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J. Steroid Biochem Mol. Biol. 2005 Feb; 93(2-5) : 221-36

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# Persian Heritage

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## FROM THE EDITORIAL'S DESK

Every year at this time, I share a very special celebration with my readers, *Mehregan*. With each passing year, we reevaluate our commitment to you. We discuss the ways we can continue to bring awareness to our youth and the public on our history and culture. As we have stated on many other occasions, our goal is to keep cultural awareness alive for future generation. We hope that we continue to be successful in educating future generations on the true characteristics of their heritage and culture, characteristics that defined their parents and grandparents. We hope that we can continue to keep their outlook on Iran a positive one. We hope that we can keep them informed of the great accomplishments of Iranians in science, medicine, education, technology, the arts, and business in the past, present and future. We are a responsible group who has earned the trust and respect of the world community and need to keep it.

While I sat in my living room, trying to decide the subject of this editorial I came across a shocking incident. It made question, for the first time, the true nature of an Iranian. Was our goodness superficial or are, we like our *ta'arof*, trying to hide our true selves?

It was late and I was exhausted after a very hectic week. Instead of regrouping myself physically and emotionally for the week to come, I decided to pick up my pen and begin my editorial. It ended to be the most difficult one to write. Though it has been edited many times, I remain uncertain my thoughts are clear.

Eight hours have passed since I viewed the images from Iran, showing the execution of two young men. With faint smiles on their faces, they were publicly executed. This image deeply disturbed my inner peace. These young men should have been working towards a bright future, instead they now found themselves in a public execution. Hanging was their punishment for killing a judge, who they believed was unjust. They proceeded to the gallows with a strange outward calmness. The faces on the crowd who gathered to witness the execution were distraught. Were they the families of these young men or the general public?

Before I continue, I would like to shed some light on a few issues that concern this editor and the people who work or volunteer at Persian Heritage. While we live in the 21st century, with advanced science and technology, there are still countries who practice capital punishment and public executions. China is number one, followed by Iran and then the United States. Iran has the number one ranking for execution of its young population. Human right activists have been fighting to remove the death penalty as a form of punishment. Their most powerful defense is that too many executed criminals are later found to be innocent of the crime.

It is a general assumption that in each country the government is the body of law who should implement its laws. It is further assumed and expected that the people follow these laws and not take "the law into their own hands," seeking vigilantly justice. This is a necessary ingredient for world order. When the legal system is respected and accepted by its citizens, the individual will not seek out "vigilantly justice." However, where respect is absent, it is inevitable that the people will seek out their own justice. It would be the "death knoll" for any country to accept this practice. Why, because it is this type of reaction and independent punishment that is certain to disrupt and destroy society?



## Persian Heritage

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I do not defend the actions of these young men, they needed to be punished for their crime. At the same time, I cannot support this type of public execution in Iran or elsewhere. This type of punishment, especially publicly, is troubling and will have a destructive impact on an already fragile society. Additionally, it simply demonstrates another kind of violence. And for Iran, especially at this time, it may increase an already negative world opinion. In any case, the judgment of my writing, this event and the effect this event may have on Iran, I leave it up to you, my readers. I do, however, apologize to you if I have, in this writing, disturbed your inner peace. However, I do believe that seeing the pictures of this event and other public executions in Iran, will confuse world opinion of a very special country.

These two young men, as I stated earlier, who were at the beginning of their lives were now saying goodbye to life with a cold calmness and a waive of the hand, for murdering a judge, alleged to be the legal hand of justice. Could their horrid actions be the result of social and economic pressure? Did they believe that their rights for justice were ignored? Are these the reasons why they took the law into their own hands and acted against an individual, who they believed to be the source of their problems? When they took his life were they aware of the consequences? On the other hand, did they see their lives as so hopeless that they had no value for their own or another?

Do you think that we would have witnessed this same scene if these men were not part of a society overwhelmed by poverty, addiction and social in justice? Do you think we would have witnessed this same scene if there were no oppression or suppression? Do you think we would have witnessed this same scene if people were not deprived of human rights? Why is it that with each day, more and more people are being labeled as villains and harmful to society, jailed, executed and tortured?

The students of Tehran University ask the question, "why are they considered villains harmful to society, while others, more abusive, go without punishment." Why is there no discussion for the punishment of the unruly and corrupt government officials who line their pockets with money obtained from illegal contracts or thievery from public funds?

Do you think that a change in the economic and social environment could improve and prevent these young men and others like them from becoming criminals? Today Turkey, Iran's neighbor, is seeking to become part of the European Union, "the free world." They seek to distance themselves from the Third World who is immersed in fanaticism. In order to do so they must remove the brutal nature of their legal system and executions. Their new Prime Minister, who hopes to be president, is pledging to separate religion from government. He has also pledged to bring new freedoms to Turkey's citizens and bring Turkey to a higher social and economic level.

We, however, come from a country that already possesses the ingredients necessary to move out from the "Third World." We come from a country rich in humanity and culture. In addition, we come from a country whose present government, instead of embracing its beautiful and gentle people distances itself from them.

It is a government who continues to build more jails to house its opponents and to execute them in order to silence their opinions.

After seeing this execution, it was clear to me that we, all the citizens of the world, need to work hard to oppose such violence. We must somehow try to stop the killing of any human being by governments or individuals. This is a serious matter, especially in Iran. We must find a way to help the people of Iran regain their deserved place in society. We need to find a way to help them push the wheel toward progress and freedom.

As I stated earlier this was one of my most difficult editorials, to write. Nevertheless, from the bottom of my broken heart, I will continue to hope that the people of Iran will find a more peaceful and prosperous life.

*Shahrokh Alavi*

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**NOT TOO LONG**

I recognize that some of the articles you receive to print are long but I do have a request. When possible please print them in their entirety rather than in parts. Breaking up of some of these articles is a disservice to your readers and breaks the continuity of the author's thoughts.

*Thank you, K.I.*

**DEAR PERSIAN HERITAGE**

I read the essay "Who are Iranians?" In your magazine, in print, and later I emailed it to those who I knew, using your web-site. I hope this was not against your policies, if so, please advise so. Needless to say, Iran is a very hot topic nowadays, and has been since 1979. We are going (again) to have another discussion regarding Iran in our next Great Decision Night Discussion (Great Decisions, Foreign

Policy Association [www.fpa.org](http://www.fpa.org) <<http://www.fpa.org>>) in our township library of Des Plaines, Illinois. I believe firmly the above essay sheds light and helps our communities to have a much better understanding of Iran and Iranians, especially the Iranian-Americans. Thank you again for the article and your time.

*Joseph S.*

**MORE ENGLISH PAGES**

If *Persian Heritage's* goal is to perpetuate Persian culture and history then I suggest there be more English and less Persian. My children, as well as myself, are disappointed when we reach the end of the English section and wish a few more of the Persian pages were in English. This letter is not meant to criticize your gallant efforts, I understand fully the magnitude of your endeavor, but we must all face the fact that future generations will

probably speak and read less and less in Persian. There are many days I am disappointed with the prospect. On the other hand, I find consolation in this fact knowing that my children and theirs will have happily assimilated into their own "new" American culture.

*E.Z*

**BEST YET**

The summer issue of *Persian Heritage* was extraordinary from cover to cover. Both interviews made me beam with Persian pride. How wonderful it is to see such great achievements from Persian immigrants. It looks like we have successfully paved the way for a wonderful future for our children.

*A.I*

**I DISAGREE**

While I, from your generation, understand the message in your summer editorial, I am certain that the younger

generation will not. They no longer identify with your opinion, Persian or not. I am afraid that our children may be right in defending their position of the movie 300, like it or not, accept it or not. Maybe it is only a movie. Furthermore, I feel your comparison of the movie to the Rutgers's basketball team was a stretch. There are cases when it is necessary to read and interpret every word written and image printed and question their meaning. Unfortunately, in the case of 300 I think our uproar gave the movie far more attention than it deserved.

*KS*

**LETTER FROM IRAN**

Mr. Kraft's article gave great insight into a period of significant turmoil in Iran. I do not know how you find these interesting articles but certainly hope your archives contain more of them.

*K.S.*

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**TA'AROF CAMP**

*The Washington Post* in an article written by Tara Bahrapour, "Courtesy Around the Campfire", and the Iranian *ta'arof* is described as the idea of parties insisting they are not worthy of each other. It is considered a normal part of an Iranian greeting and conversation. Ms. Bahrapour wrote the article about another place where *ta'arof* is practiced as a normal course, Camp Ayandeh. It is a leadership camp for Iranian – American teenagers. One of the games and workshops deals exclusively with learning and using *ta'arof*.

According to the article, the camp began in 2006 in Massachusetts and this year was held in Fairfax City, Virginia. It was developed and organized by a group of young Iranian-Americans called Iranian Alliances Across Borders. Their goal is focusing on the Iranian Diaspora.

**WHERE ARE WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN IRAN?**

Iran's judicial authorities sentenced two women activists to thirty days in jail and ten lashes, for participating in a peaceful protest against the present discrimination laws in Iran. The women are members of an advocacy campaign, which hopes to make changes in the present laws, to be more favorable to the female gender.

According to the women's attorneys the punishment far exceeded the crime.

**300 Antidote: Persian Shiva Rose in US Release of David & Layla!**



Who dose not enjoy a good love story? In this case you will laugh, cry, and also learn about intimacies of another culture. Love is the strongest emotion and is exemplified in this movie.

This modern Romeo & Juliet romantic comedy David & Layla opened July in dozens of cinemas: Beverly Hills, Pasadena & West Hills in LA, Irvine/Orange County, Washington DC, Detroit, Nashville, Florida .... the start of US distribution in 100+ cinemas over the next months.

'Best Breakthrough Performance Award' recipient Persian American Shiva Rose plays Layla, the first contemporary Muslim woman on screen, who drinks wine, dances and decides her own destiny.

A war survivor/refugee, Layla symbolizes the grace & the femininity of women from the Middle East and the Islamic world. Layla's challenge - striving to keep the best of her rich East culture while adapting to, and enjoying the best of the West's culture, especially women's rights - is shared by millions of Muslim and Asian women from Tehran to Los Angeles, from Beirut to Paris, from Baghdad to Washington, from Bombay to London.

**RECOGNIZING THEIR PAIN**

Mohsen Alinaghian and Shahin , his wife, found a young Persian woman and nurtured her back from an abusive relationship, at least in the physical sense. This twenty-four year old was imported to the US to become the bride of someone she had never met. Not long after she was ordered out of the place she called home, she found herself alone, pregnant and on unfamiliar streets, without a dime, cell phone or marriage certificate. She was stripped of all her position and cut from any type of security. Mr. and Mrs. Alinaghian found her in a battered women's shelter. They took her to their home and nursed her back to health. Not long after that woman delivered a beautiful baby. The Alinaghians found her and the child an apartment and became surrogate parents and grandparents. Mohsen is a member of a group called The Key Holders, which deals with domestic violence. Domestic violence is a subject the Persian community prefers not to address. It is Mohsen's hope, however, that by bringing the issue out in the open membership to this group will increase and result in more individuals like this woman, getting independence.

**DRINKING IN SPACE**

There is absolutely no reason why American astronauts were permitted to fly in space intoxicated. While specifics are not yet in on this issue, there is concern by all involved in the missions. At least two reported incidents are being investigated.

**A View of the Chocolate Statue of the Achaemenid Soldier**



They say never trust a person who does not like chocolate! This year at the World's Handicraft Day in Tehran, the Iranian community may just get to see who of their friends they can trust. Of course that is if they are allowed to take a bite of a 300-400kgm.chocolate Achaemenid soldier.

This beautiful piece of white chocolate was designed by Mohammad Ali Esmaeil-Zadeh and constructed by twenty-five Iranian artists who are participating in the craft show. Construction of the soldier started early June. It was not an easy task for the artists to carve the soldier, considering the high Tehran summer temperatures. The chocolate kept melting preventing them from giving the soldier the required detail. But, where there is a will there is a way and "voila" a chocolate soldier was born. Once completed this majestic piece of chocolate was placed under a glass, with refrigeration.

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**NOBEL PROFESSOR SUED**

Dr. Paul Greengard who received, the 2000 Nobel Prize in Medicine is now the subject of a discrimination lawsuit. Dr. Greengard from Rockefeller University has been accused by Dr. Effat Emamian, a cancer researcher, for discriminating against her because of her gender. The complaint alleges that she was dismissed from her assistant professorship and tenure-track position because she complained to them about Dr. Greengard's undermining her cancer research project.

According to the complaint Dr. Emamian, who made a discovery involving cancer-resistant genes, was recruited by Rockefeller University in 2004 and was promised support for her research. In fact the complaint alleges that the University patented her breakthrough. She later discovered that she was paid less than male scientists in lower standing.

Besides gender discrimination, Dr. Emamian also stated that another colleague of hers Marc Flajet sent an email to the entire lab staff calling Dr. Emamian, a "camel driver." The next month Dr. Greengard is alleged to have summoned Dr. Emamian into his office after a lab presentation. Once there, he is said to have scolded her and told her that he did not like her and that she needed to find another job. After this episode Dr. Emamian complained to David Rockefeller, the honorary chairman of the university board of trustees. His reply was to inform her that she was being dropped from her position.

According to the university all charges of the complaint have been denied by those named in the suit, although Dr. Greengard has supposedly sent a letter apologizing to her for his rudeness during discussions of their differences.

**ELECTRICAL PULSES 'ROUSE' PATIENT**

Deep brain stimulation with electrical pulses may offer hope for patients trapped in a minimally conscious state. Treatment of a 38-year-old man with a severe brain injury enabled him to use words and gestures, chew and swallow and drink from a cup, say US doctors. Before the stimulation, done through electrodes implanted in his brain, he could only make slight eye or finger movements, the team report in Nature.



Deep brain stimulation is already used in the treatment of tremors associated with Parkinson's disease. The procedure involves electrodes implanted with millimetre accuracy to specific areas of the brain.

The man involved in the study was badly beaten six years ago, leaving him severely brain injured and in a minimally conscious state, in which patients show intermittent signs of awareness. Over a period of six months the researchers alternated periods of electrical stimulation with fake stimulation to assess whether it was having an effect.

Within 48 hours of the first stimulation, the patient was able to keep his eyes open, turn his head, and utter words. After several treatments he is now able to perform complex tasks such as brushing his hair, although with difficulty due to severe immobility caused by his condition.

Dr Ali Rezaei, the neurosurgeon at Cleveland Clinic's Center for Neurological Restoration who carried out the procedure said the changes in the man had been "remarkable and sustained". Study leader, Dr Nicholas Schiff, associate professor of neurology and neuroscience at Weill Cornell added: "The work challenges the existing practice of early treatment discontinuation and also changes the approach to assessment and evaluation."

His mother, who does not wish to be identified said: "I'll never forget the words the doctor said to us: 'if your son recovers from this in the next 72 hours, and we don't know if he will, he will be a vegetable for the rest of his life. Now, my son can eat, express himself and let us know if he is in pain. He enjoys a quality of life we never thought possible. "And the most important part is he can say 'I love you mommy'."

"More experience with the approach is needed to understand which patients may be expected to benefit." Professor Tipu Aziz, expert in neurosurgery at the University of Oxford, added there had been cases of patients recovering spontaneously after being in a minimally conscious state for a long time and no firm conclusions could be made. "Much more needs to be done into the research of the best management of such patients but there is little funding to do so."

*taken from: BBC, 8/1/2007*

**\$100,000 CASH PRIZE FOR TOP AVECINA RESEARCHERS**



According to IRNA, 7/25/2007, Hamedan province Governor, General Behrouz Moradi said that from next year the board of trustees of Avecina Foundation would raise a scientific subject related to the thoughts and works of the prominent Iranian scientist at intentional level.

He added simultaneous with the annual Avecina symposium in Hamedan, the selected participants would receive prizes worth up to dlrs 100,000.

Moradi reminded that the prize will be registered in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. He also said that 200 Iranian and foreign scientific and cultural figures would participate in ceremony commemorating the 1,000th death anniversary of Avecina, known as the philosopher of the millennium".

The two day gathering was held in Hamedan from August 22-24.

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**ONE HUNDRED YEARS OLD AND STILL GOING**



Dr. Abolghassem Ghaffari, helped NASA put a man on the moon. That was a celebrated day in his life and now an equally important one arrived. On July 15, 2007, he turned a young 100 years old. Born in Iran, he was educated at the Darolfonoun School and then finished his education with a full scholarship at Nancy University in France. The Sorbonne was the next stop on his educational journey, where he received his doctorate in math and physics.

After a few years in the work place, he returned to Iran to teach at the University of Tehran and later, in 1950 he became a Fulbright scholar. In 1956, he became a permanent resident of the United States and worked for the US National Bureau of Standards. This followed with a part time consulting position for the Goddard Space Flight Center and later full time with the Apollo 11 and 12 missions. For his work in this field he received a number of awards and recognitions, including one in 2005 by the Association of Professors and Scholars of Iranian Heritage.

**IRANIAN GEOLOGIST DISCOVERS MUD VOLCANO PHENOMENON ON MARS**

An Iranian geologist and university professor has successfully discovered a mud volcano phenomenon on the planet Mars. The results of this discovery, may be the first of its kind to be published as an article in a journal that is related to the International Academy of Astronautics, Acta Astronautica.

Proving this discovery can lead to evidence of fossilized life on the surface of the red planet, Mars. "In my research and through the pictures taken by NASA's satellite, Mars Express, I was successful in discovering this phenomenon," Dr. Kangi in an interview with ISNA explained. "In the vicinity of this volcano cone, most of the lava is covered with a thick layer of loose sediments (probably clay.) The presence of such sediments at the base of the volcano cone has led to the formation of several major landslides. Moreover, liquid water flow on the volcano cone has created a myriad of radial channels. The formation of such structures, on the cone of a volcano, is only plausible because of the eruption of a mud volcano. The constant discharge of mud-like materials, as well as hot water from the volcano, paves the way for the growth and evolution of hydrothermal organisms."

**FOREIGN INVESTING IN IRAN**

Foreign companies are welcoming the opportunity to buy shares in Iranian companies and Iran is equally happy to sell it to them. The companies involved are telecommunication Company of Iran (TCI), Iranian Aluminum Company (IRALCO), Mobarakeh Steel Company, Razi Petrochemical Company and Khuzestan Steel Company. The countries entertaining the investment idea include Turkey, India, England, Russia, as well as some European and Persian Gulf States.

**SECOND MEETING RESULTS**

The United States and Iranian diplomats had a second meeting in Baghdad in which they agreed to set up a joint subcommittee with Iraq and Iran. The US Ambassador, Ryan Crocker hopes the joint committee will force Iran to validate what it has been saying, that it hopes for a stable Iraq.

**WILL THE REAL ENEMY OF THE US PLEASE STAND UP?**

Who is the greatest enemy and threat to the United States? Ask any average citizen and the quick response is Iran and Syria. Why? Because the public have been properly guided to believe that these are the true enemies. However, it is often one of your closet allies that turn out to be your biggest enemy. Moreover, in the case of the United States, its biggest enemy may just be Saudi Arabia, at least according to an article in the *Los Angeles Times*, this past July. The article states, "Although the Bush administration officials have frequently lashed out at Syria and Iran accusing it of helping insurgents and militias here, the largest number of foreign fighters and suicide bombers in Iraq come from a third neighbor, Saudi Arabia, according to a senior U.S. military officer and Iraqi lawmakers. About 45% of all foreign militants targeting U.S. troops and Iraqi civilians and security forces are from Saudi Arabia."

**PRESSURED CHANGE FOR HOLLYWOOD MOVIE**

All it takes is some pressure in the pocket-book to have Hollywood change directions. If you are not aware, a new movie starring Harrison Ford, *Crossing Over*, contained so-called honor killing scene, where an Iranian character kills his sister. Outraged the Iranian community came together and pummeled the production team with complaints.

The movie is a race-themed drama starring Harrison Ford, Sean Penn, Ashley Judd and Ray Liotta and is said to be similar to the messages found in the Oscar winning movie *Crash* in 2004.

The film is backed by the controversial Weinstein brothers. The scene was discovered by an actor of Iranian descent. While the actor is not in the film, he/she became enraged with the scene and brought it to the attention of the National Iranian American Council. They in turn reviewed the scene and determined it to be unrealistic and inflammatory. Their next action was to approach Wayne Kramer, the film's director.

Alas, changes were made with the following statement by a Weinstein spokesperson, "While we believe strongly in freedom of expression, we also believe in the importance of constructive dialogue between artists and the communities they seek to portray."

## IRAN'S FIRST COSTUME DESIGN BIENNIAL



Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMCA) hosted the first biennial exhibition of Iran's costume design in late July. The exhibit showcased designs based on Iranian traditional costumes and national cultural concepts and was organized by the art department of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

The aim of the exhibit is to encourage the design of costumes that are compatible with the culture of the country. In the past Iranians have been using foreign designs as inspiration for their products.

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Many years ago in college, in one of my sociology classes, I was asked to describe my identity. In a short paragraph I identified myself as a person who was caught between two worlds and two cultures: my native homeland Iran and my host country the United States of America, where in each place I saw myself differently. In a brief explanation of my identities in both places, I was not able to distinguish between my personal identity, social identity, and cultural identity. Then after I read the concept of “double consciousness” by Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois and the concept of “border identities” by Dr. Maria P.P. Root, I have learned how to describe myself a little more clearly in contact with others.

Dr. Du Bois was an African American sociologist, who spent his lifetime studying relationships between blacks and whites in North America in the early 20th century. When I first read his concept of double consciousness, it made me think that I may face the same identity dilemma as African Americans face today. Du Bois believes that black people in America have been caught between the issues of national identity and cultural identity. On one hand, they cannot assimilate themselves to mainstream America because their dark color skin does not melt into the melting pot. On the other hand, accepting only their ancestors’ culture may perpetuate the separation of blacks and whites even deeper. Being African American is not the same as being African. Therefore, African American people, according to Du Bois, suffer from identity dilemmas.

I could somehow relate myself to this situation of double consciousness after I read Du Bois. On one hand, I still think that I have some attachment to my Iranian culture. I still enjoy Persian music and food, and like to read Persian literature and poetry. Sometimes I think of myself more as being Persian than American. On the other hand, living in America, having my own American family, an American wife and two step-sons, makes it hard for me not to think and act like them. For example, I celebrate Christmas because this is one of the days in a whole year that most families get together and visit each other. This always

reminds me of my family and relatives at home where every week, aunts, uncles, and cousins gathered in one place, ate, talked, laughed and enjoyed one another. I still miss that even today.

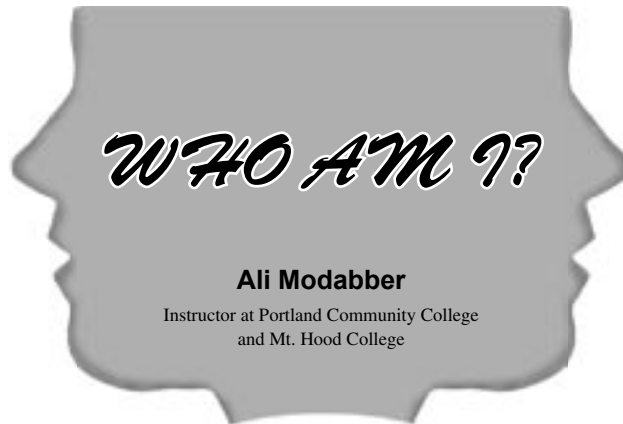
Du Bois made me think deeply to go inside and search for an identity that I may be comfortable with. Am I Iranian? Should I live my life in America while maintaining my Iranian culture and have an Iranian identity, or should I live like an American and accept my host country by following its direction, especially now that I am a naturalized American citizen. Even if I decide to join mainstream America, am I welcome while wearing my brown skin color? Although in a long contemplation with myself, I was not able to determine quite what I should do and what my identity should be. When I read the concept of border identities by Dr. Root, it made it a little easier for me to understand why I am stuck in two

we had conversations with them. Even if I asked questions, most of the time people would only look at my wife to answer. It did not matter where I was with her, people always wanted to know where I came from. I remember my first New Year gathering with her friends when a white man in a cowboy hat walked up to me and asked, “What are you?” First I thought he had made a mistake in his sentence and the correct question should have been, who are you or where did you come from? Then, later on when I had some conversation with him, I realized that he meant what he said.

However, very proudly, I always identified myself as a Persian, from a country, which has an old rich history of literature, art, and poetry. Then, gradually I hated it when all kinds of people would ask me about my nationality or my ethnic background, especially during the hostage crisis in 1979, when in the eyes of most Americans, Iran was known as a terrorist nation. It is kind of ironic how people think that a country with three thousand years of honorable history would change suddenly in a few years to a terrorist nation. However, the question about my identity still exists. Who am I? I have spent half of my life living in America; does that make me an American? Or, do I really want to be an American? Do I have a border identity? The answer to my last question is, yes.

Dr. Maria Root, who is a clinical psychologist, in her book, *The Multiracial Experience*, explains some possible conditions that people with multiracial or multicultural backgrounds may use to identify themselves. However, I do not consider myself a person with a multiracial background because my parents, grandparents, and ancestors had the same race. But, since I have experienced two extreme cultures, my own Iranian culture and the culture of my host country America, I may be able to use Dr. Root’s concept of “Border Identity” to find my place in the “cross border identity.”

