In no time, he started to work on it. The temperature was almost reaching the freezing point, that was probably the reason that he had his gloves on. Then I thanked him for giving me help and added, "I thank God that you are here to help me." He barely smiled. Such a foolish comment I wasn't religious in my entire life.

He got the jack and tools out of the trunk, and took the wheel with the flat tire out. Before leaving, he said, "You sit in the car and wait for me. I'll be back soon." He rolled the wheel over the paved ground. My eyes were following him until he disappeared at the curve of the road.

I waited impatiently for a while, then my mind started to think of what might be the reason. I reached so many negative conclusions. He is not returning, he stole the wheel, I shouldn't have trusted him and so forth. But then he showed up with the wheel rolling on the ground. I felt so embarrassed.

"There is a nail in this tire and they couldn't repair it. I got to take the other one out," he said with a rather tired voice. Then he got the other one out and the same round was repeated again, without my consent. This time, it took him more than half an hour. When I checked the time, it was quite late, around 3:30 pm.

My heart was beating faster and I was confused more than ever. The same thoughts came into my mind. He fooled me this time for sure. The other tire was not good enough, so he got the new one to sell it for better price. My mind was busy with crazy ideas, when I noticed he was approaching again. I was so ashamed of myself.

"Everything is ok now, before you know it you'll get home," he said joyfully.

"Thank God, thank God, " I praised the Lord out of fear and momentarily I felt relieved.

The car was ready at sunset. I asked him, "How much shall I pay you?" "Oh, my God, nothing at all this is my good deed for today, the angel will ride on my right shoulder, he said in a sarcastic way, then added, "Actually, I was in my way to go to The Kennedy Stadium, to a football game. My friends are waiting for me there I'm so late now. Could you do me a favor and take me there?"

How could I say no to such a question, after he went through such a problem and wasted so much time, to help me? I was late to get home, too. In wondering what to do, I heard him say, "Never mind, I'll walk, if you won't." He walked away. I felt so bad for being inconsiderate and unfair, so I followed and stopped him.

"Get in please. Although I am late, I'll take you there," I told him.

He accepted my offer and thanked me for giving him a ride, with a smile of triumph.

"Since I'm not familiar with this area, please tell me how to get there," I asked. "No problem, it isn't too far, a few blocks away, keep going, I'll tell you how to get there and where to turn," he was chewing the words.

We went through several streets in silence. We were about to run into a downward hilly road so I got upset

again and said with anger, "Where is this damn stadium then? Where are you taking me? I have to call my husband. My children are waiting at school. He has to go to pick them up."

I stopped the car, to go to a phone booth, an excuse to get out of the car and find out what he was up to. At that point I had no trust on him. I was watching his every move. He pulled his arm so close over the back seat, that I hardly could move my head and easily felt the touch of his fingers on the skin of my neck. "Oh, no. You don't need to call anyone. Be patient. We're almost there. Keep going," he said

"Then, please take your arm away from my seat and give me the room to move and drive," I was so pissed off, that I wanted to choke him. He pulled his arm away and I took a deep breath, to stop feeling suffocated.

He was absolutely right. At this time we entered an unpaved and bumpy road by the riverside. Under the dim light of the sunset, I saw, the iron gate of the stadium.

Thank God! There it is. I stopped the car by the gate. Surprisingly, I found not one single soul there. "Where are they, I mean your friends?" I questioned him puzzling

"Oh, yea, beyond the overpass of the bridge," he added, "you see, when the stadium is closed, they set the game far from the bridge, so please keep on driving.

I drove down cautiously, then stopped a few yards away from the bridge, and demanded him to get out. "What's the matter now? What's bothering you? Do you see the police car under the bridge? You may blow the horn right now to warn the police for help." When I saw the car, I felt momentarily secure. Then, with a tumbled heart, confused mind and unclear vision, I drove down along the riverside while still thinking. The end is near.