One of Dr. Root’s interpretations of border identity is that a multicultural person can create a “camp” or home on each side of the border and live a period



worlds and have difficulty in picking one over the other.

I came to America many years ago on a student visa to attain higher education. Three years into my stay, I married a white woman who had two red headed little boys from her previous marriage. I discontinued my education for a while and took the responsibility of looking after my instant American family. At the beginning of my interracial marriage, I was not aware of the fact that I may face some problems when walking together with my wife and her two little boys in public or being in the presence of her family or friends. Soon, I started to notice that I was not the same person when we went out together.

I also noticed how people would look and talk more with my wife when

of time on each side. She believes that “one’s psychological, emotional, social, and political needs may cause this kind of a crossing.” I find this concept very true and I can relate to this situation. For example, a few years ago I needed to go back to Iran to visit my family and relatives because I missed them so much that I could not wait another year. I needed to have a social change and get some pure and unconditional love from my family. I needed to be around people who spoke only my mother tongue and had only one color skin. Like in the days of old, I wanted to be able to spend some hot summer nights sleeping on the roof of our old house again and look at stars and share stories with neighbors. I wanted to breathe the air by the Caspian Sea and eat its fresh sturgeon fish.

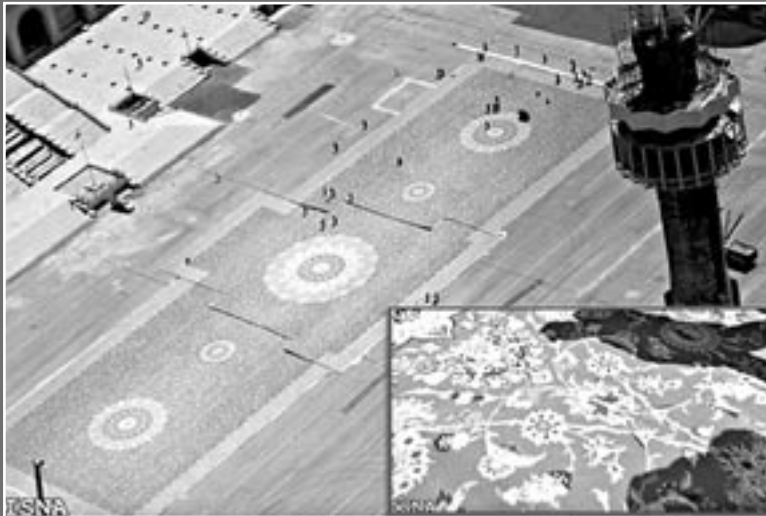
While I was in Iran, my identity was changed. I no longer needed to explain to anyone who I was or what I was. In fact, people would put labels on me and found all kinds of identities for me. Some people thought of me as a rich man who has money because I live in America. Some thought that I was a doctor or engineer because they assumed that whoever goes to America should become one. Others wanted me to teach them English because they had already formulated in their minds that I was a master in English. It was interesting how people in Iran categorized me by finding different social identities for me.

After a few weeks of staying in Iran, I started to miss the political freedom that I had in America. People in Iran are not supposed to discuss serious politics and are not allowed to criticize their government. I could not even see a foreign movie, or read any foreign publications while I was there simply because they did not exist. I was totally out of touch with the rest of the world. I started to feel very strange again. I knew that it was the time for me to go to the other camp.

I loved staying there in Iran and living a simple life like the rest of the people, but at the same time the basic freedom that I had by living in America, compared to Iran, was just not there for me. I missed sitting at my local sidewalk café and drinking coffee and reading my New York Times daily newspaper. I wanted to pat a dog and show my affection, but on the streets of Teheran, I did not see anyone walking with a dog. I decided it was time for me to go back to my other camp - America.

## WORLD'S LARGEST CARPET UNVEILED IN IRAN

Sources: Press TV, ISNA, 8/1/07



The world’s largest hand-woven carpet ‘Qasr al-Alam’ has been designed by an Iranian artist on the order of Emir of Oman. The carpet was unveiled in Tehran on July 31.

It has taken 18 months for Ali Khaliqi to design the carpet and although the patterns do not belong to any specific region of Iran, they are generally traditional patterns, CHN news agency reported.

Khaliqi describes the carpet as a great masterpiece, stating, “It’s not only noted for its size but also for its trapezoid shape containing one concave, and one convex side.”

The 5,625.15-square-meter carpet will be spread at the Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan al Nahyan Mosque in Abu Dhabi, Jalaaluddin Bassam added. It took weavers 2 years to make the 2.2-billion-knot carpet, he said.

Ambassadors and envoys of Islamic countries to Iran have also visited the on-going weaving process of the world’s largest carpet.

Public Relations Department of Iran’s Carpet Company announced that the visit had positive outcomes and that many of the ambassadors had become eager to order carpets.

Iran’s Carpet Company has decided to organize public tours to further familiarize people and journalists with this great art. “There were many countries such as China, India, and Nepal on the list of Emirates nominees for handling the project, but Iran was chosen for its facilities, and experienced weavers,” said Hassan Ansari-Nia, the manager of Khorasan Carpet Company in Iran.

## ZOROASTER: PHILOSOPHER

Hushang M. Payan

Pythagoras (c 581-c 507BCE), the first person to call himself a philosopher – a person who loves wisdom (philein = love, sophya = wisdom) – believed that a philosopher constantly searches for knowledge for the sake of wisdom. Wisdom is the intelligent application of knowledge. In southern Italy, Pythagoras organized a group of intellectuals who held meetings and kept their practices secret. Because of such secrecy, many aspects of his life and teachings are not known. His love of mathematics, stars, and musical sounds, however, seem to have been sources for his knowledge from Egypt, Babylon, and other parts of Asia.<sup>9</sup> Aristoxenus, a student of Aristotle's, wrote that Pythagoras learned about cosmic harmony from Zoroaster.<sup>1</sup>

Long before the famous Greek philosophers, it was Zoroaster who reformed a mythological religion. In Iran he advocated a monotheistic philosophical approach, encouraging his followers to love and worship his God whom he called "Mazda" (wisdom). The major attributes of the God Wisdom included Asha (all that is right, truth, justice, cosmic order) and Good Mind (source of good thoughts, good words and good deeds).

God-Wisdom of Zoroaster's expects devotion, love, kindness and hard work to improve life for all members of society. God-Wisdom objects to anger, greed, violence, plunder, and war. As the people of the time by necessity limited their concerns to survival, they had no concept of anything abstract. In 1500 BCE Zoroaster's approach to religion was too intellectual for most people to comprehend.<sup>8</sup>

Inspired by Wisdom, Zoroaster also objected to the greed of the upper class, comprised of religious and military leaders called Karapans and Kavis respectively. Since they worked to improve their own social status, rather than the life of members of their community, Zoroaster considered them corrupt. He condemned them for orgiastic behavior in drinking, torturing animals in ritualistic sacrifices, and misleading the *drighu* (downtrodden).<sup>1,4,5,6,8</sup>

About a thousand years after Zoroaster, his ethical ideas appeared in Avesta in an obsolete language. The Karapans (Magi) deliberately caused such confusion to continue to mislead the people. Just like them, the Brahman priests of Vedic India commercialized religion and became the richest members of society. None of these leaders had any concern for life, justice, truth or good deeds.<sup>7</sup>

It was at this time that Gautama Buddha (c480-c400 BCE), an educated man, rose as a leader whose mission was to reduce the suffering of the masses of people. This desire to work for the sake of the benefit of others echoed Zoroaster's thoughts, as some of Buddha's ideas like the eightfold Aryan path are very much like those of Zoroaster's Good Mind.<sup>8</sup>

Around the same time in China, Confucius (551-479 BCE), an influential leader, encouraged people to acquire knowledge, be truthful, be just, help others, promote good and stop evil. His aphorisms are still repeated today. Just like Zoroaster, Confucius objected to corrupt rulers motivated by personal interest, predict-

ing that they would destroy the moral fabric of society.<sup>2</sup>

In Athens, another near contemporary of Buddha and Confucius advocated similar philosophical ideas. Socrates (470-399 BCE) believed that the title of "philosopher king" should be the reward for a man who loves wisdom, affiliates himself with truth and laws, has no personal interest in wealth, and has no tolerance for falsehood.<sup>10</sup>

Philosophy, like many other aspects of civilization, had its roots in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Iran (Persia), India, and China before flourishing in the city state of Athens with Socrates (470-399 BCE), Plato (429-347 BCE) and Aristotle (384-322 BCE). The earliest Greek philosophers-like Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes – who lived before Socrates, 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE were from Miletus, a Greek city in Asia Minor, conquered by Cyrus the Great (588-529).<sup>9</sup> Thus Milesian philosophers were familiar with advances of civilization including the philosophy in Egypt, Mesopotamia and Iran (Persia). It was through Iranians that the Milesians became familiar with Zoroaster's thoughts-such as monotheism, immortality of the soul, and opposing forces of good and evil.<sup>8,9</sup>

Zoroaster's philosophical ideas do appear at times in Greek literature without proper acknowledgment. Colotes (3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE) accused Plato of substituting Er's name for Zoroaster's in reference to immortality of mind (soul) in *Rewards Now and Hereafter*.<sup>1,8,10</sup> Other religious-philosophical observations of Plato, such as divinity of wisdom expressed in *Phaedrus* and God's desire for all things to be good expressed in *Timaeus* are reminiscent of Zoroaster's thoughts.<sup>1,8,10</sup> Modified by later philosophers like Plotinus (204-270 CE), Plato's religious ideas influenced an entirely new school of thought identified as Neo-Platonic. Realizing the similarities between religious ethical concepts and this philosophy, St. Augustine (354-430 CE), who was originally a Manichean familiar with Zoroastrianism, converted to Christianity and seemed to have spent his life trying to integrate the two.<sup>9</sup>

A few centuries later, Islamic intellectuals, like the Iranian physician philosopher AveSina (980-1037 CE) advocated his belief that God is pure thoughts and that all creation resulted from His thinking. About the same time, in his *Epics of the Kings*, Firdowski, a Moslem poet (940-1020 CE), expounded on the idea of God-Wisdom (Kherad).<sup>8,9</sup> In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Meimonides (1135-1204), a Jewish physician philosopher, attempted in his writings to reconcile religion and reason. Realizing the similarities among the ethical concepts common to Judaism, Islam, and Christianity with the mysticism of the Near East the religious and philosophical intellectuals of the time believed that God to be a superexistent Source of all being, the source of truth, and the creator of only what is good. They further explained that evil is lack of good and that man is free to choose between good and evil. Most of these ideas reiterate Zoroaster's thoughts.<sup>1,8,9</sup>

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# Memories of an American Boy

## PHOTO ESSAY: ABADAN IN THE 50's

Paul Schroeder

Taken from [www.iranian.com](http://www.iranian.com), April 27, 2007



couple of months when she traveled back to the US with my sister, who finished her senior year of high school at home. My 12th birthday was a couple of months after we arrived in Abadan.

Socony owned about one-seventh of the “consortium” that had secured the rights to refine and market Iran’s oil. As one of the operat-

ing companies, Socony had the obligation to send some of the managers and engineers who staffed the Abadan refinery. The consortium’s official name was Iranian Oil Refining Company, IORC. The other major entity involved in the Iranian oil industry was the oil producing company, which was owned by the Iranian government. It was called the NIOC, the National Iranian Oil Company. The NIOC pumped oil out of the ground and sold it to the IORC, which refined and distributed it via the partner companies. These were the successors to the earlier AIOC, Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, which controlled Iran’s oil economy between its discovery there in 1908 and the post-WWII period. All of the earlier arrangements changed when the US and UK ousted Iran’s elected Prime Minister Mossadegh and reasserted western control of Iran’s oil resources. The new agreements began in 1954.

My father had been an accountant throughout his working life. In the late ‘30s he worked in Chicago for a printing firm, a meat packing firm, and an electrical appliance manufacturer, before getting the job in Socony’s Chicago office, eventually becoming its “paymaster,” in charge of payroll for that office. My impression of my father is that he is a person of complete integrity and personal decency, qualities perhaps somewhat missing from corporate echelons today. Among the “expatriates” in Abadan at that time were people from several countries besides the US, mainly the UK and the Netherlands. The community of foreigners linked to the refinery numbered about 300. The refinery at that time was known as “the world’s largest.” It had an incredible 30,000 employees, mostly laborers. I have no idea what they all did. Over 100 employees worked in the payroll department. Their main task was to fill weekly pay envelopes with cash, since there was no checking system. They counted the money by weight. A photo of the payroll department is among the slides.

Our family’s personal community was made up of neighbors, a few associates from my father’s work including Iranians who were among the managers in his department, families of my school friends, and the members of St. Christopher’s Church. The church served overseas families who were Protestant, and were in the Anglican tradition. Its ministers rotated like the refinery staff.

This essay aims to provide some background for the photos taken in Abadan in the late ‘50s taken by my father, Charles Schroeder. Some general features of the expatriate experience in Abadan will be given here along with some more personal reminiscences. My father is now a robust 96 and lives in the suburbs of Chicago, the city where he grew up and which is still home base for our extended family – though I now live in Maine. My sister Ellen, who lived a year in Abadan, also lives near Chicago. My mother Lois passed away about 10 years ago.

My father has given the ok for publication of the photos and for me to write about our time there. His slides were taken with an Argus C3 camera, bought specially for the trip. He has about 450 slides taken in various parts of Iran. Of these, about half are from Abadan. The photos posted here are about two-thirds of the Abadan group. We appreciate Mr. Javid’s interest in publishing these materials. Readers are invited to let me know where my memory has gone astray.

In 1957, my father applied for an assignment within his company, Socony Vacuum (since then Mobil, now Exxon Mobil) to work in Iran. He got it, and in February, 1958, he traveled to Abadan, where he was head of the refinery’s payroll department for two years. My mother, sister and I joined him there after the spring school term, in June. I stayed there until he left in February 1960. My mother was there most of that time except for a

My father had been an ac-

My father’s origin in Chicago was unusual for Americans in Abadan. It seemed most of my schoolmates were from Texas or New York, the centers of oil production and finance. This was his only assignment overseas. Some of my friends had lived in other oil localities such as Venezuela and Saudi Arabia. My father had been an ac-



## C O M M E N T A R Y

The kids my age who were part of the church had a group of sorts, who mostly played games outdoors during and after church events. There was an Iranian family who tended after the buildings and grounds of the church. Their outdoor charcoal brazier was one of hundreds in the yards and on the corners that gave Abadan its particular flavor.

We lived at SQ (Staff Quarters) 1098 in New Braim, which was an extension of Braim, an older mainly residential district. At the center of Braim was a maze of houses surrounded by high hedges known as Braim Square. Braim had several different sections, including social gathering places such as the Naft Club (with its outdoor cinema), the Golestan Club, the Central Annex, and apartment blocks for single people (such as my teacher, before he married, and my boy scout leader – I’m not sure what his job was). There was a doctor’s office in Braim, and a small grocery store and bakery. Outside this store there were usually a couple of men begging who were amputees. Women gathered to nurse together at a crossroad near the store. I think it was there that I first noticed the way of sitting on flat feet and with legs folded. I’d never seen this before; it looked pretty comfortable to me.

Also in Braim were Alfi’s Store on “Pickadilly Circus,” the river front including some of the docks, date groves and the boat club. There were also several villages, most prominently the mud houses of Braim Village. Some of the books I remember buying at Alfi’s include a paperback Koran and two collections of journalism about WWII. We also got Time magazine there, required reading for the current events lessons at school. I think “green” when I think of Braim, with its shaded streets, high hedges, nullahs and flowers. As for New Braim

where we lived, all was dust and dirt around new houses of brick and concrete. It had a more American flavor than the rest of Braim. Other places were a mystery to me. I recall the name “Segush Braim” – where was that?

The school and the Braim pool were where I spent most of my time. The pool was an environment unto itself. Two tennis courts were part of it, made of crushed sea shells rolled flat with heavy rollers. The lines were canvas tape nailed into the shell court surface. This was rough on shoes, balls and knees. I was a latecomer to swimming, and loved the pool especially. The swimming skills I got there led to lifeguarding jobs for summer work back home. Among the grounds keepers for the pool and tennis courts were two brothers who lived behind the pool, who were friends with the pool kids. There was also usually a coin toss game going on played by ball boys flipping rials. I wished I could play along.

Just behind the pool was a clay oven that produced endless piles of “nun,” or as we called it, chapatti. I would stand fascinated, watching the bakers flip the breads into the oven, sticking up on its inside dome, peeled off with broad paddles when done. I think the price was one or two rials each. I miss the taste of that bread. Beyond the bakery was the “Old House,” which may have actually been a house at one time, or an abandoned warehouse. It was literally filled with glass bottles, and there were holes in the roof through which we could climb in. A proof of daring, at least for a meek person like myself, was to take the leap from a nearby roof over a small walk to get into the Old House. We weren’t supposed to be there, and once for no reason a group of us got into an exchange of rock throwing with a group of Iranian boys. We ended up in the police station near Alfi’s, and our parents had to come and get us. All of this was within a few blocks of the school.



Sometimes I’d take the bus with friends beyond the bazaar to Bawarda, the other major neighborhood for overseas and Iranian management staff, to swim in the Bawarda pool, where they played Bill Haley’s Rock Around the Clock on the PA. We’d also go to the Seamen’s Club for a swim or a snack. I first had a “Coney Dog” there. And the Taj Cinema, of course, where I first had the thrill of holding hands.

At school I was in the 7th grade one year, and the 8th grade the next. Our unique “junior high” was Americans only. The school also had separate K-6 sections for Americans, Dutch and kids from the UK. Some families sent students to boarding schools in Beirut or Switzerland, or left them home. My experience was mostly with other American kids. A boy from Surrey lived a couple doors down from us, and I knew a couple other British kids, and went to a birthday party at the house of a cute Dutch girl. Generally the various national groups of kids didn’t have much interaction with each other; at least that was my experience. I knew a few Iranian boys, one friend from the neighborhood just past New Braim, and a couple more from the pool and scouts. I remember that the only westerner who spoke Farsi was a German boy who had been there for about 15 years. His father was a doctor. I rode my bike or took the bus to school. The school was owned by the refinery, as was everything else, from roads to water system to bus line. In our room, the 7th graders were the two rows on the right side, and we moved over to the left for 8th. One teacher handled everything, the awesome Charles Libbert. Who will forget the first words he uttered to our class: “In this room I am absolute dictator.” Hmm. When everyone figured



out what that meant, we began to have a great educational experience. He was a fully engaged teacher. Occasionally our class was visited by Mademoiselle Suzanne, a person Mr. Libbert recruited to give us lessons in French. We probably should have been learning Farsi. Mr. Libbert went on to become math coordinator for the Santa Barbara schools.

We took occasional day trips from Abadan. Groups went to the “Sheikh’s castle” up the river in the company’s launch, and also to Khosrowabad. Groups went to the ziggurat at Tchoga Zambil, and to Shush and Shushtar. The boy scouts went on a couple of camping trips, most memorably to Lali, where we camped in the hills and were entertained by a man who played a shawm and his son, probably, who played a drum. I also traveled by train to the Middle East scout “jamboree” in Manzariyeh, Tehran, as part of Abadan International Troop. I think the church group went to Ahwaz, and somehow I remember seeing an antique Bugatti on the street there. There was a deli there named Negro’s where we could get cheeses not found in Abadan. Once my father was invited to visit the Ahwaz home of a relative of a colleague from his office. The gracious family, the courtyard home, the delicious meal are wonderful memories. While my mom was back home with my sister, I traveled with my father to MIS and to Kharg Island, when they were just beginning to plan for the port there.

I’ll try to convey something of the uniqueness of Abadan, beyond these everyday arrangements. Foremost was the intensity of the physical environment. The blazing sun and baking pavements were most memorable. As a product of the frozen northlands, I truly loved the relentless heat – but of course I had a home and the pool for retreat, and didn’t have to work in it. Bluer skies than Abadan’s are impossible. The ever-flowing river was a constant presence, and the canal-watered date groves and irrigated neighborhoods of Braim provided a striking contrast with the surrounding parched tan earth, on which as far as I could see nothing grew except prickly “camel thorns.” I’d go to the river to watch the freighters, tankers and dhows docked at the shore. There was a continuing conflict with Iraq over the river boundary (which still goes on), and there were usually army men behind sandbags at the shore. Now and then US destroyers and British frigates would

sail up the river to show the flag, and we could visit the ships and have the sailors to home for a supper on shore.

Other elemental memories include the huge sulfur pile near the Taj, and its smell, and the piles of salt at salt flats somewhere near our house. Lizards scurried up and down the walls of our house, living under the eaves, sometimes finding their way inside. Once a massive cloud of locusts swept through town. These yellow and green giants were a tasty catch for drivers who raced down our street, then plucked freshly grilled snacks from their radiators. I remember seeing a young man reading under a street light outside our house. Was he there because he didn’t have light at home, or just needing to get out of the house? In any case, I started to become aware of the particular privileges we had.

Through it all was the smell of the refinery. To this day I will occasionally flash on Abadan when filling my gas tank. The smell was bad, the memories are good.

All of this is to say that the opportunity to live in Abadan as a boy was a positive and life-changing experience. There was one moment from that time that I have been waiting for a chance to make an apology for, so I’ll do it now. A few days after we arrived, in a display of my ignorance, I ordered a resting man away from the shade under the eaves of a neighbor’s house. It’s not possible anymore to say “I’m sorry” personally to this person, but perhaps this will help in a small way. In the grand scheme of things this was a small event, but the grand scheme is colored by thoughtless acts like this.

Probably the most lasting understanding that I gained from my time in Abadan was a sense that my everyday understanding and our own way of life is not the only way it can be. Whole universes of difference surrounded us, from the kids from Texas and England, to the people of the villages, markets and bazaar. Added to this was experience the wonders of Iran’s cultural history such as Persepolis, Shiraz, the blue domes of Isfahan that merged with the blue Iranian sky, and the misty atmosphere of the Caspian’s shores and hills. It was a privilege to be there, and I hope to visit Abadan again. It is also my hope that the unfortunate relations between the people and governments of the US and Iran will begin to find some way to be mended.

## Pink Pearl of Persia



**The Pink Pearl of Persia is a cartoon movie produced and directed by Hal Seeger with animation by Bill Ackerman.**

The priceless Pink Pearl of Persia is stolen from a museum. Can Batfink and Karate make it across the opening drawbridge? They fall downward but Batfink saves them. The Pearl is gone, all right, so Batfink sends out his radar. The radar tells Batfink who did it, but he’s not telling. This causes Batfink to be branded a traitor. The jewel thieves, three of them, call Batfink, wanting to cut him in on the action. At the motel, Batfink takes the pearl and is shot at. Karate knocks the door down and Batfink with it. The thieves have the pearl again, but Batfink pulls the rug out from under them. A car chase follows, ending in the Batillac crashing into a wall. Batfink is pinned to the wall, but the radar catches the thieves off guard allowing the “Bat” time to manhandle them into submission. All is well again until the Chief receives a call: someone has stolen the Sacred Siamese Star Sapphire Of Sicily.

Some of the elements of Batfink as we know it were introduced in this first of two pilot films made by Hal Seeger in early 1966. All of Batfink’s crime fighting tools are in evidence, as are the close call escapes (this episode’s comes relatively early in the cartoon) and the use of the off camera narrator to describe the action. Many of the musical cues heard throughout the series are heard here for the first time, but from this cartoon, which come from the “Hunter” library, were never heard again in the series. This film also runs slightly longer than the average Batfink cartoon, timing out at about six minutes. Karate does not appear in the opening titles of the first three Batfink cartoons.

*taken from [www.davemackey.com](http://www.davemackey.com)*

# HISTORY OF TERRORISM

## PART XIV-A

David A. Yazdan

*Today, the great Satan – the embodiment of evil and cruelty against mankind – has... [uninvited] the Middle Eastern nations to democracy... The bullying face of the United States and other arrogant powers has been unveiled.*

Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, January 9, 2006

There were several articles in recent issues of Persian Heritage which were quite interesting, in the editor's letter and articles by Dr. Ghaemi and Mr. Javid. All the concern and more will be addressed in this issue of the history of terrorism.

Recently I came upon a very interesting book, written by Alireza Jafarzadeh. This gentleman is a terrorism expert, Middle East analyst, and Fox News Channel Foreign affairs Analyst. He is president of Strategic Policy Consulting Inc. in Washington, D.C., and has frequently appeared on major television and radio outlets including CNN, MSNBC, ABC, CBS, NBC, NPR, and BBC to discuss Iran. Jafarzadeh is also former media director for the Washington, D.C. office of the parliament-in-exile, the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI). Again, I recommend this book to everyone. The following is the excerpt from a part of the book which I am going to share with you. I was quite impressed with his analysis and the facts that he brought up in this book.

How do you sit at the negotiating table with the leader of a nation who, in 2006, publicly called you the "Great Satan"? Where do you start the negotiating process with a leader who tells his citizens that the Islamic World does not need the flawed... prescription of the West for democracy?" For twenty-seven years the Iranian regime has voiced its hatred of the United States and the West, and for the same number of years attempts have been made to change the regime's behavior through external pressures, threats, negotiations, and appeasement. All these attempts have failed, and as the Iranian regime accelerates its push for a nuclear arsenal, the world no longer has the luxury of waiting for Tehran to run itself around and shed its medieval mindset. The Iranian regime has not budged from its original themes of hating the West and working to export its Islamic" revolution; ignoring this will only further step up Tehran's rush to the bomb.