At that point, I wasn't aware of the time or the weather. All I wanted was to get rid of him and run a way. Would I ever? How I wished! We past several rows of old oak trees of the park. I could detect the dead leaves through the light and shade of the sunset. Out of my good luck, the sun was moving as slow as I wished.

"Who are they?" I screamed so loud, when I saw four tall men in blue over all outfits. I hardly could see their eyes through their masks, as they were approaching us it is impossible to explain how frightened and shocked I was at that point. His laughter disgusted me." Wow, you amaze me, and what are you afraid of now? Do you know who they are? The park attendants. They collect the trash and pick up the dead leaves. The outfits protect them from the bugs and microbes. Do you understand?"

I didn't, but I said I did.

"Now that you know you're safe come closer to me. Give me a big hug. Hold me tight. Kiss my lips passionately, so they think we are lovers and are about to make love." The doors and windows of the car were locked and closed, and I was a helpless captive in his trap. What other choice did I have but to surrender!

Only after he released me from his arms and only when I got rid of his bad breath, with the moonlight scattering the golden powder over the surface of the river, I realized we were alone again and there were no traces of the park attendants anymore.

He demanded me to drive still further to get him to his friends. When I drove as far as I could where no one could see us, from far, above the hill, he stopped me. Then it was clear. There was no game, no play, nothing was there but the agony and pain, which awaited me.

I never believed in destiny but at that very moment, I knew it clearly. The end was near and struggle was useless. Anyhow, where could I run or escape? I felt like a drowner in a whirlpool, floating uselessly in the belly of the waves until he or she drowns. I was also hopelessly drowning in the whirlpool of destiny.

Lost in the world of despair, suddenly, he took a sharp long knife and a gun out. He turned to me and said, "I'm gona rape you and chop you into the pieces for fun and revenge?" His horrific actions horrified me.

"What do you think?"

"Nothing, nothing at all. I just feel sorry for you and me. It doesn't make any dif-

ference now. We eventually die anyway," and I added

"Dear heartless, what goes around comes around. So, what you do to me someone else will do to you. But please tell me what I have done to you to deserve this punishment. Perhaps I hurt someone unknowingly or the tear of my mom dropped you down, on my way. I must have done something wrong in my lifetime to deserve this!" He didn't answer.

Then, I followed with this thought, "Please before you start could you do me a favor?"

"Why do you need now? To sip the water before you die? Demand it," he said.

"Oh no, not the water but the time," I answered.

"What do you need the time or to play with me?" he said with a satanic look.

"I need the time to talk. You see, for taking my whole life away, don't you think it's fair to give me just an hour of your life?" I said in a convincing tone.

"O.K., you got it what do you want to talk about?"

"What else do you think?" I said sarcastically, "about you and I."

"Wow! I dig it, Lets talk about real love making."

I ignored his foolish remarks.

"Not like this."

"Like what?" he said.

"Please put your gun and knife away and let me die in peace."

Tears were running on my cheeks. I watched him put his knife and gun aside. Then trembling I took a deep breath trying to think how and where to start, trying to forget the time and the place in which I was caged. Due to darkness, I decided to turn the inside light of the car on, but he stopped me by saying, "We don't need it."

The best way to open a useful and logical conversation, I thought, is a friendly way. "My name is Mina, what is yours? I asked.

"Never mind, but if you insist, I'm Ray." Then we shook hands.

Do you do this for a living?"

He didn't respond.

"What do you do for living? Are you working?" I asked again.

**USHTA ALL**

“Must I answer these silly questions? Yes and No. I work part time at the Safeway. What else you want to know?”

“Do you catch any shoplifters?”

“Yes mam, the children who die for a bite of an apple. I catch, but later I release them while still eating the stolen apples. The children are hungry. Do you know?” He surprised me with his concern.

“Yes I do, but how about you,? Are you hungry too?” I questioned him

“Sure am that’s why I caged you.”

I tried to use what I learned in Department of Social Service in Baltimore. Using the same method of therapy, which I used to give to the clients. So I led the conversation. “But you caged the wrong person,” I warned him.

“I don’t think so,” he answered.