### SETTING THE STAGE FOR U.S. - IRAN RELATIONS

When Iran's nationalist Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Mossadeq was toppled by a CIA-backed coup d'état, many in the West praised the coup as a major success and as an indication of how the CIA could be instrumental in securing the national security interests of the United States, as well as contributing to global security. Of course we now know that it was orchestrated by the British but implemented by the U.S. Some, however, questioned the wisdom of this policy, predicting that sacrificing liberty at the expense of assumed stability, while expedient in the short term, would have adverse ramifications in the long term.

Today, more than half a century later, it is quite obvious that the overthrow of the elected, nationalist government of Dr. Mossadeq not only harmed the interests of the Iranian people, but also has significantly undercut the national security interests of the United States. To those suffering under pro-western, yet authoritarian regimes, such as the Shah's, the coup projected the United States as the protector of corrupt, puppet dictatorships.

The coup against Dr. Mossadeq, the most popular leader in Iran's modern history, dramatically changed the course of developments in Iran as it paved the way for the rise of a regressive, fundamentalist current that had been kept in check until then by the force of history. In a nutshell; the coup let the genie out of the bottle. In toppling Mossadeq, the United States and the United Kingdom relied on an unholy alliance of anti-Mossadeq forces. These forces ranged from fundamentalist clerics such as influential Ayatollah Abolqassem Kashani to the pro-Moscow Communist Tudeh Party. Ruhollah Khomeini was a close associate of Kashani's. Nearly three decades later, Khomeini unveiled his antagonism toward Mossadeq when he told an audience of his zealous followers, "I told the Agha (Kashani) that (Mossadeq) would be slapped in the face. And it did not take long before he was slapped. Had he remained (in power), he would have slapped Islam!!

The overthrow of Dr. Mossadeq, who was already weakened by his Islamic fundamentalist opponents, did not dissuade his young followers from picking up the torch. Learning from the shortcomings of the nationalist movement, the new generation set out for form a more organized movement. To this day, the regime considers the organized opposition within Iran and outside its borders as the biggest threat to its survival.

In retrospect, by toppling the liberal government of Dr. Mossadeq and bolstering the Shah in his efforts to eliminate the secular, democratic opposition, the United States unwittingly paved the way for the rise to power of Khomeini and his troglodyte disciples, who manipulated the growing anti-American sentiments among the Iranian population to consolidate their rule.

### WHAT DOES TEHRAN WANT?

The goals of the Islamic Republic of Iran, ever since Khomeini wrote up its constitution, are to preserve the theocratic regime, install sister Islamic republics throughout the Muslim and Arab world, and keep, and increasingly restive population in check through brute repression. Vital to achieving these goals is Tehran's commitment to building a nuclear arsenal, which will allow it to forge ahead with its expansionist policy and boost its credibility among the hard-core zealots in the regime's inner circles and among the terrorist groups that it supports throughout the world. Every act of the mullahs in Tehran supports the fulfillment of these goals, and as a result, Iran today poses a five-pronged threat with its nuclear program, its meddling in Iraq, its support for international terrorism, its opposition to the Middle East peace, and its clampdown on its own citizens.

The ruling clerics have made no attempt to hide their ambitions to export their firebrand Islamic worldview to the rest of the Middle East region. "We don't shy away from declaring that Islam is ready to rule the world... We must believe in the fact that Islam is not confined to geographical borders, ethnic groups and nations. It's a universal ideology that leads the justice... We must prepare ourselves to rule the world," boasted Ahmadinejad in January 2006. There is no room for compromise in such a mission and its very existence preempts diplomatic relationships

because the mission is based on a set of values and tenets that are diametrically opposed to democracy. The rulers of Iran dream of locking the Middle East into a society of rigid laws based on an extremist interpretation of Islam. Whereas the majority of Iraqis work toward a secular, democratic government, the mullahs in Tehran throw all the resources behind radical Shiite parties and militias in order to gain the upper hand in Iraq and to use that as its first stepping stone on the path to global Islamic rule. Whereas the young, well-educated men and women of Iran yearn for gender equality and liberty, the mullahs repress women, imprison and execute dissidents, close down media outlets, enforce the dress code, and rig the elections to maintain their grip on power.

Tehran wants to continue enriching uranium and wants to develop nuclear weapons and the missiles to deliver them. Ahmadinejad's pledge that Iran will never back down from nuclear enrichment demonstrates that the regime will continue to break its Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) obligations and derail the IAEA inspection process. In his speech before the United Nations in 2005, Ahmadinejad explained that the Iranian regime considered the NPT an unfair, 'discriminatory' instrument through which foreign nations sought to "impose a nuclear apartheid on the basis of that statement, any exception that Iran will suddenly reverse its position and adhere to the treaty is naïve at best.

With a nuclear arsenal, the Iranian regime can carry out its stated objective of wiping Israel off the map. Iran also wants nuclear weapons in order to gain the ultimate leverage in its dealings with the rest of the world. These desires were evident when Ahmadinejad warned during a September 2005 military parade while peering over the tops of giant Shahab-3 missiles that were carrying banner reading "We will trample America under our feet" and "Death to America"- that Iran would respond with "fiery and destructive" wrath if his regime was attacked.

Tehran's objectives preempt the traditional negotiation process because the West does not have anything to offer that the regime desires. The mullahs are not interested in economic and political incentives or nuclear power plants. They want to be the hegemony not only in the Middle East but throughout the Muslim world. They consider themselves to be the Um-ol-Qura (mother of all Islamic lands). In January 2006, Supreme Leader Khamenei said, "Now, during the period of post-modern colonialism, we should... not once again allow the enemy to dominate our destiny for a long time." He called on all levels of Iranian society to "prevent the world devouring U.S. from beginning a new period of colonial domination throughout the Islamic world." In short, the Iranian regime wants the U.S. to stay out of Iran and the Middle East and choke on its own "revelry, violence... and other fiascoes."

In a way, strikingly similar to that of the Soviet threat that defined the Cold War, the Iranian regime wants global domination, and its pursuit of a nuclear bomb is central to that goal.

**UNDERSTANDING IRAN**

The mullahs are now about to arm themselves with a nuclear bomb, already enjoy significant influence in Iraq, and have close ties to Palestinian groups who do not favor peace in the Middle East.

Unfortunately, the mentality that haunted U.S. policy toward Iran more than half a century ago continues to influence some policy circles in Washington today, especially in the Department of State. The United States has either miscalculated in detecting

its allies in Iran or sacrificed its own allies or potential allies in order to reach out to its enemies, whose radical and unwavering nature was never understood. Since the overthrow of the Shah in February 1979, the United States has struggled to understand the nature of the regime and what makes it tick. On numerous occasions, the United States reached out to Iran's clerical rulers, provided concessions, delivered arms, engaged in economic trade, offered a "road map" for dialogue, apologized for past behavior, and gave assurances as to the "permanent feature" of the regime. But the end result is a more radical, zealous leadership in Tehran, a leadership whose behavior is far from changed. In fact, many experts believe that Tehran is far more dangerous to global peace and security today than it ever was.

The U.S. State Department has failed to understand the dynamics of the Iranian political scene, the deeply ideological, hard-core nature of the regime - a nature diametrically opposed to international norms - and the regime's grand agenda to develop a global Islamic rule. Instead, the United States has invested heavily in different measures intended to change the regime's behavior. Many "Iran experts" and analysts have contributed to various administrations' perception of Iran. Gary Sick, the former White House aide for Iran during the Iranian revolution and the hostage crisis and a longtime proponent of dialogue, has made every effort to minimize the Iranian regime's regional and global ambitions and explain away its role in international terrorism. In a 1987 Foreign Affairs article, Sick wrote, it is apparent that Iran has modified, at least for the time being, its millenarian goal of bringing "Islam to the entire world" in favor of a policy that might be described as "clericalism in one country." On the issue of Iran's sponsorship of terror, Sick wrote, Iran may often be falsely accused. Many of these crimes were never solved, and the degree of Iranian official responsibility may be overstated.

A report published by former National Security advisor Zbigniew Brezinski and former CIA director Robert M. Gates, who headed a task force at the Council on Foreign Relations entitled, "Iran: Time for a New Approach," said that Iran "could play a potentially significant role in promoting a stable, pluralistic government in Baghdad." The report further noted that "it is in the interests of the United States to engage selectively with Iran."

But engagement has already been pursued by various European countries and U.S. administrations over the years. Since the overthrow of the Shah, there has been a pattern in western efforts to engage the mullahs; the outcome has ranged from failure to embarrassment to a further emboldening of Tehran, including in its incessant effort to acquire a nuclear bomb.

*to be continued*

I deeply appreciate what Dr. Ahkami is doing and Persian Heritage. Thanks F. Shadab





# Pan-Arabism's Legacy of Confrontation with Iran

Part One

BY: DR. KAVEH FARROKH



MICHEL AFLAQ

Few Iranians (or Westerners) have heard of Pan-Arab nationalists such as Satia Al-Husri, Sami Shawkat, Michel Aflaq or Khairallah Tulfah. Their version of Arab nationalism is as anti-Western as it is anti-Persian. The philosophies of these men have done much to inspire generations of Arab leaders such as Gamal Abdel Nasser, who passionately advocated the changing of the Persian Gulf to "Arab Gulf," or Saddam Hussein, who defined his Arabism by the extent of his brutality against Iranians (Kurds, Persians, etc.).

Before we engage in this relatively long discussion of pan-Arabism and Arab chauvinism, let us (Iranians) remind ourselves, that we too have our faults and are not perfect. In fact, I have always found the attitudes of a number of Iranians against Arabs embarrassing and unfair. Nevertheless, I also find the hostile anti-Iranian attitudes and actions of the pan-Arabists shocking (you will read some of these in this commentary). As you read this article, please balance your feelings with how many of us Iranians are also embarrassingly chauvinist, with cultural expressions such as "uncouth Arab" or "Lizard eaters." Undoubtedly, Iranians of all stripes are offended at the "Arab Gulf" scandal, not to mention pan-Arab attempts at fomenting Arab racism against Iranians. A powerful distinction must be made between people who project ignorance and hatred, versus Arabs as a whole, who, in my opinion (and by personal experience), are kind, compassionate, intelligent, and resourceful.

To understand pan-Arabism, it is necessary to briefly sketch the history and origins of this movement and how this mindset remains a danger to international peace and stability. Al-Husri, along with other pan-Arab thinkers such as Michel Aflaq, helped forge the basis of the modern pan-Arabist identity of the 20th century. Unfortunately, as with other chau-

vinist philosophies such as Nazism, pan-Turkism, Persian chauvinism, Nordicism, pan-Arabist thinking leads inevitably to violence and confrontation, in this case against the Western and Iranian worlds.

Osama Bin Laden is in fact the latest product of such pan-Arabism. The only difference between Bin Laden and previous pan-Arabists such as Gamal Abdel Nasser or Saddam Hussein is that he overtly perverts the spiritualism of the Islamic religion, to further aggrandize his vision of pan-Arabist imperialism.

At the popular level, many Arabs continue to appreciate and respect the Iranians for their contributions to Arab and wider Islamic civilization. These same Arabs are continually distressed by the anti-Persian rhetoric of the pan-Arabists. A perfect example of this are e-mails from Arab countries condemning the recent use of the term "Arab Gulf" by National Geographic. Note two examples cited below by the local Iranian Payvand newspaper in Vancouver (Vol.11, Issue 667, Friday, Dec.3, 2004):

*"I am an Arab from UAE, my dad as well as my grandfather still call it Khalij Al-Farsi which means Persian Gulf...why do some people want us and Iranians to be enemies forever?"*

*"I am an Arab from Kuwait. I agree that the Persian Gulf should remain Persian (Parsi)."*

Pan-Arabism is simply defined as the desire to forge a single Arabian super state. The movement has its roots in the Arab revolt against Ottoman Turkish rule in World War One. British intelligence agents, personified in Thomas Edward Lawrence (1888-1935) "Lawrence of Arabia" or "Al-Lawrence" (see photo), excited the Arabs against the Turks, with promises of an Arab super state stretching from the Persian Gulf to the Suez Canal (and beyond...). The Arab revolt was not anti-Persian, it was, for all intents and purposes, an independence movement against

Ottoman Turkish rule.

The pan-Arab revolt was first proclaimed in the Hijaz. Pan-Arabism found its second home in Damascus, Syria. It was in Damascus that Turkish rule dramatically ended on October, 3, 1918, when victorious Arab warriors swept into this ancient city. The Arabs were to be sorely disappointed. Having used (or tricked?) the Arabs, the British and the French simply carved up the ex-Ottoman Empire's Arab possessions into a series of artificial states such as Syria and Lebanon (under French supervision), with Palestine, Jordan, and Iraq falling under British jurisdiction. Faisal, a hero of the Arab revolt, was defeated by the French in Syria (Battle of Maysalun), but was recompensed by the British, who installed him as king in the newly formed state of Iraq. The birth of "modern" Arab nationalism is to be found in the aftermath of these events, namely the Franco-British creation of separate Arabian states. The Arabs felt used and cheated by the west, a sense of anger that has pervaded their consciousness for a period close to 90 years.

By 1932, Iraq had been recognized as an independent state by the League of Nations; Syria, Palestine and Lebanon however, remained under French rule until the 1940s. Men such as Michel Aflaq (discussed later in this commentary), directly experienced the effects of French rule.

It was in Baghdad, Iraq where the first Arab nationalists, mainly of Palestinian and Syrian descent, formed the basis of their philosophy. Prominent figures are individuals such as Haj Amin Al-Husayni (the Mufti of Jerusalem), and Syrian nationalists such as Shukri al-Quwatli and Jamil Mardam. All had been exiled because of their desire to overthrow British and French rule. Rashid Ali, a native Iraqi, is well known by the Arabs for his pro-German coup in 1941 with hopes of driving out the British. In Syria, ideologues such as Michel Aflaq (a Christian) and

Salah al-Din al-Bitar laid the basis of the present day Baath movements.

What is of special consequence to Iranians is the type of individuals Faisal decided to install in the new Iraqi educational and political systems. Satia Al-Husri was brought to Iraq in 1921. He first served as advisor to the Ministry of Education; he then became Director General of Education and eventually became the Dean of the Law College. Husri quickly ushered in scores of fellow Palestinian and Syrian educators and these people helped shape the Iraqi education system. These individuals formed the nucleus and genesis of true pan-Arabism, and unfortunately, ushered in the basis of anti-Iranian thinking in mainstream Arab education and mass media.

Anti-Persian thinking can be seen in one of the father's of pan-Arabism, the aforementioned Satia Al-Husri. Of special interest is one of Husri's works titled "Iranian Teachers Who Caused Us (Arabs) Big Problems". His campaigns against schools suspected of being positive towards Persia are well documented. One dramatic example is found in the 1920s when the Iraqi Ministry of Education ordered Husri to appoint Muhammad Al-Jawahiri as a teacher in a Baghdad school. A short excerpt of Husri's interview with the teacher is revealing (see Samir El-Khalil's Republic of Fear, New York: Pantheon Books, 1989, p.153-154):

Husri: First, I want to know your nationality.

Jawahiri: I am an Iranian.

Husri: In that case we cannot appoint you.

Husri was overruled by the Iraqi ministry and Jawahiri was appointed. Jawahiri was in fact an Arab, however like many Arabs of his day and the present, Jawahiri saw no reason to follow Husri's bigoted anti-Iranian racialism.

It is interesting that Husri, though claimed as a Syrian-Arab, was actually raised as a Turk in a Turkish household; he struggled to learn spoken and written Arabic. It would seem that Mr. Husri may have suffered from an identity or inferiority complex and like many such individuals in history (e.g. Adolf Hitler) found an outlet for his confused emotions by preaching hate against those of the "other" (i.e. Iranians).

Husri correctly deduced that it was through education, especially children, that the "new morality" of Arabism was to be transmitted. In this endeavor, he

achieved a great success. In this mission he was helped by a certain British advisor to the Iraqi Ministry of education by the name of Lionel Smith. Smith seems to have admired Husri's passionate zeal for education, but is on record for stating that many of Husri's "views were wrong". Husri's attitudes against non-Arabs seem to have been adopted by his son Khalid al-Husri, a nationalist Arab historian who has attempted to minimize the violent destruction of the Assyrian community in Northern Iraq in the 1920s. This is reflected in:

Husri, H. (1974). The Assyrian affair. The International Journal of Middle East Studies, 5, 161-176, 344-360.

For an account of the Assyrian tragedy consult:

Stafford, R.S. (1935). The Tragedy of the Assyrians. London: Allen & Unwin Ltd.

Satia Al-Husri spawned a whole generation of men who advocated violence. One example is Sami Shawkat who is famous for his 1933, speech "Sina'at al-Mawt" (Manufacture of Death) in which he rationalizes mass violence and war as the way to achieve Arab aspirations. Tragically, this speech was widely distributed in Arab schools and in Iraq in particular. It is interesting that Shawkat teaches that "force is the soil which sprouts the seeds of truth." Although not widely known, Shawkat was a main force in the organization of the Futuwwa Youth Organization - a movement modeled directly after the Nazi Hitler Youth Movement. The Futuwwa set the pace for future Arab chauvinist movements, such as the B'aath party of Iraq and today's followers of Bin Laden. It is interesting to note that Shawkat's ideas became somewhat too hot to handle, even for the pan-Arabists - Satia Al-Husri later disowned Sami Shawkat.

It is worth noting that Sami Shawkat's brother, Naji, who by 1941, was a member of the Arab committee in Iraq (which had absorbed the Futuwwa), gave Franz von Papen (a high ranking German official of Nazi Germany in 1941) a letter which actually congratulated Hitler for the brutality that he inflicted upon the Jews.

Of far greater significance is the following quote that vividly describes Sami Shawkat's thinking (see again Samir El-Khalil's Republic of Fear, New York: Pantheon Books, 1989, p.177):

"History books that discredit the Arabs should be burned, not excepting the greatest work on the philosophy of history

by Ibn Khaldun."

But, why Ibn Khaldun? As a historian, Khaldun (1332-1406 AD) is ranked among the best in history, on par with the earlier Greco-Roman historians such as Plutarch or Xenophon; truly one of the best scholars produced by the Arabs. To understand why pan-Arabists feel uncomfortable with Ibn Khaldun, one has to read a direct quote from his work, *The Muqaddimah* Translated by F. Rosenthal (III, pp. 311-15, 271-4 [Arabic]; R.N. Frye (p.91):

"...It is a remarkable fact that, with few exceptions, most Muslim scholars...in the intellectual sciences have been non-Arabs...thus the founders of grammar were Sibawaih and after him, al-Farisi and Az-Zajaj. All of them were of Persian descent...they invented rules of (Arabic) grammar...great jurists were Persians...only the Persians engaged in the task of preserving knowledge and writing systematic scholarly works. Thus the truth of the statement of the prophet becomes apparent, 'If learning were suspended in the highest parts of heaven the Persians would attain it'... The intellectual sciences were also the preserve of the Persians, left alone by the Arabs, who did not cultivate them... as was the case with all crafts... This situation continued in the cities as long as the Persians and Persian countries, Iraq, Khorasan and Transoxiana (modern Central Asia), retained their sedentary culture."

You now see why Mr. Shawkat saw the need to destroy the history of Ibn Khaldun. Arab chauvinists from Gamal Abdel Nasser to today's Bin Laden have chosen to pretend that that the Persian intellectual legacy does not exist. It is not an exaggeration to state that Arab nationalists have re-written much of Arab history, especially as it pertains to Persian contributions to Islamic and Arabian civilization. The following observation by Sir Richard Nelson Frye encapsulates the crisis in Arab attitudes towards the Iranians (See R.N. Frye, *The Golden Age of Persia*, London: Butler & Tanner Ltd., 1989, p.236):

"Arabs no longer understand the role of Iran and the Persian language in the formation of Islamic culture. Perhaps they wish to forget the past, but in so doing they remove the bases of their own spiritual, moral and cultural being... without the heritage of the past and a healthy respect for it... there is little chance for stability and proper growth."

It may be argued that one source of

the political, economic and technological stagnation so evident in the Arab world at present may stem from what has been taught (and continues to be taught) to Arabs at primary, secondary and post-secondary education.

It should come as no surprise that many Arabs (including high ranking statesmen and highly educated professors) now believe that the following Iranian scholars of the Islamic era to be all Arabs: Zakaria Razi "Rhazes" (860- 923 or 932, born in Rayy, near Tehran), Abu Ali Sina "Avecenna" (980 -1037, born in Afshana, near Bukhara, ancient Samanid Capital), Abu Rayhan Biruni (973 - 1043, born in Khiva, Ancient Khwarazm now modern Afghanistan), Omar Khayyam (1044-1123, born in Nishabur, Khorasan) and Mohammad Khwarazmi (d. 844, born in Khiva, Ancient Khwarazm, now in Modern Afghanistan). Not a single one of these scientists hailed from an Arab-speaking region, all were born in what is now Iran or the former realms of Persian speaking world.

This has posed an awkward contradiction for pan- nationalists. Their counter to these facts, are mainly based on two premises:

(a) Men such as Biruni are claimed as Arabs simply because they had the name "Al-" attached to their last names or had Arab/Muslim names such as "Omar". This is tantamount to saying that all great people in history with Christian names such as Chris, Michael, or John have been Jews, simply because their names are Jewish. Following this logic, we then must accept Christopher Columbus (Spain), Michaelangelo (Italy), and Johannes Kepler (Denmark) as Jews. Persia accepted Islam after the 7th century AD, just as Europeans accepted Christianity in great numbers after the 3-4<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. Simply put, nationality and religious confession are not the same thing. One does not "become" an Arab simply because one is Muslim, just as one does not "become" Jewish simply because one is Christian. Pan-Arabists have simply stretched the definition of Muslim to conveniently include those non-Arabs whom they view favorably as Arabs.

(b) All of these men (without exception) are simply argued to be the descendants of Arabs who settled in Iran after the Arab conquests. While true that Arab garrisons occupied Persia for approximately 222 years,

how and when did these warriors from the tough deserts of Arabia become scholars so quickly? Persia's history and traditions of learning rival those of Greece, India and China, and like them, predates Arab civilization for thousands of years. When the Arabs erupted from their desert homes in Arabia and overthrew the Byzantine-Roman and Sassanian Persian empires, they simply inherited the rich legacy of Rome and Persia. Simply occupying another person's territory does not entitle one to their achievements - in that case Greek scholars such as Democritus (Abdera, Ionia 460 - 370 BC), and Pythagoras (Samos, Ionia 582 - 500 BC) are automatically Persian, simply because Achaemenid Persian garrisons ruled the Ionian Greeks (present Western Turkey) at the time. The best retort to the pan-Arabists is the aforementioned Ibn Khaldun himself, who has made clear, in no uncertain terms, of the mighty contributions that have been made by the Persians.

Many Arab nations, such as Egypt, simply avoid mentioning where the Iranian scholars were born and where they ultimately died. Many Arabs would be surprised to learn that the grave of Ibn Sina (Avicenna) is located in Hamadan, Iran.

To understand the awkwardness (and indeed irrationality) of pan-Arabism (or any form of racialism), one is compelled to also briefly learn about the true founders of the B'aath party; Michel Aflaq and Salah al-Din al-Bitar. Both were born in Damascus; Aflaq was a Greek Orthodox Christian and Bitar a Sunni Muslim. They both experienced the humiliating treatment of their country, Syria, at the hands of the French, especially during the 1925-1926 uprising. The two met

as students in the University of Paris in 1929. It is unclear if they actually joined the Arab communist students in Paris at the time, but what is clear is that they formed their party on the basis of pan-Arabism, like the movements that had taken place in neighboring Iraq in the 1920s. Another influential and French (Sorbonne) educated Syrian, was Zaki al-Arsuzi. Al-Arsuzi was especially outspoken in his racism against the local Turks of Syria and especially venomous in his hatred against the Jews. To summarize, the followers of Arsuzi joined up with the Aflaq-Bitar team. Arsuzi himself intensely disliked Aflaq, which explains why he himself never joined in.

As a non-Muslim, Aflaq's interest (see photo at left) was not in the cultivation of a pan-Islamic identity, but in the promotion of pure pan-Arabism in the spirit of what he called "al-ruh al-Arabiyya" (the Arabian spirit). Faith and love for one's race is the cornerstone of pan-Arabism, as it is with any kind of racial chauvinism. That same "Arab spirit" is what Aflaq relates to "the great deeds (of the Arabs) in the past and can continue to do so in the present". It is interesting that Aflaq also rejected those Arabs influenced or sympathetic to Western culture; exactly as Bin Laden does today.

Michel Aflaq defined Islam only as "a revolutionary Arab movement whose meaning was the renewal of Arabism" (see Khalil, p.198). It would seem that Aflaq, Bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, or the Husri and Shawkat clans have chosen to forget one crucial point: Islam (like all great religions), since its inception, went beyond the moronic and barbaric concept of race worship - Islam, like all of the world's great religions (Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Hinduism, etc) rejects racial self-love in favor of the acceptance of others irrespective of race, ethnicity or color - all of mankind are seen as members of one another (to quote the Persian mystic Jalal-e-Din Rumi). As for Islamic civilization, one can again quote Samir al-Khalil (Republican of Fear, p.199-200):

*"Arab ethnic hegemony was terminated under the Abbasids, Arabic culture very quickly metamorphosed into a wider Islamic civilization with the peoples of the fertile Crescent - Persians, Turks, Berbers, and Spaniards as well as Jews and Christians..."*

*to be continued*



# Indoctrination

## Verses Self-Activation

M.K.Sadigh

The first one signifies the conditioned mind sets, which formed into some fixed intellectual structures and bound to follow certain paradigms. To instruct in a body of doctrine or principles, to initiate by means of doctrinal instruction, to imbue or to inspire, permeate, or invade with a partisan or ideological point of view, such as a generation of children who had been indoctrinated against the values the determination and will.

The second part introduces a liberated mind set directed not by any doctrine or principles, to initiate by means of doctrinal instruction, but rather by the self- knowledge, self guidance, self-judgment, and his or her own consciousness which follows the logical discourse, to formulate and conceptualizes the problems and issues and peruse an appropriate path toward a goal.

When we are talking about materializing a concept, we mean being ready and committed for action and doing it, which is the state of activation of thoughts and materialization of concepts, but to conceptualize our thoughts we should be knowledgeable, alert and conscious. Now we arrive at a point that the ingredients for success, comprehension, and advancement are not praying, wishing, compassion of merciful magical forces, ignoring our realistic potentials, living in an imaginary state of stagnation, but rather a materialistic and vast educational capacities, motivations and a will power to drive us toward a clear goal and absolute rejection of any negativity which no matter what is the cause of its existence, it is a neutralizing force in any progressive endeavor, a conscientious or concerted effort toward an end; an earnest attempt.

Raising the issue of indoctrination certainly attempt to describe the hidden mechanism that in an ongoing process functions toward the conditioning of the humanity particularly those who live under suppressive and theocratic regimes. The majority of these people become accustomed to imposed mind sets as their second nature, that are not the humane and fair and democratic setups toward their own welfare, but rather socially, politically, religiously controlled and conditioned for the stability and the security of the dominant power.

By raising the issue of indoctrination indeed, I am trying to understand the mechanism of the functionality of pretension and deception being presented as democracy in the secular systems and faith in the religious systems that generally dragged the humanity in such a confusion and particularly our Iranian people to a cultural and social devastation since the Arab - Islamic conquest of sixth century 638 A.D. and the domination of fanatics, brutality and stagnation of our own identity.

When the whole structure of a theocratic regime is based on a doctrine that the determinant factor is only the supreme religious ruling power, then it is clear that "self" is meaningless and absolute obedient and being conditioned into certain fixation is the set conditions for living. This is not by any means allegation against any particular ideology or religion but rather the analytical truth about the basic mechanism of religious stability which its existence as observable facts which our people live with it and recorded history of suppression under the pretext of faith and spiritual believes

define it. For example, the identity of non-Moslems in Umayyad Dynasty AD 661-750 as "Movalies" were subjected to certain taxes and payments and being subjugated, segregated and deprived from many privileges of Moslems, and the distinction of non-Moslems in the Ottoman Empire, also called Turkish Empire.

The most recent example, tremendous discriminations and segregations of minorities, particularly different religions and particularly, women in present Islamic Republic of Iran is the most familiar example that every Iranian have been grown up with it. The major mechanism of suppression in any one of these political and religious dominations is the control of the masses by deep and profound functionality of indoctrination complimented with suppression by force. How this suppression escaped out of logical and intellectual evaluations and judgment, simply by vast and profound penetration of religious indoctrinations, or degradation of "self" in every individuals' personality structures trough the conditioning which turns the believers to "self, operated crusaders" and defenders of the faith or regime against any different point of views and those who had different interpretation of their ideologies and religion, which they considered them their enemies.

Indoctrination in this case is the soul mechanism of "self-sensor", and absolute and the most reliable mechanism of control. This indoctrination mechanism then not only become a system of education but also become an instrument of "reliable suppression" because it is an innate and embedded instrumentation that its operation does not need to be guarded constantly by some third party as long as the conditioned individual is firmly fixed in the imposed mindset and doing what ever was the orientation intended to be.

How could possibly such an old mechanism be firmly implanted into our mind for so long? The answer is, it is reinforced by punishment of the burning in hell for those who are not faithful followers. In the other hand going to the paradise after death because, they have fidelity and are faithful to the cause whole-heartedly and advocate, support, and follow the covenants of the faith will reward the blind believers that are securely being conditioned to follow the order.

This catastrophic and devastating mindset will never ever go away, or being eliminated, or replaced, unless the mind sets are changed and nobody possibly could be able to change it, besides the people themselves. It is exactly the same mechanism implied in a tyranny or totalitarian regimes that indoctrination is the fundamental mechanism of control and suppression. In both cases "the person or self" is not functioning as a liberated individual but rather a conditioned person. There will never be any salvage or hope for the people unless they themselves become aware and conscious of their deficiencies and transform themselves through the self- education to a conscious person and the "manipulated self" becomes and turn in to "self-activated and self-conscious" to be liberated from this long lasting intellectual devastation.

The major question will be that how and what ways we can change this old embedded destructive mind set out of our cultural life, and its deadly grip out of our existence? And I only assume and based on my own hypotheses developing toward a "self-activated person" rather than being indoctrinated or brained washed by dominant imposed paradigms. But is it possible for all those people who have inherited this mind set for fourteen hundred years? The answer is yes. Not through the forceful bloodshed and imposition activities, but rather through the gradual and planed system and definitely, by a deep individual commitment and national awareness as a nation.

Development of educational capacities, motivations, a will

power to drive us toward a clear goal, and absolute rejection of any negativity. As a matter of fact, simply we should reverse what the regime of the Iranian Islamic Republic did in just one generation.

The same way that a dominant theocratic regime within only one generation was able to create such a cultural devastation, we can reverse and undo whatever had been done, if we create the appropriate reorientation environment through the lectures, publications, artistic committed means of expressions such as movies and electronic channels and medias we could be able to bring even those old mind sets to their senses. As far as I remember from my childhood, the more crucial and cardinal mechanism of Islamic promotional instrument is the Mullah's long and effective speeches in mosques, the most effective platform to indoctrinate masses by millions. Fortunately the advancement of global electronic communication and the presence and expansion of the awareness of our people are reflected in such a vast proportion that brings hopes and joy of the existence of such a great potential of change.

### **EDUCATIONAL CAPACITIES, MOTIVATIONS, A WILL POWER TO DRIVE US TOWARD A CLEAR GOAL, AND ABSOLUTE REJECTION OF ANY NEGATIVITY**

We hear a lot of success stories from the life of successful people, perhaps among a number of them there were elements of chances and "being in the right time and right place or having the appropriate connection" but the most part of their success is educational capacities, a willpower to drive them toward a clear goal and absolute rejection of any negativity. Some of these persons are the children of those people that never were capable of changing from the fanatic mindset and yet their children become the pioneers of the most progressive human advancement.

This is the most valuable psychological cultural stimulation that could intrigue and drive a vast spectrum of possibilities for our people, particularly those true stories of personal successes that wisely reflected in my favorite and magnificent magazine *Persian Heritage*, which I am proud of being part of it. These kinds of reflections should not, by any measure, be denounced or devalued because the documented realities that we bring our selves back to our selves, which was crushed and depressed by fanatics for a long time.

We should and must prove to the world that our identity was contaminated by false introduction of our culture, our real people and distinguish our selves from invaders, plunders, and rapists, and pretentious religious aggressors that we never were defeated by them. It is undeniable historical facts that our nation was attacked by Alexander in 334 B.C. Arab conquest 638, Ghaznavid Dynasty invasion of 999, Seljuq Turks in 1030, Gharakhani Turks 1141, Ghaz Turks 1156, Mongols Genghis Khan 1220, Timur and Timurids 1381 A.D. and Afghans 1729. We overcame all these devastated attacks and invasions and in many of them we were able to convert them to historical opportunities to use their forces toward our cultural advancements, and now we will overcome this present devastating ordeal just like others.

We went through hells and we reoriented our culture so many times and we should be strong enough to do it again by educational instrumentation, which could be the most effective way.

Educational capacities refers to the capability of a person who is able to see and evaluate any phenomena or any event, which they are facing or witnessing, in a holistic view rather than being confined in his own limited scope of limited perception.

The educated person should be able to see the world in a related configuration rather than confinement in a personal feeling and limited understanding, which eventually ends up with inappropriate assessments and wrong judgment.

Let us not be confused with the word's fascination, or the word power and assume an educated person has to go through the institutionalized training in order to be capable to be qualified for such a capacities.

It is comprehensive that most educated people will achieve their educational capacities through the educational institutions, but I am trying to get rid of this taboo and break this fixation and myth and take away the excuses from a great majorities of people that withdraw from improvement of their understanding because they assume they do not have time for some reason to read, write, or be informed of the facts that elevate them to educated level.

The main objective of education is the capacity of being self activated rather than trapped into a fixation by a persuasive power of predators that constantly are expanding their domain of promotional activities for the quest of dominations, whether it is political, religious, or simply personal or social. The self-activated person unlikely will be persuaded by projection of any negative indoctrination process, which as the routine for social, political, or religious stability executed in the process of domination and the stability particularly in our modern living environments.

Establishing the social balance by coordinating the individuals in a balance relation in a democratic order is desirable as far as the end result is the advancement of social welfare, but if such process of indoctrination will end up to destitutions and stagnation of freedom and democracy, then here the self activated and conscious and educated person should be alert to denounce it and reject it. The end result is the emancipation of tyranny and prevention of spread of ideologies of zealous fanatics and corruptions of any kinds, which either is introduced and sugar-coded by revealing deceptive presentations or concealed under a legitimate acceptance and facades.

The process of self reorientation in spite of its apparent improbability because of the non institutional learning and self disciplinary commitment could start with a simple and feasible task and gradually developing a new habit, just like trying a new food and become accustomed to eating it for the rest of your life without rejecting it, to more expanded level of reading, searching, writing, listening to informative documentations, being acquainted with analytical descriptions, re evaluate our own believes fearlessly, and comparative assessment of our own values. For example as a Moslem we might resort to certain values for certain elements of our lives that never ever attempted to question our self of the validity of its value in our existence, and we should be comparing it with other religions or cultures to see what is their assessment and judgment so we will not be fixed in an imposed paradigm inherited from our parents or our tradition for the rest of our life.

This kind of reorientation should be developed gradually into new habits and gradually be replaced the old ones based on the probability of every individual's possibility and devotion. The achievement of such reorientation could be felt and revealed when every individual will notice his presence in a wider scope of social participation. The acquaintance of more informative sources will expand the capability of the person's participation in self-activated assessment of social values and less indoctrination to the imposed paradigms.

In an environment of educated self-activated societies there will not be room for corruption, imposition, suppression, conceal-

ment of the facts, and impact of persuasive powers toward any domination which is not beneficial for the well being of totality of social structures. It is not difficult to have a comparative study of what we as the Iranians have that is out of balance with the ones of the self-activated educated ones with less corruptions.

The most obvious distinction of the backward societies in comparison with those of affluent and advanced and more civilized ones in more educated communities are the level of disorder, crime, restlessness and corruption which are motivated by often significant stimulation of the destitutions and illiteracies. The level of resolution and elimination of those discrepancies could be reduced only if the increase of the level of education, elevate to a degree that before any emotional sensation begun the neutralizes the logical capacities towards any defensive responses, the intellectual capacity will lead and direct and prevent the emotions. It is obviously understandable that emotion is the natural defense mechanism and that natural reaction is inseparable part of human being.

## MOTIVATION

To provide with an incentive; move to action; impel, to urge to action through moral pressure; drive. We are talking about the elements of subsistence and mobility; we are talking about stepping toward rewards or avoiding the punishment. And we are talking about living. What the whole concept of education refers to alertness and being conscious of what surrounded us and what we know about them and who can we possibly manage to control and manipulate it rather than being consumed by its powerful damages.

Our biggest handicap as a nation is the lack of vision and alternatives, and our absolute ignorance of who we were, what we had and what we have now. When we settle for least fearfully because we do not know more about our scope of our values and capacities and remain in the same position or stick to the same live-style without opening our eyes to discover new horizons and ourselves. We have to tear apart the shell that they created for us. How? By gaining, and gaining, and gaining knowledge, by development of our sensitivities through our artistic means.

The developments of human sensitivities through the artistic channels is a proven educational fact. Yet we as Iranians being the lovers of our glorious poetries and proud of our literary and cultural heritage are not benefiting in the stand point of educational values from our arts to improve our taste, our aesthetic awareness from our rich aesthetic creations as a channel toward increasing our sensitivities. The reason for this is not that we do not appreciate our magnificent carpets, we buy and sell and use them every day, our beautiful metal works, our genuine and non-commercialized miniature masterpieces, or significantly crafted artifacts. It is the way we use them and configure them as part of our existence. These objects are not only for beautification of our homes, they are the channels of our learning let us use them as such.

## PERSEVERANCE, WILL POWER TO DRIVE US TOWARD A CLEAR GOAL?

Perseverance is steady persistence in adhering to a course of action, belief or purpose steadfastness. Will power is the strength of will to carry out one's decisions, wishes, or plans. Drive, to push, propel, or press onward forcibly; urge forward, to repulse forcefully; put to flight, to guide, control, to compel or force to work, often excessively, to force into or from a particular act or state, to carry through vigorously to a conclusion. These are the elements

that should be undoubtedly inseparable constructive parts of our personality that could be instrumentally significant in our quest for enhancement to an educated level. In these instrumental vehicles that are fundamental parts of success in some people, or are a kind of innate availability but in most of the people should be embedded through a long and conscious relearning and achieved in order to avail certain appropriate qualities in the person.

Now could these instruments of reorientation be applicable to an ordinary individual who is not even aware of the most elementary values in his life? It is questionable that he or she without assistance of the so called committed intelligentsia who is willing for sacrifices could be ready for any further advancement.

We need an enlighten movement which fortunately has been born but slowly mature and we the indifferent members of our awakened intelligentsia should participate more committed to assess those who are or being pushed into a dormant state of mind.

When I am talking about Perseverance, will power that can drive us toward a clear goal and absolute rejection of any negativity I am talking about two crucial elements that analytically the lack of the first part is the major obstacle in denouncing any positivist and forceful motivations that could forward our thousand of intellectuals toward the participation in the social involvements and for some irrelevant excuses they shy away from our national and political problems. I am addressing the most pessimistic and inactive and indifferent segment of our intelligentsia who sees the world only within a small limited world and personal success in his or her self segregated environment, while our daughters and sons are devastated by suppression and corruption of zealous pretenders of religious faith and theocracy.

Within the tremendous numbers of Iranian Diaspora scattered all over the world we witnessed the most severe struggles in the personal levels particularly within the post-Islamic revolution toward achievements in varieties of social, economical, political, scientific, and artistic levels. It is obvious that for immigrated people being somehow forced out of their home-land is extremely painful particularly the first generations to readjust themselves to entirely different cultural setups different from that of their own, but those psychologically strong managed to deviate from the negativities that could bring them to devastation, instead step by steps not only they found their way out of negative impact of migration, but also rise gloriously to higher and successful places that we are now proud of their achievements.

The impact of negativity is the most apparent in the created environment of destitutions, drug addiction, prostitution and unemployment, we should not consider our fortunate selves alien to them undoubtedly they are part of our existence as a nation which strongly penetrated and damaged the psychological structures of our people.

How can we eliminate, or reduce this huge corrupted, well-guarded environment of slavery? It is difficult to fix some thing that have been shuddered and disoriented in a long time process. Again the people with such devastated psychological and desperate living condition that their only motivation is instinctual drives and their motivation hardly could go beyond that should be helped by those who are in a position to positively devote themselves to awaken and stimulate them from this stagnation not directly to them in the level of charity but creating the facilities for them to pull themselves out of the misery trough a more awareness. And in the direction of their enlightenment and betterment of their lives should come to a commitment not only pretension and lip services.

**THE NEGATIVITY**

The negativity, is the force that practically denounces all the potentials and qualities that are the drive and willpower of human toward creativities, enhancements, and finally achievements.

When we talk about the negation our reference is the human rejection of logical discourses deliberately in all kinds of circumstances, particularly denial of the facts which are the most destructive attitude as egocentric viewing the realities of hard and proven facts to persistent levels. We can not call that ignorance, because those who are intelligent to be manipulative to the extend of using the denials as an instrument to their advantages are capable of being rational, if really they chose to be, but they will never ever will deviate from the only instruments that keep them in power.

The elements that create the environment politically, religiously, traditionally, and socially based on the policy of denial always promote corruption to its highest degrees, because action and execution of human social activities and commitments turn into lip-services, which does not implied to any thing which is truly materialized. The continuation and spread of such social behaviors eventually leads to distrust, discouragements, disorientation, fixations and psychological phobias and fears in social relations.

In the environments of destitutions whether created deliberately or the consequences of economical miss managements, the negativity becomes the most powerful preventing force to takes away the willpower and self steams of the people. Because people will witness that practically honesty does not get them anywhere and consequently become corrupted and when corruption reward them and result in a better living conditions individually, then corruption become a common accepted social practice. It is obvious that in the environment of destitution the instinctual forces of subsistence and survival does not allow the intellectual faculties of the destitute people function logically and for the sake of survival any individual uses only his instinctual drives and departs gradually from his capacities of logical discourses. The increase of level of crimes will be an inseparable part of living conditions.

We now face a social true dualism, in one side the process of practical but concealed indoctrination, which as a mechanism of so called social controls, political, and most strongly intense religious indoctrination and brainwashing will not only eliminate and reform the destitution and improvement of people living conditions, but also maintaining it. The reason is the more the level of social conformity expands the more stability and security the dominant social, political, and religious power will have and the longer they remain securely in power.

The other part of our social dualism which is my main hypotheses and was sufficiently described before is the educational and intellectual capabilities of the people to be self activated and not being manipulated in every aspects of their lives. The individuals that are self guided by their own appropriate and intelligent assessments, their own judgments, and their own conscious decisions with the vision not only in their own private life but in their vast and holistic view for their own society, their own world and eventually their own future generation. This should be the agenda for all of us particularly those of us who claim of being the forces of our nation's intelligentsia. Let be a doer rather than pretender and talker. Heaven blesses all of us in this possible task toward a desirable goal.

*Check Out  
Being Iranian*

**Compiled by: Prof. M.S. Tajar**  
University of the Philippines

16. According to Professor Griffith Taylor of Australia, the homo sapiens were originated from the Iranian Plateau, also known as the Land of Mahd(the Medes?) and scattered throughout the world some 17,000 years ago (15,000 B.C.)Gardeshgari, Iran, Jan. 2001. No wonder, the famous Orientalist, Professor Arthur Pope said: "Western world has a vast unpaid debt to the Persian civilization!" Also Hegel, the great German Philosopher, wrote: The beginning of evolution of man starts with the history of Persia (Hegel, Philosophy of History p.174).
17. Some paintings in Lorestan caves in Persia, that show a horse-riding man, are 17,000 years old! (15,000 B.C.) (Gardeshgari, Iran, Jan. 2001).
18. The original homeland of the Chaldeans was Susa, Iran. The word Chaldean comes from Khalad, which comes from Kurd (Kurdish) who were originally Tajiks (Gardeshgari, Iran, Sep. 2000).
19. According to the Encyclopedia Britanica, "It may well be proved eventually that the human race evolved in Central Asia or Iran" (Gardeshgari, Iran, Sep. 2000).
20. According to the Indian Professor, Mereji Baba Kolka: A group of Iranian migrants were settled along the Nile River and founded the Egyptian civilization, thousands of years ago! (Gardeshgari, Iran, March 2000).
21. Sumerians were originally Iranians from Kurdistan. So were the Chaldeans, Babylonians, Assyrians, Achadians; All of them spoke Chaldean, as their original language.
22. According to Professor Filder Petry : The civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia are actually branches of the older Culture of Eilam (Persia), which dates back to 6-10 thousand years ago! (Gardeshgari, Iran, March 2000).
23. The Turkish People are a result of the mixture of the early Iranians, and the Chinese; Semites and Egyptians, Palestinians and Arabs, are the mixtures of Iranians and Africans; while the Indians are a mixture of Iranians (Brahman) and the native blacks of India, Dravidians. (Gardeshgari, March 2000 p. 47).
24. The history of first people of Persia goes back some 30,000 years ago (28,000 B.C.) Gardeshgari, Iran, March 2000).
25. The oldest rock relief in the world is the Bistoon rock in Persia some 2,500 years old.
26. The most mammoth ziggurat was constructed in Persia, near the historic city of Susa, thousands of years ago.
27. The biggest thatch construction also took place in Kerman, Persia, some 2,000 years ago.

*to be continued*

**RESPONSE TO  
MR. GHAFERI'S ARTICLE TITLED:  
HERE WE GO AGAIN**

**Part Two**

**Written and edited by:  
Mahvash Amir-Mokri**

In his research book, pages 209-224, *Sahrvin* recorded the names of a number of knowledgeable people who graduated from the *Gondishapour University* whose names survived, mainly because they survived through the Invasion and served after Islam, yet they were a fraction of all the graduates. Their area of knowledge ranged from mathematics, astronomy, and geometry to medicine and pharmacology and finally literature, philosophy and logic. The graduates had different faiths that show the open-mindedness of Iranians at the time.

Iranians contribution in art, science, literature, and architecture were outstanding in the Islamic world. Here are only a few examples:

"Until the last year of Umayyad rule, there was no prose which deserves to be called literary. About that time *Marvan II's* secretary, *Abd al-Hamid [Abdol Hamid] (132/750)*, a *mawla* [slave] of Persian origin, wrote an epistle on the secretary's art, the form of which, with its abundance of synonyms, the balanced structure of its sentences and its clarity of expression, shows how the language had developed, and how at all events in epistolography, it was tending towards artificiality. About the same time *Ibn al-Muqaffa' [Roozbeh] (d. 149/759)*, a *Zoroastrian* who had embraced, though not sincerely, the Islamic faith, made an admirable translation from *Pahlavi*, adapted to the needs of the Islamic world, of a collection of fables originally written in Sanskrit and entitled, in the Arabic translation *Kalila wa Dimna [Kelilae va Demneh]*, from the names of two jackals who play leading roles. Thanks to this work [that] *ibn al-Muqaffa'* was often called the creator of Arabic Prose" (*Vaglieri 99*).

"When *Muhammad* [His holiness *Mohammad*] built his house in *Medina* he provided it with a spacious courtyard, to be used for domestic purposes and for meetings of his followers. He planted two tree-trunks in the manner of columns close to one of the perimeter walls, to show worshippers the direction towards which they should turn their faces during prayer; and on one side he built a low shelter for the poorest emigrants" (*Vaglieri 99*).

"The mosque at *kufa* consisted of a spacious square court and a prayer hall; it would seem, by five rows of columns which had been brought from *Hira*. It was unpaved and had neither minaret nor pulpit (*minbar*), not even a *mihrab* (direction of prayer). Was the design of the prayer-hall inspired by the shelter which *Mohammad* built in his courtyard? This is quite possible, though there would also be a natural desire on the part of those present at meetings to be shaded from the scorching rays of the sun. By the time *'Uthman* became caliph, the design of the mosques in *Mecca* and *Medina* had already been modified, the shelters built of palm-trunks and branches were replaced by arcades supported by columns; but these mosques were still primitive" (*Vaglieri 99*).

Mosques in Iran during the Islamic period were either built on the *Zoroastrian* temples such as *Jaumae* in *Esfahan* or their architecture were inspired by the *Zoroastrian* temples and the *Sassanian* architecture. This is the reason that they have their own characteristics entirely different from other mosques in other Islamic countries. They are the most magnificent in terms of architecture and unparallel ceramic tile-works and mirror inlays.

It seems that *Mr. Ghaferi* has not read the travel account of *Nasser-Khosroe Ghobadiani* but has nevertheless provided us with his judgment. For his information, I suggest he read the travel account translated by *Ronald Nicholson* and edited by *M. Ghani-zadeh*. "In 437 A.H., *Nasser-Khosroe* began his journey through Iran from *Sarakhs* and after several months with a caravan which is naturally slow moving, reached *Khoy*. His stay in *Khoy* was not long and soon headed to cross the border and arrived to *Van* in Turkey. His entire journey from *Sarakhs* to *Van* is written in four pages and the rest of his book is about his Hajj and long stay in *Cairo* where he became an *Esmaeli* missionary. After seven years in 444 A.H., he returned to *Marvaz* and wrote his travel account."

About Dr. *Yelda*, I have no problem believing him as I have read the entire book and I know that he had read enough books about the places he traveled and he had acquired enough knowledge about the points of interest in each city. With modern facilities and having enough knowledge about the places he had planned to visit, what he has written is quite possible.