“Hear me then. The fact is I am married. I met my husband at Howard University.” During the conversation I searched my wallet and told him I had only six dollars.

“I know it’s not enough, I left my checkbook at home too. Give me your full name and address I ‘all send you some money for your priceless help.’

“Don’t you bother. Just give me what you got, your gold, your watch, rings, bracelet, everything you got.” He sounded like a robber.

“Who taught you robbery?” I said sarcastically.

“Who you think? An empty stomach. Shut up and give me what you got woman.”

So, I did I handed him all my valuable jewelry, including the remembrance diamond ring of mom, which was heart breaking to loose it.

“Now, kiss me good by,” he said. Then I pressed my lips on his ugly cheek.

Not like that. Hurry up. Kiss me with love and passion on the lips.” he demanded.

Did I dare disobey him? In that deadly moment, I kissed him farewell with hate and disgust. When he was leaving. I heard him say, “Remember what I said?”

“Yes, for sure, as long as I live,”

I tried convincing him.

“By the way, did you flatten my tire?” I asked.

“Who else? Who else? Who else?”

His voice gradually disappeared into the dusty night. Then a raindrop melted on the surface of the dashboard.

I was about to leave. Suddenly someone knocked the window. I was startled and thought he came back again. Fortunately, it was a police officer who warned me to leave that area before I got a ticket. After she looked at me under streetlight, she said, “You look upset. Anything wrong? Do you need help? Are you alright?”

“Thanks officer, I’m OK, just tell me how to get to Pennsylvania Avenue.”

She gave me the right directions plus told me to be careful and walked away. I gathered myself together. I wanted to get home as soon as possible to wash off the horrific memory of that day under the pleasure of a hot shower.

It wasn’t easy at all. Up to this day that I’m writing about it, the emotional turbulence is still there. For months I was dealing with insecurity, anxiety, loss, fear, insomnia and so forth. But time is the best healer. I also try by using my own knowledge to erase that awful dream off of my mind and overcome those problems.

Time has rolled on. Although the remembrance of that nightmare is still painful, the past is past, but the scars of the past always remain. My late father God blesses his soul once told me, “If you break a valuable bowl and you wish to save it by stitches, you always see those stitches.” Indeed father was right, I still see the stitches which mended me together, deep in my bone. Sometimes I blame myself for not reporting him to the police especially after I saw him at the Fountain Cafeteria, fifteen years later with that young blond hair girl.

Is he a professional criminal now, I wonder. Was he really the same man that, I thought he was? I keep asking myself. The sound of “Kiss Me Farewell” is still echoing in my ears.

The central thought is that Darius wanted to rule according to justice: “It is not my desire that a man should do harm, nor is it my desire that he goes unpunished when he does harm.”

*As the sun settled  
In the for the night  
All of a sudden  
In the distance  
There was a orange  
Red light  
Shooting towards  
The inky sky*

*Word wildy spread  
That Persepolis  
Is on fire  
Flames shooting  
Higher & higher  
Before help would arrive  
It was already engulfed in flames  
Alas! all that remained  
(Except for a few columns  
And the stairway)  
Were the charred remains*

*They were aware of their mortality  
They played the game  
The way it was meant  
To be played  
Ruled with humility  
As well Civility  
Treating people  
With utmost respect  
Knowing they lived  
Only once  
Nagging feeling:  
“What if tomorrow never comes”*

*It was Love’s Labour Lost  
I don’t doubt for a moment  
History ever forgot  
This event in history  
Of these Noble Persian kings  
Who called their home with Pride  
Persepolis!*

PS: Persians seem to be the noblest part of the Iranian Race. Their bravery temperance love of truth extorted the admiration of the Greeks. (History of Greece) By J.R. Bury page 227.

Ushta!  
Farida Bamji, (Ontario, Canada)

*Please tell us about your father Amin Daftar.*

My father and grandfather and other ancestors were the key holder of Imam Reza's tomb and managers of his endowments for 250 years.