About imported, strict one dimensional, I refer him to at least three books, **Two Centuries of Silence (Doe Gharn Sokoot)**, by *Zarrinkoub*, two books by *Shojaedin Shafa*, **After Fourteen Hundred Years (Pas az Hezar-o-charsad Saul)**, in two volumes and **Tavalodi Digar, Iran-ae Kohan, dar Hezarhee Noe**. And, I am also interested to know why *Omar ibn alKhattab* was so unpopular and not liked in Iran. Just to see the difference between Iranians and other conquerors I would like to quote a few lines from *Cyrus* the *Great's* famous Yalinder, extracted from the book **Persia and the Bible** by *Edwin Yamauchi*:

"When I, well-disposed, entered *Babylon*, I set up the seat of dominion in the royal palace amidst jubilation and rejoicing. *Marduke* the great god caused the big-hearted inhabitants of *Babylon* to ... me. I sought daily to worship him. My numerous troops moved about undisturbed in the midst of *Babylon*. I did not allow any to terrorize the land of [*Sumer*] and *Akad*. I kept in view the needs of *Babylon* and all its sanctuaries to promote their wellbeing."

The cylinder also claims that *Cyrus* entered the city of *Babylon* "without fighting or battle." He showed his concern for the starving people and restored their "dilapidated dwellings." In another cuneiform text *Cyrus* declares that he was the restorer of the *Ezagila* and the *Ezida* [temples] (87-8).

About *Zoroastrianism* and *Monotheism*, I would like to quote *Eusebius*, the Greek historian who quoted *Philos Biblius* (80-130 A.D.) about *Zoroaster's* definition of God *Ahura-Mazda* that, "*He/She* is the first and eternal; was neither born of any parents nor will be a parent; *He/She* has no equal or likeness; is the creator of all goodness and *Himself/Herself* is the supreme goodness; *He/She* will never be enticed and is the most knowledgeable of all; is the parent of order and justice; *He/She* owns innate knowledge and is the founder of the sacred law of nature" (*Yasht-ha 1/39*). About the influence of *Zoroastrianism* in *Judaism*, I should refer *Mr. Ghaferi* to the history books about ancient



nations of the present Middle East and their religion. (see Persians and the Bible by *Yamauchi* p.458)

About non-Muslims in Muslim countries, I would like to know how the words *mawali* (*mawla*) and *dhimmis* came about. What about the exodus of Iranians to India twelve centuries ago and the mass exodus of all Iranian minorities after the Islamic revolution?

About temporary marriage, surprisingly enough, *Mr. Ghaferi* admits that the *Shi'a [Shieh]* sect does not necessarily practice Islamic law. However, I wonder why in the Arabic dictionary under the word "*mut'a & pl. muta'*" is written: "temporary marriage, usufruct marriage contracted for a specified time and exclusively for the purpose of sexual pleasure." We know that the majority of *Shi'a [Shieh]* live in Iran and the word used for this purpose is "*sigheh*," not "*mut'a*" which apparently is used in the Arab countries. Although, *Mr. Ghaferi* says that temporary marriage (*mut'a or movaghat*) is not Islamic, and has read the Holy Ghoran in its entirety, I think it is good for him to review verse 4:24, which the *Shi'a [Shieh]* clergy rely on for this particular affair. The verse reads, "Those who have not means to marry a prosperous woman, can marry female slaves whom they possess or with the permission of their owner, and after they become satisfied, they better pay them what they had in contract with them" (4:24).

About the Legal Code, that *Mr. Ghaferi* claims is as before the Islamic revolution – in this case why bother so much? Yes, he must be right, because, then, nobody wanted to leave the country but now many people if they could leave the country do not hesitate to do so, and the rest of the people are striving to get out as soon as they can. Then, women could become judges, and serve in the army if they should have chosen to do so and now that is impossible. Then, girls did not have to take only the back row seats of university classes or get on the bus from the back door and now they are forced to do so. Then, men and women could choose their own clothing according to the temperature, season, place and the occasion. Now, women are forced to be in a dark garb no matter where or when. Then, women could check in a hotel, but now they need a close male relative to do it for them.....Truly, it hasn't changed at all. How Nice!

About Polygamy: How wonderful that we want to compare ourselves after claiming so much to having extraordinary ideas of progress, with the Zoroastrians whose legacy has been destroyed and whose gentle lifestyle has been mocked. On the other hand how wonderful it is that one husband possesses four wives. This is truly the essence of equality, of social justice and civil rights among men and women of a society, let alone that in this case women are not considered human with a soul or feelings. On this subject, *Mr. Ghaferi* recommends an article by *Dr. Stein*. I was wondering why he did not recommend the original article written by *Mary Wollstonecraft* which was absolutely the opposite of what *Dr. Stein* had understood. To check the accuracy of his understanding, it would be better to refer to the verse that he had translated.

About Stoning – I think the action speaks for itself. In recent years, we did not see any incident of stoning among various Jewish communities, but have seen many documentaries or live broadcasts on television in many Islamic countries from the Arabian Peninsula to the Sudan, Afghanistan, and Iran during the Islamic Revolution. However, I think that *Mr. Ghaferi* missed the point completely. First of all, how did they prove that the parties were guilty and deserve such an atrocious punishment?

Secondly, were all the stone throwers surrounding the poor accused so pure? Thirdly, is the punishment proportional to the sin? Fourthly, temporary marriage, is it not adultery?

About *Allah* and compassion – this depends on the person's judgment about what they see and what they read. However, for *Mr. Ghaferi*, it would be a good idea to read the Ghoran over and over, because it is not a book to be read it only once, and if he does not have time to read some chapters such as 3, 5, 8, 9,10, 11,13, at least he may read the following verses: 3:54 & 6:33, 36, 37, 38, 41, 71, 73 & 8:3,4, 30 & 9:101 & 11:13, 14, 21, 52, 54, 102.

About women – it seems that *Mr. Ghaferi* is either fascinated by the fake and ridiculous article of *Dr. Stein* or has not read any other material on this subject. Maybe it is better to read the original verses of the *Ghoran* such as, 2: 228, 223, 282 & 4: 11, 15, 19, 30, 33, 34, instead of *Dr. Stein's* distorted article.

Generally, all books which become guidance for followers or society have to set a model through stories or mandates. Part of *Avesta*, which consists of *Yasht-ha* or worship and prayer, prays to the spirit of famous characters such as kings along with *Zoroaster* and his wife. *Zoroaster* married one woman. In life, he maintained equality in practice and after life; he and his wife are equally remembered.

About Dress – again I think that *Mr. Ghaferi* has missed the point. It is not what style outfit one chooses to wear. It is that every person should have the right to choose what he or she wears without any person, institution or administration taking the liberty to interfere with that decision.

About the Queens Sovereigns of the *Sassanian Dynasty* – of course it is very advanced and important, because there is not any other nation to have not only one but two queens sovereigns in the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D. *Elizabeth I* became queen sovereign in England, nine centuries after the first time after Iran had queens' sovereigns. No matter how long they each ruled and they were not able to turn the table to the advantage of the troubled country in turmoil, but it was indicative of progressive thought and rich culture which stems from the teaching in society.

About Politics and Religion – certainly the ancestors of the founder of the *Sassanian Dynasty* were the guardians of the *Anahita* temple, and there is nothing wrong about it. They founded a dynasty which lasted for more than four centuries, they liked Iran, and brought prosperity and progress to the country.

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Certainly I do not see myself in a position to advise *Mr. Ghaferi* what to read or not to read but I can generally say that if anybody claims that he has read a book, he had better read it carefully and think about it. Also, I found it quite arrogant on the part of the person who has not read the book to write a criticism of it quite apart from distorting.

Of the books that *Mr. Ghaferi* suggested I read, I should admit that some of them I have read but did not find them truthful or interesting in comparison with other sources.

\*\*\*

The transliterations in this text are tried to be closer to the Persian pronunciation rather than Arabic except a few established names.

#### Concerning the criticism of the book **Reading Lolita in Tehran**

I would like to congratulate Ms. Azar Aryanpour on her excellent criticism of the book, **Reading Lolita in Tehran**.

# Mikhake Noghrehei



فرشید

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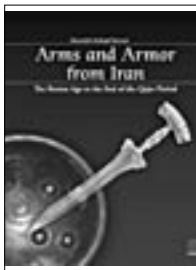
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**BOOK REVIEWS**

**ARMS AND ARMOR FROM IRAN**  
**Manouchehr Moshtagh Khorsani**  
 (Legat 2006)

There are “coffee table” books and then there are “coffee table” masterpieces. The second best describes author Manouchehr Moshtagh Khorsani’s book *Arms and Armor from Iran*. It is a collector’s piece for the Iranian library, home or institution and reflects years of love from print to photo. The book describes and analyzes the development of weapons used during the course of Iran’s history. Most are accompanied with a clear and modern photo of the piece. It also goes beyond the scope of tangent weapons and explains the martial arts influence in Iran, passed and present.



No historical analysis of military weapons can be complete without an in depth look into the weapons and military technology of early Iran. It has clearly influenced the development of more modern weapons.

While reading the book it may appear to be a daunting task, in reality it is not. The author delivers his information in story form, hence making each chapter very interesting. It is as if you are on a tour of a museum.

The book is written in an understandable manner which makes it recommended.

**2020 VISION**  
**Hossein Eslambolchi, Ph.D.**  
 (Silicon Press 2006)

Don’t be afraid! This book, which deals with the future of technology and its impact on the world is easily understandable for the average computer and technological geared individual. Though the author has held a variety of high positions in the techno field. His writing is concise and clear. He speaks to the public on business and technology sharing his viewpoints on the pros and cons of its future and its impact on the world. It is truly a necessary read for all generations who intend to survive the technical speed chase.



**THE IRAN THREAT**  
**Alireza Jafarzadeh**

(Palgrave MacMillan, 2007)

It is a who done it and will we ever know the truth about Iran’s Nuclear program type of book? Today there are so many versions of what the program details, that it is hard to take a side on whose version is truthful. In this book, the author attempts to expose the veracity of the nuclear program and the repercussions it will have on Iran and the world. His conclusions are based on an intricate study of President Ahmadinejad’s past history and his journey to the top.



While the book is enlightening and is true to its intricate research, the reader will still not be able to draw any concrete

conclusion on the present progress of the nuclear program in Iran.

**JASMINE AND THE STARS:**  
**READING MORE THAN LOLITA IN TEHRAN**  
**Fatemeh Keshavarz**

(The University of North Carolina Press, 2007)

I am disappointed with myself that this book was not reviewed more timely. Having said that, however, when the book was first published its message might have been lost due to an overflow articles and books exposing Iran and its present population. Consequently, now may be the proper time to review and give it proper justice!



In this country instead of seeing the glass half full regarding the Middle East and most recently Iran, we seem to embrace any book or article that legitimizes the negatives we have been taught. This is destructive, fuels military intervention and divides rather than informs.

In this book the author begins with a brief story, that was often used by Moulana who related the story in the *Masnavi*. The story was about an elephant that was brought into a village late at night. There was no available light where the beast was housed. Rather than wait until morning or bring a candle to see the crowds, filled with curiosity insisted to immediately satisfy their curiosity.

Of course, not seeing the elephant, when asked to describe it there were many different answers. Yet, had they waited to see the beast in the light most differences would diminish. Like wise in Iran it seems that we are making determinations without personal observation and find such observations as a source of truth rather than a source of investigation.

You will find a very different and interesting approach by this author and one to provide you with a more direct, frank and intimate exploration of Iranian literature and society. The author bravely and openly challenges the more popular perceptions of Iranian society. She wants the world to see that Iran’s population does not lack the vitality and joy as typically depicted.

She tells her side of the matter through two modern day women who represent an entirely different perspective on the subject, and portrays society as it is, complex with a deep sense of culture. Like *Lolita*, she interjects her own life experiences, which the reader should digest and compare to other perceptions.

You will walk away from this book with a new impression of Iran and its people. It is not much different from American society, there are those who have and those who have not, and a constant struggle to justify the discrepancy. This book does not force the author views on the reader She instead softly delivers information in a manner that is understandable and easy to digest.

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A couple of days later I flew to Isfahan, with my Iranian friend, again accompanying me as an interpreter. Isfahan, as the 1966, Hachette Guide proclaims with unwanted effusion, is “one of the most marvellous places in the world.” The city lies on a plateau watered by a large oasis and a lovely stream. Shah Abbas I – the greatest Persian emperor, not excepting Xerxes and the three Dariuses, – made it his capital at the end of the sixteenth century. At that time, it had a population of about half a million, and was among the largest cities in the world. I remembered from a previous visit, a decade ago, broad, tree-lined avenues; a magnificent central square, the Maydan-e-Shah: the extraordinary Bridge of Thirty-three Arches; and a general air of refined elegance. But even from the air, I could see burgeoning suburbs and smoke from factories – signs that change had come to Isfahan. A local official, who asked not to be mentioned by name, rapidly brought me up to date on developments in Isfahan. He said, “Five years ago, there were five hundred and sixty thousand people in Isfahan, and this was one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Then the Shah decided that there was too much administrative and economic concentration in Tehran, and that he needed to decentralize. So he put a steel mill here and an airbase, with a helicopter training center. Naturally, foreign companies followed suit. Bell Helicopter came in with the training base. Du Pont put a plant here. Now we have more than a million people. The doubling in five years of a population that had been stable for three hundred years has changed everything. This used to be an educational center, with a university, many religious schools, and lots of music. Now it is an industrial town. Over three hundred

## THE NEW YORKER

FROM THE ARCHIVE

## LETTER FROM IRAN

Part Two

BY JOSEPH KRAFT

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

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

thousand workers have come in from the countryside, most of them without their families. They live five or six to a room in the poorer quarter of town. They make good wages – a dollar seventy-five an hour – but they don't have their families, and they're miserable. Everybody else has been affected, too. The bazaar merchants used to be very important. Now the banks manage credit, and the engineers are the big shots in town.

“Students have grown up under the Shah, and they don't know what things were like before development started. All they know is that the Shah promised that Iran was going to be like France or Germany. That isn't happening. The huge surge in population means that services are spread too thin and are constantly breaking down. There aren't enough telephones. It's impossible to buy a car. The schools are jammed. Housing is scarce. During the past three years, there has been a recession, especially in building, and many laborers are out of work. So the students are in a mood to reject everything that has happened. They are turning back to the old days, and pursuing an idealized version of what things

were like then. They are pushing the mullahs to go back and re-create the wonderful past. The mullahs see a chance to regain their prestige and power. The students provide them with a power base for putting pressure on the government to give them the consideration and importance they have been seeking for years. So the mullahs go along. That's the dynamic of trouble in Isfahan.” I asked about the circumstances relating to the declaration of martial law in Isfahan back in August, a month before it was declared in the other major cities of the country. The local official said. “That's a perfect example. All through the spring and summer, after riots in Qum in January, and in Tabriz in late February, this town was seething with unrest. The workers were demanding better housing conditions, and more money to meet inflation. The bazaar merchants were bitching about the loss of their old status, about price controls, and competition from the big banks and supermarkets. The intellectuals were complaining about the lack of freedom. The students were telling the mullahs to do their stuff, and the mullahs were saying ‘right on.’ About the first of August,

a mixed group of workers and students occupied the home of the most prominent local religious leader, Ayatollah Khademi. The governor-general and the local Army commander went to Khademi and told him to get them off the premises. He tried, but he couldn't. On the contrary, the crowds got bigger and bigger. At one point, maybe twenty thousand people were camping there. When Khademi tried to cool them down, the students turned ugly. They took down the posters of the Shah and put up posters of Ayatollah Khomeini. On August 11th, the military decided to clear the place. Troops moved in, threw tear gas, and pushed the crowd out at bayonet point. The crowd then went on a rampage. It burned down a bank and a hotel and fifteen other buildings. It threw a bomb into a bus for Bell Helicopter employees. That's when martial law was declared. The bazaaris – the bazaar merchants – immediately went on strike and closed down their shops in protest. The madressah students stayed in their schools, but they demonstrated every day, always making more radical demands. On the night of August 21st, two high-school teachers, who had built up a large following of anti-government young people, were arrested and sent to Teheran. Next day, the kids hit the streets, and there has been trouble of one kind or another ever since.”

I asked for and was given the names of the teachers – who had been released after a month in custody. They had no telephones, so my Iranian friend and I picked one, Hassan Zehtab, and drove out to see him. He lives on the outskirts of town, in a neighborhood of narrow, twisting unpaved streets. The car could barely squeeze between the walls, and the puddles and mud in the road reminded me anew of the origins of the custom

of removing one's shoes before entering a mosque. Once we were in the neighborhood, we had no trouble finding the house; everybody we asked knew Hassan Zehtab, and where he lived.

Mr. Zehtab turned out to be a partly bald, moon-faced middle-aged man with a complexion slightly darker in tone than that of most Iranians. He was carefully dressed, in a suit, white shirt, tie, and sweater. I saw only two rooms of his home, and they were modest in size and bare of ornament. When we arrived, Zehtab was meeting in one of the rooms with about forty disciples. He agreed to see me, and we moved into the other room, with ten of his disciples coming along, tasked Zehtab to tell me a little about who he was and what he believed. He said, "I'm forty years old, and I have been a schoolteacher here in Isfahan ever since I graduated from the University of Teheran, fifteen years ago. In all this time, I haven't seen one truly free election or one instance of concern on the part of those in authority for the happiness of the people. I think the only way to bring about the happiness of the people is through an Islamic culture. We're given to understand that the ruling clique is talking about religion now, and putting on a turban and the white garments of holiness. But that is a mere pretense. Even a child can see through that. It is like the ceramic facing on the wall of a building. Everybody knows that beneath the facing there is a real wall, of a different material." I asked him if it was not true that under the Shah the country had taken large strides toward economic development over the past fifteen years. He replied, "I have to say with great sorrow that our economic growth is based on a windfall called oil. If we consider where we are,

and then where the progressive states like Japan are, we realize how little we have accomplished. When I think of Japan, I think of a verse:

Leila and I were fellow-travellers on the road of life; she reached her home, and I am still a vagabond."

I said that even if some countries had done better than Iran. Iran had done quite well.

He said, "What we see here is inflation-prices for food have gone way up. What we see is the depletion of our oil reserves. At the present rate, we have only twenty years to go. What we see is an agriculture worth zero. We buy vegetables from Israel, wheat from the United States, onions from Turkey, meat from Australia, oranges from six different countries. Our industry is just an assembly line for products made in other countries. We would be poor fools indeed if we were satisfied with that."

I asked him what would satisfy him. He said, "My ideal future is within the framework of Islamic law. That is the guarantee of happiness and a good future for society. On particular religious questions, I don't find it in my area of competence to make answers. I leave that to the highest religious authorities."

All during the interview, Zehtab, his disciples, my Iranian friend, and I were sitting cross-legged on the floor. I was extremely uncomfortable, and it must have been evident, for one of the disciples asked if I would like a piece of fruit. I said yes, and he took an apple out of a bowl in the middle of the floor. He began to peel it for me, but at the first stroke of the knife the blade separated from its handle. He held out the broken knife. "There you see it all," he said in disgust. "Our country owns twenty-five per cent of Krupp in Germany, but in Iran we can't even produce a

knife that cuts an apple."

Everybody laughed, and I began questioning the disciples. All of them were students or professional men between the ages of twenty and thirty, and had participated actively in many demonstrations against the Shah. They all supported Zehtab in his quest for an Islamic society. I expressed surprise that young men with professional training should be so drawn to a religion that seemed to a Westerner, at least-not exactly with it. I went around the room, asking the disciples, one by one, a single question: "What drew you toward Islam?" The first to answer was a mullah, in robes and turban, who had a degree in psychology from the University of Teheran. He said, "My love for Islam has grown because I have studied it and compared it with other religions." The others-four students, two employees of the National Iranian Oil Company, an accountant, an engineer, and a physicist-all gave nearly the same answer. Two of them said that they had compared Islam with the teachings of a nineteenth-century European social philosopher-that is, Marx, whose name has been taboo in Iran-and found it preferable. Another offered the generalization "Islam offers a solution to the complications of our life." As we drove away, I remarked to my Iranian friend that the similarity of the answers was disappointing. "You don't understand," he told me. "They all followed the lead of the mullah. It doesn't make for interesting answers, but it makes them happy."

I spent the night in Isfahan at the Shah Abbas Hotel. The clientele was entirely foreign - a sprinkling of Japanese, Indians, Americans and Europeans. Apart from the sight of a section of the hotel which had been damaged during the riots of August, and an armed guard in the gardens, there was

no sign of trouble.

Before dinner, I visited Wanda Hake, an American psychologist employed by the United States companies working in the Isfahan region. Mrs. Hake reported that most of the Americans in the area lived in a compound, largely removed from contact with the Iranians. They had the problems usually found in such communities. There was great boredom - especially among the children. Alcoholism was common among the women, and many of the children had drug problems. There was a good deal of contempt for the Iranians. "Because of their turbans, many Americans call them rag heads," Mrs. Hake said. "That's the nicest name they call them."

Mrs. Hake had some guests, and one of them was a bazaar merchant from an old Isfahan family. "I could cry about what has happened here," he told me. "It used to be a paradise of water and gardens and beautiful buildings. Now the town is full of strangers. There are the people from the villages. They live in shantytowns. There are ten thousand Americans. They drive up the price of everything - especially houses. A house that rented for five thousand rials per month five years ago now costs forty thousand rials per month. Many people are unhappy. One of my interests is a building project. My workers were Afghans - three hundred of them. The other day, the government sent the Afghans home. I know why: There was a crime wave, and they did a lot of the stealing. But nobody gave me any warning. Now what do I do?"

"Lots of the young men come to see me about their problems. They don't know how to deal with the young women sitting next to them in their classes. In the past, they had never seen any women, even mothers and sisters, who

were not wearing a veil. Now they see miniskirts and bare arms and bare legs. They say to me. 'What do they want, these women? What are they trying to do to me?'

"When I go to Teheran, I feel as though I were in Hell. Somebody could die right in front of you and nobody would do anything. Deep sadness comes over me when I see the uses to which we have put our oil wealth. So it is not surprising that there has been a political eruption. Five years ago Khomeini was nothing. Now he is held up as the equivalent of the Shah." At breakfast the next day, I met a professor of religion at the university who had been educated at Harvard and Oxford. His family are members of the Baha'i sect, and he is going back to Oxford, at least partly because of religious persecution. He said he would like to talk about the state of religion in Iran, but only on condition that I not mention his name. I agreed. He said. "As a student of religion, I read with great interest Toynbee's 'A Study of History.' I always wondered why he felt that the next stage of regeneration in the world would be religious. I felt that religion had been on the run all over the world for centuries. In some places, there have been adjustments, but they have been made only slowly and painfully. Christianity accommodated itself to Darwin, but it was hard even in a tolerant country like Britain. Islam has experienced a number of shocks and adjustments. There have been several efforts to update the religion. But, they have all failed. By and large, the clergy remains narrow, fanatical, and ignorant."

He went on. "The merchants of the bazaars worked hand and glove with the mullahs. They were the two most conservative elements in the cities. The bazaaris usually

rented land from the religious foundations, and made the foundations big gills. But both the bazaaris and the foundations have been outmoded by recent developments. When I left Iran to go abroad to school, in 1960, this was still a backward country. Only a few cities in the country had running water. There were only about ten thousand people who had been or were at universities. Most industry was handicrafts, and about eighty per cent of the people still lived in rural villages. In 1970, when I came back, it was a different country. All the young people—and that is over fifty per cent of the population — were going to school. There are a hundred thousand university graduates now and almost two hundred thousand people in universities. On a normal weekend, between one and two million people drive out of Teheran in their own cars.

The mullahs have been losing steadily through these developments. Their base was education. Now they have to contend against state schools and universities. They've lost the large landholdings they once had. Most of their endowments have been nationalized, and are controlled by the state. No one ever paid much attention to them until the present wave of troubles. The bazaaris have also lost great power. The banks and big companies have taken away their control over loans and credit. There are shops out in the streets—across from your hotel, for example—so people don't go to the bazaar as much. And for a while there was price inspection as part of a campaign against inflation. That hit the bazaaris very hard." After a pause, he continued. "People now don't remember what it was like in the old days. As late as 1955, I remember going with my father to a village in the countryside. The local khan

— the head man — did justice the religious way. He cut off hands for thievery, splitting people's tongues for tale bearing. There was a peasant in the village with a beautiful wife. The khan took her, and the peasant complained to my father. The khan went out riding with my father, and they encountered the peasant. The khan took his riding crop and beat the peasant senseless.

The oil boom ended all that and put it out of mind. But it also brought lots of trouble, mainly inflation. There are buses now, and vegetables, but most people can't afford them. Moreover, a lot of the money has been spent — I almost said wasted — on big projects and arms purchases that don't do ordinary people any immediate good. And it has to be said that on the cultural side the Western world has not done well in Iran. Students coming back from Europe and the United States present the cities there as meccas for drunks, whores, and illegitimate children. They depict a total breakdown of morale. So to the difficulties of local adjustment there is added a tarnishing of the classic model. The West is seen xenophobically, as something frightening, and the search for old values is intensified.

"It also has to be admitted that the Shah, in his enthusiasm to build the country, ignored the people in it. The masses were left out of his development program. The bazaaris were left out. The mullahs were left out. He thought he could bring them along through economic progress without any accompanying change in ways of thought. The heart of the difficulty, though, is the new group of university students. From fifty to seventy-five per cent of them come from poor homes. They are very disturbed when they sit next to a girl in class. They feel a sense of guilt, a fear of being pol-

luted — of secularization. All this takes the form of opposition to the regime as the bearer of Western values. The sexual drive pushes the students in the direction of religion, and the mullahs latch on to them to maintain their position of importance."

Back in Teheran, I found mounting turbulence and confusion. A wave of strikes that had started in September with employees of the central bank had spread to other banks, to the telecommunications industry, and to the oil workers. One day, there was a rumor that the gas-station workers would go on strike. I saw hundreds of cars lined up at several gas stations. Angry motorists jockeyed for position, and in one place troops had to fire into the air to maintain order. The university had been scheduled to reopen at the end of September, and then at the end of October. Each time, registration had been stopped by student strikes and demonstrations. After the second effort, the authorities gave up, and turned the campus, in downtown Teheran, over to the demonstrators. There were daily protests, and one morning I went to watch, with a visiting American professor who spoke Persian. Armed soldiers in tanks and armored personnel carriers patrolled the gates, but we were allowed in without any demand to show our credentials.

There were two groups of demonstrators, marching back and forth. One group — of about seventy-five students, almost all men — was clearly Marxist in its political sentiments. The students carried placards denouncing international imperialism, and chanted slogans calling for the unity of the workers. The other group, obviously Islamic in orientation, bore pictures of Ayatollah Khomeini and carried signs calling for an Islamic republic. There were several hundred students

in the Islamic group, including many women. All the women were veiled. Some wore the chador, a garment that envelops the body from head to foot, while others wore blue-jeans, blouses, and scarves that veiled their heads and faces. A few times, word went through the crowd that soldiers were coming. The ranks broke and everybody rushed for cover. But that day, at least, no soldiers came.

The professors, having no classes, were available and talkative. By far the most interesting was Karim Pakravan, an economist trained at the University of Chicago, whose father, a former Iranian general, had at one time been head of the security-police apparatus, known as Savak, and was now working at the Imperial Palace in a high administrative position. He came to visit me at my hotel room, and talked freely of his own situation and that of his colleagues.

“Young professional people want to escape the establishment,” he said. “The establishment is everybody who has real power. In one way or another, either morally or financially, it is corrupt. We are not brave enough to join the opposition, but by being at the university we maintain a passive opposition. Our case against the government is lack of freedom. All creativity has been crushed. I teach a course in economics. I’m not allowed to say that there’s malnutrition or poverty, or that we’re underdeveloped. A doctor friend of mine went to the countryside to look at health problems. He found all the diseases typical of underdeveloped countries – trachoma, dysentery, that kind of thing. He didn’t find cancer and hypertension – the diseases that go with modern society. So he was never allowed to make a report.

*to be continued*

## Tehran’s Famous Flower Market

By Syma Sayyah, Tehran

One of my all time favorite films is *My Fair Lady* and my favorite scene is the flower market in the early morning hours. So a few days ago, we booked a taxi for about 5 a.m. I decided to make my long term wish come true and go to see one the two famous Tehran flower markets.

Flowers are a part of daily life in Iran, especially in Tehran. There are a huge number of flower shops, big and small. I love flowers and love to have them around the house. Yet, I have always been averse to buying them for myself as they are rather dear and to me seem an unnecessary extra, except for special occasions. Even at that early hour and despite the fact that our driver, Mr. Amir-Taher knew his way around well, and drove quite fast - he had once been a racing driver - it took us over an hour to get there. The fact that he knew where to go was a condition when I booked the taxi.

We drove down Modarres, east into Sadr, then down around Lavizan Park and then east again and then got to the South Terminal and Afsariyeh expressway, passed Basiji Square, towards Mashhad Road (Imam Reza Highway) and just after Tambakouyeh we arrived at what is known as the Imam Reza Flower market. Here you feel as if you can almost touch Bibi-Shahbanou mountain which seems so close but because of pollution we hardly see the north of Tehran.

I do not know what I expected, but I assure you it is a jolly pleasurable experience and I bet that you cannot come home empty-handed no matter how much you resist. If you

need a lot of flowers for any special occasion it is definitely worth one’s while to go there. We simply filled up the trunk of the car, and spent only around 22000 Tumans (\$23).

At the flower market, I talked to several worked. Many of the businessmen who have a stand have their own flower gardens near Tehran, in Garmsar, Varamin or as far away as Isfahan and Mahalat. The market is open from 4 a.m. until 10 a.m. but many of the big buyers had already left by the time we arrived at 6:30.

Many errand boys carry the purchased flowers to the cars of the flower shop owners. It is a predominately a male business. I think besides myself I only saw two other women.

I found the people who work there mostly positive, camera friendly and active. Many of them were reading newspapers that they would later use to wrap the flowers. The market seemed quite active, although not terribly tidy and clean. There were several large open sheds where the flowers were put on display, wrapped and ready for the customers to choose.

There were so many gerberas, tulips, roses, carnations, lilies, irises, gardenia and camellias as well as others. I was touched by seeing all these lovely flowers of all colors and so many choices. We bought so many that for the first time in my life I had enough flowers to fill all my flower vases. It was so great and gave me such a pleasure and feeling of love and peace.

*(taken from payvand.com, 6/18/2007)*



## to the memory of OSTAD HAJ HOSSEIN FARAJIAN

BY: MANOUCHEHR MOSHTAGH KHORASANI  
Taken from *Persian Mirror*, April 6, 2007

It was couple of years ago when I last met Mr. Haj Hossein Farajian in his shop in Zanjan. I still remember that it was a hot afternoon. The sun was shining, and we drove all the way through the highway between Tehran and Zanjan. I can still remember all those hills, the landscape, the dust, and the nature of my country, passing by. The journey reminded me of my childhood. I turned and looked at my father, who was happily driving the car. He has been always a major help and support for all my research. I remembered those days back in my childhood when my sister and I were sitting on the backseat of the car, impatiently asking for the arrival time, and my father kept telling us the stories of bears that had different colors, not only black and brown but also blue, orange, and all those fanciful colors! And, we used to believe those stories and tried to use our imagination to have a clear picture of those bears in our minds. Then, I was back again in my country as an adult, looking at my father happily driving.

I can still remember the very moment when we arrived in Zanjan and headed for the shop of Ostad Haj Hossein Farajian. When we stopped the car, Mr. Mohammad Reza Farajian, his son, ran towards us, shook our hands, and welcomed us to their shop. How friendly and hospitable, I thought. We entered the shop and saw Haj Hossein Farajian, who welcomed us with a big smile. He had an aura of a very wise man. I was mesmerized to see the pieces of art he had made that happened to be swords and daggers. An award from the Cultural Heritage of Iran was hanging on the wall, entitled *Dasthaye Mehrabani Ke Chaguhaye Tiz Misazand* (The kind hands that make sharp knives). And, I immediately understood what the statement meant as I wondered how such a gentle and nice man could pound steel. During the following days, we had very interesting discussions. He explained his philosophy, his

love for the Achaemenien Empire, and his true dedication and love for his native country Iran. He was born in Zanjan as all his ancestors and followed the tradition of sword making. He also told me how much he adored Molana and how much he loved the poems of Saadi and Hafez. I could still remember the countless hours where we sat in front of his forge, staring at the fire there, and marveled at the beauty of the fire and its different colors. I can still remember his hands that always had traces of the color of steel.

For years, I had a dream to have a reconstruction of a royal akenakes (the Achaemenian short sword). There are different types of akenakes. Some of them that were given as royal presents by the king to his satraps and high military commanders were made of pure gold (see Moshtagh Khorasani, 2006:406-407, plate 49). The majority of them had blades made of iron (see Moshtagh Khorasani, 2006:408, plate 50). However, there are still examples that were cast from bronze (one of these examples is kept in the Museum of Cultural Institute of *Bonyad*). I designed the whole akenakes on a piece of paper and based it on the prototypes made of gold. Then, I copied the royal inscriptions of King Xerxes in Persepolis and glued the sentences on the paper model. I knew that the only artisan who could fulfill such a complicated project was Ostad Haj Hossein Farajian. I still remember the day when I showed him the design on paper. He smiled and said that he always respected King Xerxes a lot, and he was a figure who had been always misrepresented. I thought how intelligent Ostad Farajian was as the distinguished professor Wiesehöfer stressed that point clearly in his book *Das antike Persien*.

The making of the blade was a hard process. The blade needed to be fuller, and the casting had become a difficult process. However, Ostad Farajian cast the blade of



the akenakes from bronze; the final result was a breathtaking beauty. He, then, filed the corners to give it smooth lines and chiseled the royal inscriptions of King Xerxes in Persepolis on both sides of the blade. The chiseling was a painstaking process, and it was very difficult as the inscriptions needed to be written in cuneiform. The final result was a breathtaking beauty. The inscriptions in Old Persian in Cuneiform read:

[1-6] A great god is *Ahuramazda*, who created this earth, who created heaven, who created man, who created happiness for man, who made Xerxes king, one king of many kings, commander of many commanders.

[6-11] I am Xerxes, the great king, the king of kings, the king of all countries and many men, the king in this great earth far and wide, the son of Darius, an Achaemenian.

[11-17] King Xerxes says: by the favor of *Ahuramazda* this Gate of All Nations I built. Much else that is beautiful was built in this Persepolis (*Pârsâ*), which I built and my father built. Whatever has been built and seems beautiful - all that we built by the favor of *Ahuramazda*.

[17-20] King Xerxes says: may *Ahuramazda* preserve me, my kingdom, what has been built by me, and what has been built by my father. That, indeed, may *Ahuramazda* preserve.

In the next step, Haj Hossein Farajian made the handle scales of buffalo horn and





filed them into the shapes of two lion heads. That was also a very difficult process. The eyes were made of bronze, and the teeth were made of horse bone. The scabbard was made of maple wood. The scabbard mouth and the scabbard chape were made of brass. Then, Ostad Haj Hossein Farajian chiseled the scabbard mouth and the chape with images from Persepolis and Apadana. The surface of the wooden parts between the scabbard mouth and chape parts were carved in and later filled in with figures of ibexes that were made of a light-colored wood. These figures were also based on Persepolis prototypes. The end result is a sword with a mesmerizing beauty.

Unfortunately, I was so busy giving lectures and interviews during my last visit to Iran and, therefore, could not go to see Ostad Haj Hossein Farajian. After the conference Acquaintance with Nanotechnology during Safavid Period, many students of the University of Cultural Heritage came to me and kindly offered their help for my further research. One of them was Ms. Shadi Taherkhani, a student of Ms. Etezadi, who kindly offered to interview and take pictures of new pieces of Ostad Haj Hossein Farajian. When I came back to Germany, I received an e-mail from Ms. Taherkhani, informing me of Mr. Farajian had passed away.

*“Thanks for contacting me. I do not know whether you have been informed about the sad*

*news as it really made me sad. Yesterday on Sunday when I went to see Mr. Farajian, I saw an announcement informing that he has passed away on Saturday 26 of Esfand [17 March 2007]. I am extremely sorry to inform you about this. The destiny did not want me to meet Ostad Haj Hossein Farajian. I am really sorry. The funeral service will be held in the Masjed Chaguzazan (Mosque of Knifemakers). I hope you are OK and will pursue your precious work. I am not sure whether I can take pictures at this moment. If you need anything else, let me know please.*

*Kind regards,  
Shadi Taherkhani”*

First, I felt so bad for Ms. Taherkhani, who took all her camera equipment to take pictures for my new articles because I could not visit Ostad Haj Hossein Farajian during my last trip. I felt very bad for her as I could imagine and feel the shock she must have gone through, standing in front of the shop of Ostad Farajian, seeing the announcement of his death. I still remember that I felt my hands were getting colder and colder, and I could not believe that our country had lost such an important cultural asset. I could not believe that I could not see the nice and gentle smile

of Ostad Haj Hossein Farajian anymore. I knew that I was not going to sit in front of his forge and watch the games of fire when he told me the stories about ancient Iranians, ancient cities, and all those proud warriors who had defended the national integrity of Iran. I knew that I was not going to hear how he pounded steel to shape anymore. I knew that I could not see him shaping silver threads into filigree anymore. I was aware that I could not listen to his stories about *javanmardi*, about love, about friendship, and about values anymore. I still remember that I had a sore throat. I felt as if someone was strangling me. I thought how brutal it was when someone died during *Noeruz* time. Then, I remembered what Ostad Farajian had told me once. He said that life was like climbing up a ladder, and we climb it up, going one rung after the other, only to meet God (*Pelle pelle ta molaghat ba Khoda*). And climbing up the last rung can happen any time. I looked up at the big picture of the *akenakes* he made, which was hanging on the wall, and I could swear that the blade was shining very bright, much brighter than it used to. It looked as if the spirit of Ostad Haj Hossein Farajian was transferred into it.

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

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

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

### **Paying For Home Care**

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

#### **Consider group coverage.**

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

#### **Buy it when you're young.**

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

#### **Buy only what your parent needs.**

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

#### **Long-term care rider.**

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

### **Insurance Considerations**

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

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

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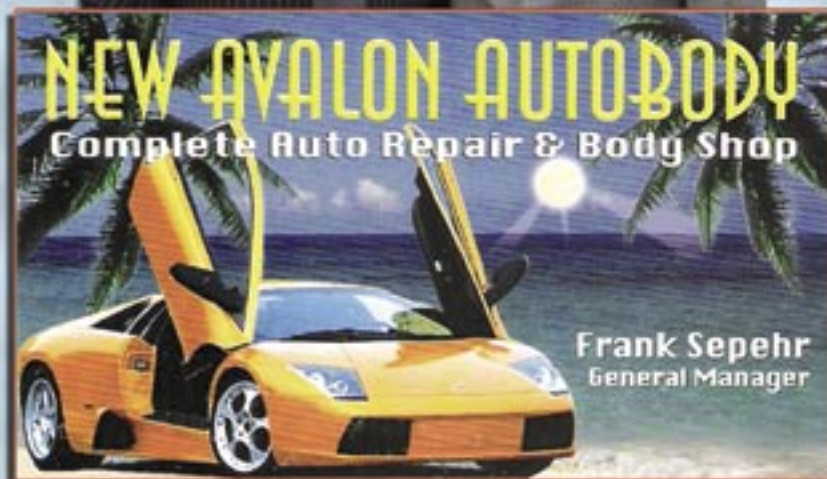
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I Fariborz Sepehrnia have been studying theology and comparative religions in the past twenty five years I have studied the Old, New and the final testaments in farsi, English and Arabic, I am well aquiented with the Torah, Gospel and the Guran, I have served in the board of directors of the Islamic center of south bay L.A.. I am involved with the Interfaith Alliance one nation Many Faith. On the last day of the Holy Month of Ramadan, 2006 I had the pleasure of meeting with Sheriff Lee Baca of the Los Angeles county Sheriff Department in West L.A at the Emon Cultural Center, the purpose of this meeting was an enter faith activity between Muslims, Christians, and Jews, Sheriff Lee Baca emphasized on some very important issues facing all of us in the faith community, such as united we stand, divided we fall, he said that interfaith activity has never been more important than now, we all should participate in our local interfaith communities with churches, Senegal's, and mosques. We all need to educate ourselves about each other, the bottom line is once we know much about each other we see that we all have more in common than what we all think, we should emphasis on our commonalities rather than our differences he said.

I Fariborz Sepehrnia have been an interfaith activist in my community since October 2001, I have had the pleasure of going to may Churches and Senegal's to deliver speeches to the youth with respect the the Great Religion of Islam, My Gole has been to establish a friendship and a good relationship within our communities Churches, Senegal's, and Masques, I hope to build bridges of understanding between our comm unites and to defuse tentions and hatred toward each other, in fact I teach tolerance and Patience for one and other, and I believe in peace and prosperity insted of death and distruction. For example in some of my speeches I inform the Jewish people did you know that in our Holy Quran God mentioned the name of Moses More than Prophet Mohammad Himself, or I tell them in (Surah 2:62) God said -Those who believe in the Quran, and those who follow the Jewish Scriptures, and the Christians and the Sabians, any who believe in God and the Last Day and work righteousness shall have their reward. Another Surah 5:5 - This day all things good and pure are made lawful for you. The food of the People of the book is lawful for you, and yours is lawful for them.

It was Muslim Spain, the only land the Jews knew in nearly a thousand years of their dispersion, which made the genius of physician Moses Maimonides possible.

I do encourage every one to get involve in interfaith meetings and gathering, may God bless you all.

for more information how to get involved please email me

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or call me @ 310-350-1317  
Fariborz Sepehrnia

*continuing from previous issue*

This area was, as we have seen, ancient Celtiberian land tardily and very superficially Romanized. Could anything be more reasonable than to suppose that the Cantabrians and Celtiberians preserved a great part of their epic tradition, which later came to form part of the basis of the Castilian epic? Is the Cantabrian-Celtiberian combination in the least Romanized parts of the Peninsula the reason why only Old Castile inherited and continued the epic tradition of the Goths? As we shall see later, Ramon Menendez Pidal seems to have sensed this, though he was little informed concerning Celtic studies. Referring to the Christianization of the Peninsula, Adolfo Salazar says:

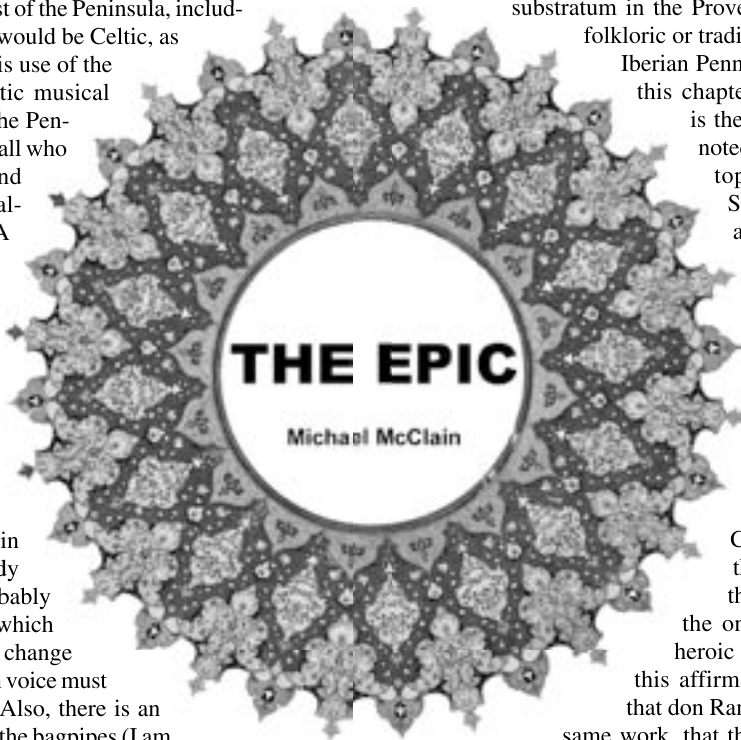
“... the pagan customs fought a delaying action, retreating to inaccessible corners in some cases; in others to a curious phenomenon of persistence which is today collected as “folklore” and which, in its poetic and musical aspects had tenacious guardians among the bards and jongleurs.”

Speaking of the Northwest of the Peninsula, including Old Castile, said customs would be Celtic, as Salazar seems to suggest by his use of the Celtic word “bard”. The Celtic musical heritage of the Northwest of the Peninsula is patent to everyone, to all who have heard Irish, Scottish and Breton bagpipes and also Gallego and Asturian bagpipes. A song of the Scottish Highlands, **Bluebells of Scotland** (the words appear to be of the period of the Jacobite Wars, of the end of the 17th and the 18th Century, although, as we shall see, the music may be older) has a melodic line identical to that of a Gallego bagpipe tune, *Alborada de Veiga*. The tempo is different in the two works, but the melody of the Scottish song was probably originally a bagpipe tune to which words were added later. The change from the bagpipes to the human voice must inevitably change the tempo. Also, there is an Asturian dance tune played on the bagpipes (I am not certain, but believe it is called *Jota Asturiana*) which has the same melodic line as the Scottish Highland song **The Nut-Brown Maiden**. Anyone who has heard **Aires de Galicia** and **Hymn of the Ancient Kingdom of Galicia** played on the bagpipes would swear that he was hearing music from the Scottish Highlands. I am not speaking of similarity, but of identity. Any Scottish Highlander who hears said Gallego works would swear on his heather, thistle, tartan, whiskey and on the memory of Kenneth MacAlpin, William Wallace, Robert Bruce, Montrose, Bonnie Prince Charlie and Rob Roy MacGregor that he was hearing the traditional music of some Highland clan. Interestingly, the music of the Asturian bagpipes reminds one more of Ireland than of Scotland. Many Asturian bagpipe tunes remind one of Irish works such as **The Kerry Dance**, **The Lark in the Morning** or **An Poc ar Buile**. It is enough to make any Irishman proclaim “the pipes are calling” and take a drink of whiskey for nostalgia. During the Spanish Civil War Irishmen and Highland

Scots who came to Spain to fight on the Nationalist side spent hours listening to Gallego and Asturian bagpipes. As we shall see later, Celtic musical modes were used also in Hispano-Muslim music.

Jose Caso Gonzalez has noted that many Asturian traditional songs have the same melody as traditional songs of the Auvergne, and says that a common Celtic base is the only explanation for this phenomenon, since the resemblance is too close to be a coincidence. A song is a “marriage” of poetry and music. The relations between the words and music of a song is very close. The tempo and the melody are closely related to the theme of the song (happy, sad, etc.), the tempo and rhythm to the metre of the words (or lyrics) and the melody with the rise and fall of the voice produced by the pronunciation of the words. The melody is also closely related to the strophic structure of the song. If the Celtic musical strain, apparently so strong in the Northwest of the Peninsula, had not brought with it a certain literary influence, it would be very strange indeed. The topic, which is a link between the problem of a Celtic substratum in the French and Castilian epics and the problem of a Celtic

substratum in the Provençal troubador verse and the folkloric or traditional songs of France and the Iberian Peninsula, is outside the limits of this chapter. Our theme at the moment is the epic rather than the lyric. As noted before, we will return to this topic. Who can doubt that the Spanish Celts had their “faith” and “filid” or bards as well as their pipers? Ramón Menéndez Pidal noted that Old Castile, cradle of the Castilian epic, has a Cantabrian-Celtiberian base rather than an Iberian (whatever that means) base, and believed that perhaps this fact is the origin of the strong and original character of Old Castile, and of its hegemony in the Christian Reconquest and of the fact that the Castilians were the only people who inherited the heroic poetry of the Goths. Perhaps this affirmation is related to something that don Ramón says in another part of the same work, that the epic is a creation proper to the Aryan (in this case it would be more accurate to say Indo-European) peoples: Indo-Aryans, Iranians, Greeks, Germans and Celts. Of course, Greeks and Germans, while Indo-Europeans, are not Aryans. All Aryans are Indo-Europeans, but not all Indo-Europeans are Aryans. I have no doubt whatever that don Ramon was right as far as he went, but I wish to carry the idea a bit further. The original base of Old Castile was Celtiberian, very thinly Romanized. Later Old Castile was heavily occupied by the Visigoths, though without exterminating nor displacing the Celtiberian population. Later at the time of the repopulation of these lands which had been devastated by two centuries of border warfare against the Muslims, a new Celtic stratum, even less Romanized, the Cantabrians, occupied Old Castile. In other words, in Old Castile the Visigoths were sandwiched between the Celtiberians before them and the Cantabrians after. Thus, Old Castile was not only very Visigothic but also very Celtic, and it is this fact which cause Old Castile to have the strongest



(though not the only) epic tradition in the Peninsula, and caused the Castilians to be the only people who inherited and continued the heroic poetry of the Goths.

The French and Castilian epics have at least two basic characteristics which are absent in the purely Germanic epics, such as **Beowulf**, the **Nibelungenlied** and the Viking sagas: chivalry and the strong sense of honor, cornerstone of the moral system of Druidism. Says Henri Hubert:

“...principle of the moral life of the Celts, honor in this refinement of the moral of **honor** was a principle of civilization whose development was not detained by the political fall of the Celtic societies. The Celts passed it on to their descendants.”

Anyone who knows the Celtic epic, whether Irish or Welsh-Breton, knows that honor and chivalry are two of its basic themes. Louis Charpentier has noted the similarity between certain aspects of the Rule of the Templars (written by St. Bernard of Clairvaux) and the chivalrous rules of the Order of the Red Branch of pre-Christian Ireland (mentioned in the **Ulster Cycle** and a few other sources). The same author has noted that, although many have looked far indeed for its origins, the Code of Chivalry of Medieval Europe is almost entirely contained in the **Ulster Cycle**, exception made of specifically Christian elements.

Many have noted that the ancient Celts and Rajputs coincide almost exactly in their virtues and their defects. As William Crooke says in his introduction to Tod's **Annals and Antiquities of Rajastahan**:

“There is much in their (the Rajputs') character and institutions which reminds us of the Gauls as pictured by Mommsen in a striking passage”.