My father helped create the multi-disciplinary hospitals that when first built was called Shah Reza Hospital and later renamed Imam Reza Hospital. He was also instrumental in connecting the popular resort Kooch Sangi to the city by building wide boulevards lined with large *Chenar* trees. Today *Kooch Sangi Boulevard* is one of the most scenic and desired residential areas in Mashad. My father was also responsible for a large number of endowments and gifts to the Rezavi Foundation during his tenure. He also made certain that the deeds for all endowed lands were registered and that the gifts of antiques, precious metals and stones were properly and timely catalogued at the museum.

*In 1936 your father's best friend Mr. Mohamed Vali As-sadi, the governor of the state of Khorasan was executed by the order of Reza Shah how did that change him?*

It did not only change him it also changed the direction of the Shahidi family. My father resigned from his position thus ending our family's involvement with the *Razavi Foundation*.

*Are you married?*

Yes, to Mary Alice Vandervoort.

*Children?*

My son lives in Texas and my daughter in Illinois. We have five grandchildren.

*Tell us about your higher education?*

I went to Paris to study in 1946 and then later to Montpellier, France but returned to Paris to complete my education. During my residency at '*Hopital Des Enfants Malades*' I met a number of American pediatric doctors who kept telling me to pursue my pediatric career in the United States. I made the decision to apply to City Hospital in Baltimore with Dr. Harold E. Harrison who also taught at Johns Hopkins. His interest was in metabolic disorders and



An Interview with  
**DR. NASROLLAH SHAHIDI**  
Physician and Researcher

by: Shahrokh Ahkami

Dr. Shahidi is a world reknown physician and researcher. His accomplishments in medicine and research were instrumental in pediatric diagnosis and in the reduction of toxic chemicals used commerece. This interview would not have been possible without the help of Dr. Manuchehr Javid, Dr. Shahidi's friend and colleague. We thank him for introducing Dr. Shahidi to us.

I thought that would be beneficial to my career. I was fortunately accepted for this residency.

*I understand that during your residency at City Hospital one particular case truly impacted the direction of your medical career.*

Yes, a seven year old boy was brought to the Emergency Room at midnight with a presumptive diagnosis of hepatitis. After a thorough examination and tests I found the boy to have a severe case of hemolytic anemia. When I explained my findings to his parents I noticed his mother had an accent. I asked her where she was from and she told me Greece. Immediately I remembered studying about certain Mediterranean people developing

acute hemolytic anemia after ingestion of uncooked fava beans. I discussed this with his mother and she concurred that he had been eating them that evening. I transferred the patient to the ward and gave him multiple small red cell transfusions and hydration fluids. His recovery was very quick. Because of the eating and correlation of the boys illness to the fava beans they called the illness "favism." At his rounds the next day Dr. Harrison asked the other residence if they heard of "favism" and when they said they hadn't he credited me with the discovery, fast and successful treatment of the boy as well as given the honor of educating the other physicians.

*After your residency at Baltimore City Hospital what did you do?*

I became more and more interested in academics specifically Pediatric Hematology and applied and was accepted for a post-doctoral at the Children's Hospital at Harvard Medical School under Dr. Louis K. Diamond. During my six years there I managed to pursue an active research program and published articles and made four major discoveries.

1. We demonstrated that in some patients, the chronic non-spherocytic hemolytic anemia was the consequence of the absence of markedly reduced amount of the enzyme, glucose-6-phosphate deficiency dehydrogenase. These efforts led to the discovery of other red cell enzyme deficiencies.

2. For reasons described in an article I wrote on the subject other discoveries were made on cell enzyme deficiencies and I began to treat patients with aplastic anemia (such as Fanconi anemia) with testosterone. I noticed that many patients became transfusion dependent. (article 3 & 4)

3. I also was able to show that under hematopoietic stress, the fetal hemoglobin (2 $\alpha$ 2 $\gamma$  chains), which declines steadily after birth to 1-25, begins to rise. This indicates that under erythropoietic demand, the  $\gamma$  chain pathway reopens again. Subsequently, other investigators have reported the rise of other embryonic protein during protein synthesis demands as in cancer.