There is a very close parallel between the resistance of the Celts to the Romans and the resistance of the Rajputs to the Muslims. The Celts, though weakened by their own disunity and exaggerated individualism, resisted the Romans with desperate bravery, particularly in Spain fighting to the death, their women committing suicide rather than be dishonored and enslaved. We have already spoken of honor and chivalry in connection with the Celts. Crooke briefly remarks how the disunity of the Rajputs fatally weakened them. As Ashvani Agraval notes: “They (the Rajputs) lived and died for their clan, then for their king and last for their country”

Very Celtic indeed. In chivalry and sense of honor the Rajputs very closely resemble the Celts. The struggle of the Rajputs in favor of Dara Shikoh, son of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, reminds us forcefully of the struggle of the Irish and Highland Scots in favor of the Stuarts. This is briefly described by Waldemar Hansen:

“Rajastahn (literally “the abode of kings”) had a history of heroism and chivalry dating back to the legendary days of the Indian epics. From deserts and hill ranges petty Rajput chiefs came, together with the grand rajahs of Jaipur, Statem, Jodhpur and Udaipur; all of them brought clansmen into battle with them. Recklessly courageous, proud and with a high sense of honour, Rajputs fought against overwhelming odds. The men wore yellow robes of self-sacrifice, while their women often committed acts of suttee, dying in flames in order to avoid capture or disgrace.”

In spite of vast distances and centuries of separation, the kinship between the Celts and the Rajputs is evident. In respect to honor and chivalry as in so many others, the Celtic epic is much nearer to the Indo-Aryan and Persian epics than to the Germanic epic. In the Germanic epic the themes of chivalry and honor (in a much broader sense than pure vengeance) are virtually absent. It is interesting to note here the existence of a parallel between the Latin **Carmina Campidoctoris** of the Cid and the **Arthurian Cycle**. In these

carmina, the Cid has the image of a dragon painted on his shield. In the **Arthurian Cycle**, King Arthur as well as his father Uther Pendragon bear a dragon painted on their shields, from whence the Welsh name “Pendragon”.

Although one may perhaps say that it reinforced the Celtic substratum, the Breton influence is visible only in details: the Castilian epic is not a copy of the **Arthurian Cycle**. The **Arthurian Cycle** is too late, at least in its French recensions, to form part of the substratum of the Castilian epic, and too different to have been a direct source. The Breton influence no doubt entered Castile by way of the pilgrimage to the tomb of St. James in Santiago de Compostela and the crusaders who came to Spain to fight against the Muslims, the same as the French influence with which we shall now deal.

For some time it was believed that the Castilian epic is derived from the French. This theory has since proven untenable. Nevertheless, no one doubts that the French epic tradition did to some extent influence the Castilian. Ramón Menéndez Pidal has written a great deal on this topic. As Menéndez Pidal noted, three cases of French influence in the **Cantar de Mio Cid** are perfectly clear: the repetition of the word tanto (“so much”)the prayer of dona Ximena in verses 330-365 and the expression llorar de los ojos (to weep from the eyes) repeated several times in the **Cantar**. Here I wish to note that the **Cantar de Mio Cid** is one of the more recent Castilian chansons de geste. To my knowledge, neither Menendez Pidal nor anyone else has shown nor even suggested any French elements in the earlier Castilian chansons de geste (perhaps we should use the Spanish “cantares de gesta”), such as those concerned with Fernan Gonzalez, founder of Castile or with the Seven Princes of Lara.

In reference to the **Cantar de Mio Cid**, it appears to me that Menendez Pidal is right, that the French influence, like the Breton, is present only in details, not in fundamentals.

The **Cantar de Mio Cid** is not an imitation of the **Arthurian Cycle** nor of the **Chanson de Roland**. The **Cantar de Mio Cid**, like the **Chanson de Roland**, contains historical material, non-historical or novelistic material and material which belongs in the category of fantasy, but the proportions are reversed between one and the other. The **Cantar de Mio Cid** (“Cid” is a title derived from the Arabic Sayyid: the proper name of Mio Cid was Rodrigo Diaz de Vivar), is fundamentally historical; elements of fantasy are extremely rare, and it is necessary to search in a great mass of historical material in order to find a few novelistic pieces. In the **Chanson de Roland**, on the other hand, it is necessary to search among a mass of novelistic and fantastic material in order to find a few grains of history.

The metre of the **Chanson de Roland** is regular and elegant, that of the **Cantar de Mio Cid** is very irregular, perhaps because it was written by someone who thought in terms of musical notation rather than a literary metre. The Roland of the **Chanson** is a “superman” hero; el Cid, in contrast, is so human a hero that some have denied that he could be considered an epic hero at all. As Menendez Pidal has said:

“One may recognize in the **Cantar** a base of native poetic tradition and a form somewhat renovated by French influence.”

The Mozarabs (Arabic: must-Arab, = “half-Arab”) were the Spanish Christians who continued to live under Muslim rule. Some, including Julian Ribera, have suggested a Mozarabic epic tradition as the source of the Castilian epic. The existence of said epic or of at least a sort of popular narrative poetry among the Mozarabs would not be surprising, since that part of Spain which was under Muslim rule was in its major part occupied by the Celts and entirely by the Goths (to avoid confusion, the Goths were divided into two parts, the Visigoths and the Ostrogoths, only the Visigoths coming



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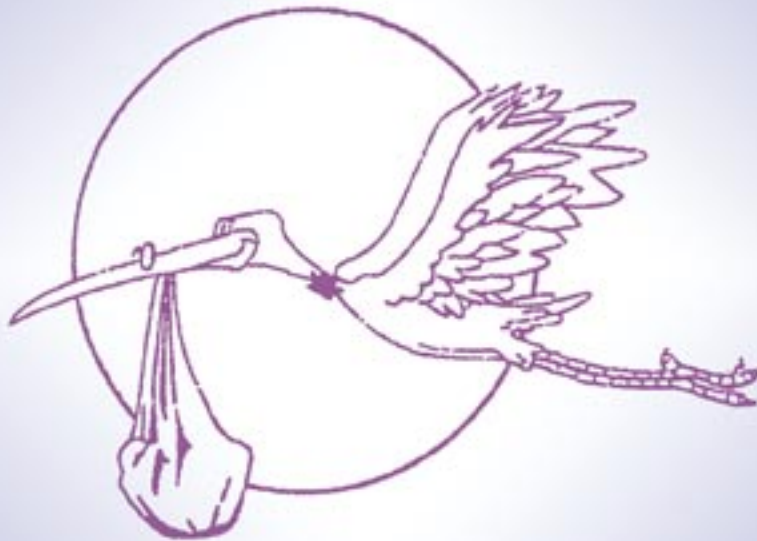
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to Spain; all Visigoths are Goths, but not all Goths are Visigoths), two peoples who had a strong epic tradition. There are also more positive proofs of the existence of a Mozarabic epic; one of them is the legend of don Roderick (or “don Rodrigo” in Spanish; here is a curious case of a Visigoth with a Celtic name, perhaps the result of the presence of Irish priests and scholars in Visigothic Spain) or the Loss of Spain.

Various versions of this legend exist, due in part no doubt to the existence of factions among the Mozarabs, some of whom were partisans of Roderick, the last Visigothic king, while others favored the sons of Witiza, the penultimate.

On the death of Witiza, the Visigothic senate chose Roderick as king, passing over the sons of Witiza. Count Julian was commander of the garrison at Ceuta across the Straits from Gibraltar (there is disagreement as to whether he was a Visigoth or a Byzantine). In any case, the key to the whole affair is that Julian, as Visigoth or as servant of the Emperor in Constantinople, was a partisan of the sons of Witiza, and his actions were intended to topple Roderick from the throne and reinstate the line of Witiza. The whole business has a very Byzantine flavor, and one is inclined to suspect that the sons of Witiza represented a pro-Byzantine faction, while the partisans of Roderick were anti-Byzantine. In any case, Count Julian is an historical figure, not a poetic invention.

Julian sent his daughter, Florinda, to Toledo, capital of Visigothic Spain, to be educated. At this point the versions diverge. One version, no doubt that of the partisans of Roderick, says that Florinda seduced the king. Another version frankly accuses Roderick of rape. Florinda, whether victim or strumpet, wrote to her father

claiming that she had been “corrupted” by Roderick. Certainly not the first nor the last time that a woman seduced a man one day and accused him of rape the next, as one version has it. Julian came to Toledo, using some pretext to take Florinda back to Ceuta. After returning to Ceuta, Julian used the (Byzantine?) fleet in the port to transport the army of Tarik the Berber to Spain. The rest is history. All the figures of this legend, except possibly Florinda, are historical. From various sources it is known that the defeat of Roderick at the hands of Tarik the Berber at the fatal battle of the river Guadalete was due to the defection of the followers of the sons of Witiza. What we have here is obviously an attempt. With or without Byzantine participation (though the whole affair reeks of Byzantine diplomacy and scheming) to reinstate the line of Witiza on the throne, which attempt miscarried with disastrous results. The incident of the seduction of Florinda is poetic invention.

This legend is cited in the **Pseudoisidorian Mozarabic Chronicle. Anseis of Carthage** (12<sup>th</sup> Century) a French chanson de geste, is a paraphrase of the same legend, and in the same century it appears in the **Chronicle of the Moor Razis** (translated to Castilian in the 14th Century) where it has a marked character of a chanson de geste and where Marcelino Menendez Pelayo observed the presence of assonant rhymes. In the **Sarracen Chronicle** of Pedro del Corral and in the **Romancero** are episodes which do not figure in any chronicle. In summary, as Manuel de Montuliu has said:

“... only by admitting the previous existence of various chansons de geste on the theme of don Roderick may we discover a satisfactory solution to the problem.”

*to be continued*

# An Intellectual Approach to Religion

*Zoroaster and his God "Lord Wisdom"*

Hushang M. Payan

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



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

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

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



# Illustrated History of Iran's Oil Industry



حفری چاه نفت - سالهای دهه ۱۳۱۰  
Digging of Well, 1910s

Digging oil well, 1910s.



ساخت خط لوله انتقال نفت توسط کارگران بختیاری سالهای ۱۳۱۰  
Constructing oil transferring pipe line by Bakhtiary workers, 1910s

Constructing oil transferring pipe by Bakhtiary workers, 1910s.



روز پرداخت حقوق - سالهای ۱۳۱۸  
Salary payment day, 1910s

Salary payment day, 1910s.



حمل لوله های نفتی به سر چاه برای ساخت خط لوله انتقال نفت - سالهای دهه ۱۳۱۰  
Carrying of pipes to the top of the well in order to construct the pipe line for transferring the oil during 1910s

Carrying oil pipes to the well in order to construct the pipe line for transferring the oil, during 1910s.



عملیات نقشه برداری توسط انگلیسی ها در کوه های بختیاری سالهای ۱۳۱۰ تا ۱۳۱۸  
Mapping operation by the British on Bakhtiary mountains, between 1901 to 1910

Mapping operation by the British on Bakhtiary mountains, between 1901 to 1910.



اعضای آنگلو - پرسیان از شرکت نفت ایران و انگلیس (شرکت نفت ایران و انگلیس) در اردوگاه زمستانی خود در کاشغور، ق. ۱۳۲۵  
Members of the Anglo - Persian oil company's staff being entertained at luncheon by the Kashguli Khans at their winter camp, C. 1925

Members of Anglo-Persian oil company's staff being entertained at luncheon by the Kashguli Khans at their winter camp, C. 1925.



حمل نفت خام توسط چهارپایان سالهای ۱۳۱۰  
Carrying the crude oil by animals, during the 1910s

Carrying the crude oil by animals, during the 1910s.

Haj Agha Yadollah with a sugar cube in his mouth said, "Haj Khanoom, my hair didn't go grey on its own you know. I've been young and I've had my fair share of days. That kid Naser is infatuated with Zahra. We've been neighbors for around ten years now and the two of them have known each other since they were kids. Surely, they have feelings for each other. I should say I assume that it's Naser who has feelings for the girl, but it makes no difference. I'm just worried that something might happen; you know the boy might make a fool of himself or say something stupid. Haj Agha Azim and I go back a long way. If he finds out that my son fancies his daughter it would be rather awkward."

Haj Khanoom said, "Drink your tea before it goes cold and tell me what should we do? We can't stop him from having feelings for Zahra. Times have changed and kids just don't listen to their parents like they use to, they even don't give damn."

Yadollah chucked his tea and said, "We can't just sit around; we have to make it official."

Haj Khanoom said, "What do you mean official, you mean a temporary marriage?"

Yadollah said, "Temporary? You've got to be kidding; Haj Azim would never accept such a thing. They should have a proper wedding, I even have a special ceremony in mind, and it's called an 'adoration courtship'. Haj Khanoom hit her hand and said: Are you out of your mind? What in the world is an 'adoration courtship'?"

Haj Yadollah laughed and said, "Let's go to Haj Azim's house, when we get there you'll find out what

I'm talking about. Stop arguing with me, don't make me all worked up. Get you Chador on and run over to Haj Azim's house, tell him we want to join him for afternoon tea. Remember Naser has to come with us, and make sure that Zahra will be there too. C'mon hurry up."

There were only two houses in the Love Dead End valley, one belonged to Haj Azim who had been there for quite a while, and the other belonged to Haj Yadollah who had been there for about 10 years, meaning the two

and had asked to join them the day after tomorrow at 5 o'clock. I have to tell Naser to come with us no matter what his plans are. Haj Yadollah said: well the whole point is for both of them to be there. Haj Khanoom asked in a spoiled manner: now that the plan is made tell me what is the 'adoration courtship'? Yadollah frowned and said, "stop being so childish. You'll find out when the time is right. On the day of their meeting, Yadollah, accompanied by his wife and Naser went to Haj Azim's house."

They took their shoes off

that's true. And in the past years we've seen nothing but compassion and kindness from you and your family. God bless you."

Yadollah said, "Yes, as I was saying, during this time our boy Naser has seen your daughter Zahra around and about. You know how these youngsters are, they are so vulnerable to their desires. Being neighbors and all, you know these two youngsters might find an attraction for each other."

Haj Azim interrupted Haj Yadollah and said, "My daughter isn't really the type to walk around and just get attracted to somebody, she is very modest."

Yadollah said, "Oh please don't get offended, what I meant was they have seen over the years they have definitely met, am I right?"

Haj Azim while playing with his beads said, "Well you can't doubt the possibility of such a thing."

Yadollah said, "As I was telling your kind presence, my family deeply respects and believes in religious ethics. If you agree, well that is if your wife and Zahra agree, we came here for an 'adoration courtship'."

Haj Azim seemed very confused. He said, "Sorry I didn't catch your last words, did you say 'adoration courtship'? I've never heard of such a thing. The only courtship I know about is the good'ol fashioned weddings with a marriage ceremony. Please enlighten me on what you just said."

Yadollah replied, "Well," said Haj Agha, "As I mentioned we are a religious family. Regarding that our families have so much contact. The world works in mysterious ways, Naser and Zahra might fall in love with each other; you know



were neighbors.

They had the same amount of air pollution, they hung their clothes under the same sun (meaning they were very close), they feasted together on happy days and cried sad ones with swapping gratuitous foods.

Naser was Haj Yadollah's son, he was 24 years old. Zahra was about 20; she was the daughter of Haj Azim. The two youngsters had known each other for 10 years.

Haj Khanoom returned home and told Yadollah that Azim's family was very pleased with our proposal

in front of the door and went inside. The room was full of large pillows up against the walls, and there were plenty of nuts and sweets to eat. Haj Azim joined them along with his wife. After saying their hellos Zahra entered the room with a tray of tea, placed a cup in front of each person and then sat in a corner looking at the carpet. After saying their greetings about 10 times, Yadollah finally broke the ice and said, "We've been neighbors for a while now. Our boy Naser was a child when we moved here, and thanks God he is a man now."

Haj Azim said, "Yes,

youngsters' affections can ignite like cotton and fire. If they fall for each other no force on earth can stop them. So I thought ahead. I said to myself let get everything out in the open. If you and your wife wouldn't mind my boy falling in love with Zahra, well of course that is if Zahra approves herself, we'll make the whole deal ethically and religiously righteous."

Haj Azim said, "Now tell me how are you so sure that they are going to fall in love? Have you even asked your son how he feels?"

Yadollah said, "Well nothing has actually been mentioned but I can tell that in our house hold we tend to talk about Zahra a lot. We talk about how elegant, modest and beautiful she is. She has also matured a great deal. You know in my opinion a girl is like a fruit. When it's ripe, it's time to harvest. If you donor else the crows will eat it or it'll fall to the ground and it will spoil. So if it's God's will, we can go on with the adoration courtship. What I mean is if we all agree and these two innocent youngsters agree, then such a courting would make it righteous. Haji, now, did you understand what I meant?"

Haj Azim said, "Yes, I understand, but there are still some questions in my mind. What if they don't fall in love at all, and then what happens?"

Haj Yadollah said, "No problem at all, you see, when you get insured, you might have an accident, and you might not. But if anything goes wrong the insurance will cover the expenses.

Haj Azim asked, "Well, I want to know how much freedom we will be giving our children regarding this new type of relationship."

Haj Yadollah replied,

"Let's start with visual contact. Any form of visual contact would be OK. They can also have brief conversations. They can also greet each other once in a while over the phone. But I strictly forbid contact through the short messaging service (SMS), I hear there's a lot of degeneracy associated with messaging, you know, inappropriate jokes and pictures. I think the kids can also meet up, but it has to be in the presence of us elders."

Haj Azim looked to his wife and said, "Do you get what he's saying? We are allowing them to distantly get acquainted and then see what the future has in store for them."

Haj Khanoom said, "If it's as Haj Yadollah says, then I have no objections. I think we should also ask what Zahra thinks about the idea."

"Darling, what do you have to say about it?" Without even raising her head Zahra said, "Whatever you say I'll accept."

Haj Azim said, "It seems that everyone agrees. Now what do we have to do, what are the ceremonies. Haj Yadollah said: I know someone. Well he's a friend of mine, he is truly a saint. I'll tell him to come and perform the ceremony. After that the two youngsters can start getting acquainted regarding the limitations I mentioned earlier. Then we'll just have to wait and see what happens, one might fall in love with the other, and God forbid they might not even fall in love at all. We'll just have to wait and see. If everything goes ok then we'll move on to the next step."

Haj Azim said, "What is the next step?"

Haj Yadollah said,

"Well that depends on what happens between the two of them. We'll synchronize the next step according to the outcome of the courtship?"

Haj Azim said, "Alright, you have my approval. Make an appointment with your Saint Friend and ask him to come and perform the 'Righteousness of Love Ceremony.' By the way how much is all this going to cost?"

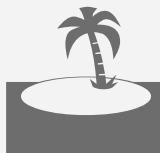
Haj Yadollah replied, "Please Haj Agha, don't even think about it, we are the ones who came up with the idea so we will take care of all the expenses."

Haj Azim said, "Alright then, in that case all is good. Hurry Haj Khanoom, go and pour us all some tea. I consult a rosary right now and it was good."

After, getting permeation to look at each other and have ordinary talks, these two innocent young people with utmost dignity and shyness come to the garden and stand under an apple tree and Naser said, "We are supposed to just sit and have ordinary talks in the presence of Haj Khanooms."

Zahra said, "Don't be so childish, the day after tomorrow which we have a date, remember not to forget condom like last time. I couldn't get the thought of getting pregnant out of my mind, by the way don't wear too much cologne. I have the smell of your cologne on me, so everything will blow up."

Naser said, "Whatever you say my Blondie mama!"



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## Rediscovering Iran ..... THE ANCIENT CITY OF NEISHABUR

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Statue of Khayyam, the Persian poet, mathematician, philosopher and astronomer

Neishabur (Neyshâbûr; نیشابور in Persian) is a town in the province of Khorasan in northeastern Iran, situated in a fertile plain at the foot of the Binalud Mountains, near the regional capital of Mashhad. In 2005 it had a population of 216,000 people. The main east-west railway line through Iran passes through the town. The region is very prone to earthquakes.

Neishabur occupies an important strategic position astride the old Silk Road that linked Anatolia and the Mediterranean with China. On the Silk Road, Neishabur has often defined the flexible frontier between the Iranian plateau and Central Asia. The town derived its name from its reputed founder, the Sassanian King Shapur I, who is said to have established it in the 3rd century CE.

Nearby are the turquoise mines that supplied the world with turquoise for at least two millennia. For a time Neishabur rivaled Baghdad or Cairo: Toghriûl, the first ruler of the Seljuk dynasty, made Neishabur his residence in 1037, and proclaimed himself sultan there, but it declined thereafter, as Seljuk fortunes were concentrated in the west. After the husband of Genghis Khan's daughter was killed at Neishabur in 1221, she ordered the death of all in the city (1.7 million), and the skulls of men, women, and children were piled in pyramids by



Mausoleum of Khayyam

the Mongols. This invasion and earthquakes destroyed the pottery kilns. In 1979, the 15th World Scout Jamboree was scheduled to be held in Neishabur, but it was cancelled because of the Ayatollah uprising against the Shah of Iran.

Neishabur is also home to many poets and cultural celebrities. The poet Omar Khayyâm was born in Neishabur in 1048, and is buried a few kilometers outside the town, near the Imamzadeh Mahroq Mosque. The 12th century poet and mystic Farid al-Din Attar, another native of Neishabur, is also buried nearby. And, Iran's greatest contemporary painter, Kamal ol-Molk is buried in the same place.

Photographes by Ahmad Halabisaz, Fars News Agency



Mausoleum of Attar, the mystic poet

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## BAM 6.6, THE MOVIE

### Interview of independent filmmaker JAHANGIR GOLESTAN-PARAST

BY: BRIAN H. APPLETON

PART TWO

taken from: *payvand.com*, Dec. 2006

*It sounds like she deserves an interview all of her own. Let's go back and talk about making the film. I know that you wanted to tell the story from the point of view of Tobb and Adele so that Americans would see how loving and caring Iranians are. How did you go about contacting the Dell' Oro's and the Freedmans and talk them into participating in this film?*

A Persian student brought me an article from the paper about this American couple that had been caught in the Bam earthquake. I researched about them and after three months I contacted Tobb's sister Tam. She was very receptive to me when I told her about my desire to make a film about their experience and she thought that her family and Adele and her family would want to participate in it; however Adele was in Long Island. Both the Dell' Oros and the Freedmans, it turned out were very interested in getting the word out to the American public and the Western world about what loving, kind and humanitarian people the Iranians really are based on the treatment they had given to them and most especially Tobb and Adele in Iran during the traumatic episode and the aftermath of the Bam earthquake.

Adele agreed to the interview and the first session was in May of 2004. I came by myself to her parents' house in the Hamptons. I thought about bringing my cameraman but I did not want to overwhelm her, so I filmed the interview myself. I cried throughout the entire interview because it was such a moving story.

Three years later I realized I needed more footage and I was worried that perhaps Adele would not agree to further interview. Things had changed and I wondered how they still felt about Iran. For one thing the moderate government of Khatemi had been replaced by the hardliners. Also I just didn't know if Adele and

the Freedmans wanted to be subjected to more publicity. My fears were unfounded as she agreed readily.

Later when I had finished the film I went back to NY to show it to her but she did not want to see it. Adele's parents watched the finished film with me. We were all crying. When it ended, Adele's mother said: "Excellent, excellent, it is not just about Adele and Tobb's love story, it is about the children, it is about Iranian culture...you need to see it Adele...having seen this film, now I understand why Tobb wanted to go to Iran. People need to see this!"

I felt so relieved that they had approved of the film. I asked Annamae (Adele's mother) if there was any special message she wanted communicated about the film and she said that Farzaneh (the tour guide) should be seen as the symbol of the Iranian people and politics needs to be put aside. The message is that people are people no matter where they are in the world.

*Is there anyone else that you would like to honor in the context of this interview?*

I would like to give special thanks to Bill Woolery, the editor who was a huge help in the nuts and bolts of making this film and for his faith in it. I would also like to recognize my wife, Brenda who gave me lots of motivation to make this film and I also wish to thank my daughter who appears in the dream sequence portraying the recurring nightmare that Mrs. Freedman kept having prior to Adele's departure on her trip to Iran, like a premonition of ill foreboding before the earthquake. I shot this segment with my daughter in the desert in Palm Springs.

I became totally committed to making and promoting this film because I believe that its message of peace is of great urgency. I believe that if you ask for



anything in this world with enough commitment, courage, desire and persistence, you will get it. I truly believe that's why this movie is where it is now.

*I also believe in this philosophy. I think part of the reason that you and I hit it off so well is that we are both in sales. You cannot make a living in sales if you do not believe in the possibility of success. Sometimes when I find my optimism flagging, I remind myself of sales I have made in the past as large as \$1.85 million and it gives me the courage to move forward again. The biggest enemy and obstacle that a person can have in life is the self-doubt generated in their own mind. If you identify your goal with a cause much greater than yourself, you will be so passionately engrossed in pursuing it that you will not see yourself long enough to harbor doubt. Love and truth are the most powerful weapons on earth mightier than the greatest army or the biggest bomb. In the end love conquers all and the truth wins out.*

*I had read that the Dell' Oro and Freedman families are raising funds to build a school for children in Bam with an emphasis on improving understanding between Iran and the USA. Can you tell us about that?*

You and your readers can go to [www.tobbdelloro.org](http://www.tobbdelloro.org) to learn more about their "Friendship Fund," and how you can participate in its events and make donations for its cause of peace in the Middle East and especially between the USA and Iran.

Another point I want to make is about the effect that the making of this

film had on me personally. I spent three years making this film and during the process I underwent a transformation. It reconfirmed my philosophical beliefs and at the epicenter of them is humanity, humanity, humanity. I became a lot closer to people.