4. This was the first report of hereditary error of iron metabolism, now referred to as "Shahidi, Nathan and Diamond syndrome." (article 10)

I was also asked by the Editor of the New England Journal of Medicine, Dr. Franz Ingelfinger to write an a review on "Androgens and Erythropoiesis." I did and in the article I summarized all of my research on how androgens stimulate erythropoiesis by directly acting on stem cells and indirectly by stimulating the production of erythropoietin by the kidneys.

#### ***After Harvard where did you go?***

These accomplishments opened doors for me. In the fall of 1963 the new chairman of the Department of Pediatrics at the Kindred Hospital in Zurich was visiting Harvard's Children's Hospital and asked to see me. He told me that Dr. Franconi had treated a number of his patients using my regime and had successful results. As a result of this they asked me to come and visit them for one year. I would be the first foreign Swiss National Foundation

Scholar.

#### ***Did you go?***

Oh yes. In fact it was there that we found the connection between, phenetidin as a potential oxidizing agent in the body with hemoglobin and its cause of nephropathy and urinary tract cancer. As a result of our findings phenacetin was labeled a carcinogen by The Food and Drug Administration. Its use therefore declined. I would like to note that this was found as a result of a 17 year old girl who was overtly cyanotic. She denied the use of drugs and within 10 days she appeared normal, however she was readmitted with the same symptoms. During her second admission I asked the nurse to search her. She discovered multiple phenacetin suppositories in a sanitary napkin and that is when our investigation of phenacetin began.

#### ***You were also responsible for the banning of DDT in the United States.***

Well I had noted that many of my patients with acquired aplastic anemia had been exposed to toxic chemicals, particularly those containing aromatic hydrocarbons (benzene and derivatives.) Among them, DDT and chloramphenicol had been the main culprits. As early as 1958, I noted that several of my patients had been exposed to DDT. When Rachel Carson's book, "Silent Spring", was published the toxicity of DDT in humans became more convincing. Some of my patients had been given chloramphenicol for fever of unknown origin. While in Madison, I received an invitation in early 1976 to organize a meeting in Kyoto, Japan with some leading hematologists from Japan and other eastern countries. Two leading Japanese hematologists, Drs. Hibano and Takaku and I, edited the Proceeding of the Congress and a book was published by University Press in 1978. When I returned to the US I got in touch with Senator Nelson of Wisconsin and asked him to testify in front of Congress. He did and as a result of this testimony the use of chloramphenicol was markedly restricted.

#### ***With all of these wonderful accomplishments I am sure you were in high demand but why the University of Wisconsin?***

Yes, I had wonderful job offers all

over the world, but the results of my research made me more interested in research. I choose Wisconsin Medical School for its excellent program and basic science department. I was then fortunate to receive the nomination for the Dean of the Medical School at the University of Wisconsin when Dr. Arnold brown resigned, but respectfully declined because I wanted the time to read and research.

#### ***When did you accept your position in Madison, Wisconsin and what was your title?***

In 1966 I accepted my position at the Department of Pediatrics as an Associate professor and head of the Division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology at the University of Wisconsin.

#### ***Besides your position as a professor you had a number of other accomplishments please tell us about some.***

I established a first class research lab which was initially funded by the Medical and graduate Schools and the by the NIH (National Institution of health) and other private foundations. I also was able to obtain a government grant for a post-doctoral fellowship program for research and clinical training in Pediatric Hematology/Oncology.

#### ***What do you believe are your greatest accomplishments?***

I can say every success I had in my medical career was a great accomplishment, but I am also very proud that the results of my research has led to the establishment of research funds such as the Fanconi Anemia Research Fund and the naming of a fellowship in my honor at the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Wisconsin.

#### ***Is there anything else you would like to say?***

Yes I am very grateful for the life I have. I am proud to be in America and am also proud of my Persian ethnicity. I want to thank you and your magazine, Persian Heritage for giving me the chance to introduce myself, through this interview, to other Iranians. This is very important to me.