I think many Iranians and other Middle Easterners anglicize their names and hide their ethnicity for a variety of reasons including avoidance of persecution, or fear of persecution, shame of the perceived “backwardness” of their culture and so forth. I have always been proud of my culture. However, after making this film, I felt even prouder than ever of the Iranian people and of being Iranian and I want every Iranian and especially expatriates to feel proud of the good things in Iranian culture. This is the main purpose of my film “Bam 6.6” This film celebrates that which is the best in the Iranian culture and character.



As I said before, every culture has its good aspects and its not so good aspects. There are traditions worth preserving and those that need change. Individuals are the same way. I do not perceive myself as perfect at all. I know my own shortcomings. I want to say that a great deal of my growth and my positive self-image is something that I have my wife to thank for. She really saw the good in me and helped me to bring it out. I really owe her a lot.

***You know when you speak of people attempting to mask their ethnic origin; I have an understanding of that phenomenon, as my own father back in the 1940's anglicized his name to escape persecution as a Jew. In fact he hid our Jewish heritage from me until I was 15 years old and it was ironic because unwittingly I had even participated in anti-Semitic jokes and attitudes up until then. It took me years of my own effort to learn about Jewish culture and to take pride in***

***it. On a different topic, one thing I have been wondering about besides the loss of approximately 50,000 lives in the earthquake and the fate of the orphaned and homeless there and the effectiveness of the relief effort, is also about the destruction of the 2000-year-old citadel itself. Is there any effort underway to restore it or is the magnitude of reconstruction cost beyond what any institution or government is willing to pay?***

The Iranian government has signed a seven-year contract with an Italian engineering firm, which is going to undertake the restoration of the citadel. So we are all hopeful that it will be restored to its former beauty. The citadel at Bam was one of the world heritage sites of UNESCO. I recently did an interview for Voice of America. The interviewer, Mr. Farhoudi, whom I developed quite a respect for, asked me why I had not focused more on the citadel itself or whether I intended to make a movie about the citadel alone; its history, construction, etc. Others have asked me why I didn't focus on the children and the victims of the Bam earthquake. In fact Mr. Farhoudi said that everyone already knows that Iranians are very warm and generous people. And I said, no they don't!!!

The media portrays Iranians and Middle Easterners as terrorist demons who are out to destroy the Western world and way of life. After the experience which Adele Freedman and her parents had in Iran in which doctors and nurses and ordinary people from every walk of life offered them their humanity, their kindness, their generosity free of political motivation, Adele's mother agreed with my mission and my position that the Western world needs a better understanding of who the Iranian people really are. I also have a lot of respect for Tobb's parents Jeanne and Walter and his sister Tam, who share my goal of peace between our two peoples. Tobb's family was very supportive of this film and believed very strongly in the need for the American people to become aware that not all Iranians hate Americans. They said that had that been the case, why would they have taken Tobb and Adele into medical care ahead of all the Iranian victims and given them the highest level of care and refused any compensation.

In fact when Adele went for a follow up visit with her doctors in New York, they commented that they could not have done a better job than the Iranian doctors had done.

Tobb's sister Tam told me that when the Iranian surgeon took a look at Adele's crushed foot he had to decide between amputation or reconstructive surgery which was the difference between a half hour versus five hours of surgery. Even though there were literally thousands of people in need of medical attention, he elected to undertake the five hour surgery because it was the right thing to do for her.

***One thing I found very interesting in the film was the information about water only being available along fault lines in the desert, which caused people over the centuries to build cities and trade routes along fault lines. I first ran across this fact that water in deserts is found along seismic faults in the Palm Springs “Living Desert” zoological garden where a guide pointed out to me that the palm trees grew along the fault lines all in straight rows because that's where the water is. Your film also pointed out that desert people use adobe construction despite its susceptibility to earthquake damage because often that is the only material available to them.***

***About making the film in Iran, how soon after the earthquake did you get there or was this all filmed way after? Did you go there right after? How long did it take to make?***

Two weeks after the earthquake we sent a crew to go and videotape. Some of the photos and footage were given to us by Peter Cook from the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service in the UK. By a very unusual coincidence, his group came over to do rescue work and in the process of recovering the remains of the deceased they ran across the remains of one of their colleagues, Gavin Saxon. No one knew that he had been killed in the Bam earthquake or even that he was there at the time. He was on vacation touring Iran by himself by bicycle. He was on his way into Pakistan as he was actually doing a world bicycle tour so he ended up staying in the same guest house: “Musafer-Khaneh Akbar” where Tobb and Adele were staying because of its proximity to the border.

The team from Hampshire found his personal effects in the guesthouse but could not find his body because the bodies had already been removed to the morgue. Eventually they found and identified his

body, which was arduous given how many dead there were and in very poor condition making identification difficult. They then contacted his family in UK and asked how they wanted to dispose of the remains. It turns out that Saxon had such a love for Iran that his family chose to have him buried there.

We ended up filming in Iran on three different trips and it took us three years to complete the work. Two and a half years ago we contacted Farzaneh in Tehran. She in turn referred us to Jerry Dekker, a professor at New College in San Francisco, who speaks Farsi and lived in Iran for many years and visits there frequently and even takes his students on tours there. He is a big promoter of Iranian culture and he gave us a lot of information for the film for which we are very grateful.

I called Farzaneh and I told her that I needed to interview her but I couldn't come right now myself. She agreed to do the interview with Jerry Dekker and his student camera crew. But when they met up in Esfahan, she changed her mind and said that the only way to really do this story was if I came over myself. I agreed and went over a year and a half ago.

***Well I think we have come to the end of the interview. During the process of the past two months we have been collaborating on this, I feel as if I have become your long lost brother re-found and I will follow your career with interest from here on. What is your next film?***

I am planning to make a film about my own experience in coming to America and the experience of other expat Iranians in the USA. I also want to state in closing that it is my profoundest wish that Iranians find unity amongst themselves and that all the wounds between the factions and different political and ethnic groups should heal and that as a united effort we work to preserve our heritage and our culture. Life should never be taken for granted because it is a precious thing. Remove the anger from your hearts and make room for love there. Do not wait until someone is dead to bring them a flower or appreciate them, the time to do that is while they are alive. We can learn from each other. Especially in California, which is riddled with seismic faults, we must live each day as if it could be our last and we must really appreciate life itself. This is what Bam taught me.

In closing, this film is not my story, it is the story of all the individuals in the film, the story of Adele and Tobb, the story of Farzaneh, the story of Jila Khashef, the

story of Gavin Saxon and so on and also all the people who helped technically to make this film a reality like Bill Woolery. Without all of them it would not have happened. The message I want to make is that there is good in everyone and in every culture and all you have to do is look for it, keep your eyes and your heart open to it. I also want to say that Brian H. Appleton aka Rasool Aryadust gave his time generously without compensation, to do this interview in order to help promote the message of our film and I am deeply touched by that.

Not only has Iran been demonized in the West but so has Islam in general because of the activities of a few terrorists claiming to act in the name of Islam or the extreme practices of a few fanatic sects like the Wahabi. I would just like to say that Islam has more followers than any other religion on earth at the moment and the word Islam itself means peace and I am not ashamed to be a Moslem. I think that if we look for the common values that most religions share like helping the poor, doing good works that benefit humanity, practicing the Golden Rule of doing unto others as you would be done by that you will find that religions have much in common and could be a source of unity and peace rather than divisiveness. Different religions are like many ladders leading to the same roof.

Regarding Iran, I think that in the West there has been an over-emphasis on the contributions, which the ancient Greeks have made to Western civilization, not to diminish the Greeks in anyway, but it is only within recent years that scholars of advanced Persian studies are becoming aware of how much the Achmeneid Persians contributed to Hellenistic culture instead of the other way around and how much Persian culture has contributed to Western civilization in general particularly during the middle ages in terms of science, mathematics, medicine, architecture, Sufism, philosophy, poetry and literature.

***In that vein I would like to mention that the British Museum had an exhibit last year called: "The Forgotten Empire" to that effect and that also the Soudavar family has a Foundation which each year selects a student of any national-***

***ity who is pursuing advanced Persian studies and awards them a scholarship with the very purpose in mind of helping to put Iran's contribution to World culture and civilization into the proper perspective. Also of note is the work that Dr. Abbas Edalat of the Royal College in London, is doing towards peace with both his CASMII (campaign against sanctions and military invasion of Iran) organization and his NGO dedicated to bringing internet access to children of the "third world."***

That's great! Lastly I want to emphasize that my own personal goal is to serve humanity in whatever way and format that I can. I believe that love is the greatest of all human qualities and I would like to reiterate that not only is it my goal to promote peace between the US and Iran but also to help generate healing between Iranians themselves and the many splintered factions within our society. Finally I would



like to encourage your readers to visit my website at: [www.essenceofiran.com](http://www.essenceofiran.com) and to feel free to e-mail me their comments at [golestanparast@sbcglobal.net](mailto:golestanparast@sbcglobal.net). Since education is one of the primary goals of this film I would also be happy to make it available to educational institutions as well.

•••••  
 • *While visiting my friend* •  
 • *in St. Louis, MO,* •  
 • *I read the subscription* •  
 • **Persian Heritage.** •  
 • *I enjoy it very much.* •  
 • *Please send to me.* •  
 • *Margaret Anderson, NJ* •  
 •••••

## HAFEZ

and

## WINE

## PART ONE

**BY MAHMOOD KARIMI-HAKAK  
& BILL WOLAK**

**PERSIAN WINE**

Forbidden wine permeates the poetry of Hafez: scandalous wine drinking and its related network of imagery and lore are as crucial to the poetry of Hafez as the descriptions of the beloved's face and hair. Both wine and the lover constitute pathways to ecstasy and therefore union with the divine. To begin understanding Hafez, one must grapple with his use of the term wine and its related words wineglass, drunkenness, tavern, Saki, libertine, and Jamsheed.

Every civilization proposes a legend to explain its discovery of viticulture. For the Greeks, Dionysus, the god of the vine, teaches humans about wine making. In the Bible, Noah plants vineyards and discovers drunkenness near mount Ararat where his ark came aground. For Persians, the discovery of wine (sharab, mei or bade are the Persian words for wine) is forever linked with the name of Jam or Jamsheed.

King Jamsheed is one of the early Persian kings lauded in Ferdowsi's *Shahnama*. According to the legend, one day Jamsheed was watching his archers practice when a bird appeared that was barely able to fly because of a huge snake coiled around the bird's neck.

According to Zoroastrianism, the bird represented goodness while the snake signified evil. Therefore, such a sight would have been intolerable to a Zoroastrian since it suggested the supremacy of evil (snake) over goodness (flying bird) (Goboneau 27). Jamsheed immediately ordered his archers to shoot the snake





without hitting the bird. The archers succeeded in killing the snake without hurting the bird. Soon after, the bird returned, and in a gesture of gratitude for saving its life, dropped some seeds from its beak at Jamsheed's feet. From these seeds grapevines grew, and quickly grapes became Jamsheed's favorite fruit. He stored jars full of grapes so that he could enjoy them as long as possible after they were out of season. At some point, he noticed that several jars seemed to contain a strange fermenting fluid along with half rotten grapes; these jars he marked with the word poison. Later, Djem, a beautiful and beloved member of the royal harem began to suffer from chronic, excruciating headaches. Finally, Djem became so desperate for relief from her constant pain that she drank from one of the jars Jamsheed had marked as poison. The next day when she awoke, miraculously she found her headache completely cured. Djem ran to tell Jamsheed about what had happened. Jamsheed discovered not only the medicinal uses of wine but also its liberating effects. Afterwards, wine was known as *shah daroo* or "royal wine" because wine's salubrious effects were discovered by Jamsheed whose title was *shah* or king ("Wine among the Ancient Persians").

Jamsheed's wineglass became an important symbol in Persian literature. Within Jamsheed's wineglass, infinity and eternity became visible simultaneously. Wine had the ability to collapse time and space. Thus, gazing into Jamsheed's wineglass produced a vision as earth shattering and transformative as Dante's beatific vision. (Bayman 196).

Jamsheed's wine drinking, therefore, is connected with the experience of esoteric knowledge. Such a myth might suggest that the more one drinks wine, the deeper the gnosis. Nevertheless, Hafez frequently mentions Jamsheed along with another legendary king, Kai Khosru, whose story offers a very different interpretation to the meaning of wine.

Hafez says, for example, "Bring me a glass of wine so that I can divulge all about Jamsheed and Khosru." ("At the Service of Lovers and Wine").

The names of Jamsheed and Kai Khosru are frequently invoked to explain the ineffable nature of the mystical experience. For instance, in Attar's *Book of the Divine*, the Persian King Kai Khosru gains possession of Jamsheed's famous wineglass and glimpses the secrets of the universe. Eventually he notices that he can see everything except the wineglass. Then within the wineglass appears the following message, "How can you see us in us? We have passed away entirely from ourselves. Whatever you see is not us. You can see everything through us, but it is impossible to see us in between." (Bayman 196). This statement is more astonishing than the other visions Jamsheed's wineglass produced because it announces the path to union. As a result of this jarring experience, Kai Khosru abandons his kingdom and becomes an ascetic living in a cave (Bayman 197). In this poem, the symbol of the wineglass is no longer merely connected to the transformative experience of wine drinking which might lead to debauchery and decadence. Now, Jamsheed's wineglass becomes the vehicle to communicate the paradoxical experience of non-dualistic union in which literally the subjective merges into the objective. The Sufi poet San'ai also mentions the wineglass of Jamsheed in his *Food for Seekers*: "Know," he states, "that the cup of Jem(sheed) is your heart. If you want to see the cosmos, it is possible to see all things in the heart. The eye of the head sees bodies composed of elements; only the eye of the heart can see what is hidden. First open the Eye of your heart, watch everything afterwards." (Bayman 197). Here the esoteric

experience is described as an alternative form of "inner" seeing – heart seeing." Like peering into Jamsheed's magic cup and being transformed by the mystical power of wine through time and space, looking within, the meditative discipline of heart seeing," is the alternative path to understanding; the path inward leads the seeker to the realization that "as within, so without." The inner world opens into a cosmos as vast as the material universe. Such "heart seeing" – which is more transformative than the power of the lover's gaze in mere love poetry – is both a meditative practice as well an ontological imperative in Sufism.

## ISLAM AND ILLICIT WINE

The Islamic attitude towards wine reveals a unique set of cultural preconceptions. For today's Moslem, drinking wine is reprehensible and is associated with Western decadence, amorality, and permissiveness. The injunction against wine was in part brought about by Mohammad's judgment that intoxicants posed a distinct danger for alcoholism, and alcoholism threatened individuals, families, and therefore the entire early Islamic society. *Khamr* is the specific word for wine most commonly used in the Qur'an while *nabidh* is employed for date wine. The more general words for intoxication are *sukara* and *mushir* (Kueny 4). The Qur'an forbids the use of intoxicants (*sukara*) in two places: 2:219, "They will ask you about intoxicants and games of chance. Say: "in both there is great evil as well as some benefit for man: but the evil which they cause is greater than the benefit which they bring." (Asad 48) and 5:90: "O you who have obtained the faith! Intoxicants and games of chance, and idolatrous practices, and divining of the future are but a loathsome evil of Satan's doing: shun it, then, so that you might attain to a happy state! By means of intoxicants and games of chance Satan seeks only to sow enmity and hatred among you, and to turn you away from the remembrance of God and from prayer. Will you not, then desist?" (Asad 162). Intoxicants cause strife between people and make an individual forget Allah; these are the main critiques of intoxicants in the Qur'an. Therefore, believers are warned not to pray while intoxicated, "Oh, you who believe! Do not draw near prayer when you are intoxicated (*sukara*) until you know what you are saying;" (4:43). The result of the Qur'anic injunctions against intoxicants was that wine became considered *haram* ("forbidden" or "restricted").

Wine is also forbidden in several Hadith, or "sayings" of the Prophet. Wine (*khamr*) is defined in the following way: "... Wine (*khamr*) is made from five things: raisins, dates, wheat, barley, or honey." (Kueny 32). Another Hadith has a much broader definition, "... Every intoxicant (*mushir*) is wine (*khamr*) and every intoxicant is prohibited." (Kueny 34). Similarly, all things that are fermented are prohibited, "As for what is called wine (*khamr*), it is what is left after its cleanness is gone and all that remains is muddiness." He (the Prophet) angrily admonished anything that is steeped until it achieved that kind of darkness." (Kueny 35). However, the most famous Hadith concerning the prohibition of wine is related by Abu Dawud, "Abdallah heard the Prophet say in the year of victory, when he was in Mecca: "God forbids the selling of wine and carrion and pig flesh and idols." (Kueny 28). Anyone who has anything whatsoever to do with wine is cursed in the following Hadith: "... The Prophet said, "I curse wine (*khamr*) on ten points: its owner, the one who presses and the one for whom it is pressed, the one who sells it and the one who buys it, the carrier of it and the one for whom it is carried, the one who eats its price, the one who drinks it,

and the one who serves it.” (Kueny 32). The punishment for wine drinking could be very severe as is shown by this Hadith by Al-Nasr: “The Prophet said, “Whoever drinks wine (khamr), strike him. If he continues to drink, strike him. If he continues a third time, kill him.” (Kueny 47). Islam’s success in banning intoxicants is based on threat of punishment expressed in such Hadith as the one quoted above.

But wine does not have an altogether negative connotation in Islam. As Glassé points out, “Wine, however, is not a substance without spiritually redeeming qualities; thus the Koran says that in paradise there are rivers of wine (khamr)” (418). Furthermore, the Qur’an promises that wine will be enjoyed by the saved in Paradise, “Youths of never-ending bloom will pass round to them, Cups and decanters, beakers full of sparkling wine, un-heady, uninebriating . . .” (56:18-9). Earthly wine is prohibited because of the deleterious effects it causes on individuals and remembrance of Allah, whereas in paradise over drinking wine will have the exact opposite effect, it will lead to a sense of clarity and the enhanced ability to appreciate the beauties of paradise (Kueny 15). On the other hand, according to the Qur’an those who are condemned to hell will be forced to drink a very different type of liquid – boiling water laced with thorns! (88:4-16). Nevertheless, the Qur’an also contains some rather ambiguous references to wine:

*And in the fruits of the date-palm and the grape-vine you obtain an intoxication (sakar) and good food. In this [saying] are signs for those who understand. Your Lord inspired the bees to make their homes in the mountains, trees, and hives built by men. Eat from all fruits and follow the paths of your Lord. A drink of many colors comes out of their bellies – medicine for men. In this are signs for those who understand (16:67-9).*

The ambiguous word “sign” (aya) is employed in the Qur’an in relation to such things as miracles, portents, wonders of nature, and God’s strength and power (Kueny 11). Kueny explains the passage by indicating that, “. . . clearly the “intoxicant” acts as a sign to ignite deeper understanding of God’s greatness.” (11). Even Mohammad’s own poet Hassan Ibn Thabit employed wine in his poem celebrating the capture of Mecca written shortly before Mohammad’s death in 632 CE (Robinson 44). Consequently, the use of wine imagery in poetry was never abolished in Islam; quite the contrary, wine became one of the most vital themes in Islamic literature. Even after wine was outlawed by the Qur’an, physicians throughout Islam continued to prescribe wine as a medicine and alchemists continued to use wine in their quest for gold (Kolpan 674).

### ABU NUWAS & THE LIBERTINE’S DEFIANCE

Some rebelled against the Islamic prohibition and were labeled libertines. Because wine had been such a seminal aspect of Pre-Islamic values encoded in both the muru’ah and Jahiliyah poetry, some Arabs expressed a defiantly anti-religious reaction to the prohibition against wine. For example, poets like al-Ta’if, Abu Mihjan-al-Thaqafi began to write poems contradicting the pious position concerning wine in lines like the following, “If I die bury me by the vine, so that its roots may saturate the thirst of my bones.” (Robinson 44). Thus, the khamriya or wine song, which mixed the erotic and the drinking themes, emerged from

the nasib section of the qasida. Abu Nuwas, (b. 747-d. 814 C.E.), who was half Persian but wrote in Arabic, is perhaps the best example of the new kind of libertine because he is known for his drinking songs, his mujum, or obscene poems concerning homoerotic love, and his scandalous life. Here is an example of a profane use of wine from the Divan of Abu Nuwas:

*Ho! a cup, fill it up, and tell me it is wine,  
For never will I drink in shade if I can drink in shine.  
Crust and poor is every hour that sober I must go,  
But rich am I whenever well drunk I stagger to and fro.  
Speak, for shame, the loved one, s name, let vain disguises fall;  
Good for naught are pleasures hid behind a curtain-wall  
(Nicholson 33).*

The provocation in the poem is that the hidden pleasures must be ousted. What’s in the cup must be clearly identified as wine, not hidden in the “shade,” and “vain disguises must fall” so that pretending and dishonesty cease. Likewise, hidden pleasures, “pleasures hid behind a curtain wall” must become visible. Nevertheless, there are no pleasures being sought beyond the fleeting present; carpe diem is the essential theme. Anacreon would be comfortable with such sentiments.

Adonis, the contemporary Arabic poet, describes the fundamental importance of wine in the poetry of Abu Nuwas and in much of early Arabic poetry as well:

Abu Nuwas adopts the mask of a clown and turns drunkenness, which frees bodies from the control of logic and traditions, into a symbol of total liberation. This symbol is a vast crucible of metamorphoses. Wine is not wine: it is a symbol and indicator, a force which transforms, annihilates, constructs, rejects and affirms.

It is the ancient creator, to which everything is related, but which itself is related to nothing. (60).

Thus, the first and most important meaning of wine as a symbol is its transformative and liberative power. Wine evaporates the ego and allows the authentic self to be accessed.

Adonis’ passage continues with another major symbolic meaning of wine:

*It is the beginning of life and the eternal return, and between the two it is life in one of its most splendid meanings: love. It is a life-changing power, which recognizes opposites and makes the ordinary logic of time meaningless. It is the intoxication of the encounter with the self, and the joining of the self with the world . . . Wine is fire, a living being which speaks and sees; the glasses which hold it are lamps and stars; the gathering where it is consumed is a celestial sphere where people die and are born again. The descent into the depths of the soul is at the same time a descent into the depths of nature (60-61).*

The symbol of wine is also established as a major association with love. Love not only connects the self with the other; it also connects with the universe. Such groundwork sets the stage for the Sufi, s concept of wine as life enhancing love.

Through his use of life affirming wine imagery, Abu Nuwas rejects the strict Islamic ban on drinking. His ideal society is an optimistic vision of city life which is based on tolerance, friendship, and love. Furthermore, he facilitates a continuity between the ancient tradition of wine based on the muru’ah and Jahiliyah poetry and the emerging urban lifestyle that would replace it.



# Monir Vakili

## The Founder of Opera in Iran

For certain Monir Vakili is one of Iran's priceless gems. Her beauty bewildered the public and her talents entertained the world. We thought it fit to feature her in this magazine. With the help of her own website, [www.iranian.com](http://www.iranian.com) and an article Memorable Gift, written by Parvin Ramazan-Nia, we present Monir Vakili to you.

Monir Vakili was born in Tabriz, Iran, to a family of art and music enthusiasts. Her father encouraged her love of opera and supported her decision to study abroad. Monir studied voice and the Conservatoire National de Paris and continued her training in opera directing at the New England Conservatory of Music in the U.S.

A pioneer in the true sense, Monir started the very first opera company in Iran. She gave memorable performances as Madama Butterfly, Mimi in La Boheme, Violetta in La Traviata, Liu in Turandot, and many others at the Rudaki Hall where she strived to bring the level of artistry in Iran up to international standards.

Among many other highlights in her illustrious career she produced and hosted a television series featuring the best selections from Rudaki Hall; created an opera film festival which was the first of its kind in the world and established the Academy of Voice, a government-funded, co-ed boarding school to educate and train students in

the art of opera and choral singing.

In 1951 Monir placed 1st at the Berlin Youth Festival (vocal category) and in 1975 she was the recipient of the prestigious Forough Farrokhzad Award.

Throughout Monir's life, her love for her country permeated all of her work. A manifestation of this love is an album recorded in Paris in 1958, of songs from different regions of Iran. She dazzled the public and international critics with her performance, and the album, *Chants et Danses de Perses*, won the Grand Prix du Disque of Academie Charles Cros.

Monir passed away in 1983. The memory of her ever-lasting spirit and talent lives on in *Baazgasht* ("Resurrection"), an innovative rendition of the 1958 award-winning album with the help of modern technology, Monir's daughter and grandchildren were able to accompany her in this stunning collection 45 years later.

One can not more delicately describe Monir's work than the article below .



Monir Vakili in festival celebrating  
Persian Folk Music



*Monir Vakili as Michaela  
in a scene from "Carmen".*



*France's "Charles Cros Academy Award for Best Album  
of the Year 1958" given to Monir Vakili*

## MEMORABLE GIFT

### Monir Vakili's inspiring and elevating artistry

By Parvin Ramazan-Nia  
iranian.com , April 7, 2004

I am known to my family and friends for my love of music. That is why I usually receive CD's for various occasions. This year too was no exception! The CD I received for Norouz was Resurrection by Monir Vakili.

Listening to Monir's voice took me back forty four years to the fall of 1960 when I first met her. At the time I was accompanying my husband on a trip to the U.S., while he was attending the Advance Management Program at Harvard.

At that time, Monir was studying voice at the New England Conservatory of Music. There, I not only come to know Monir personally, but I also got to know her dear husband, Mr. Majid Majidi, and their beautiful little daughter, Zaza.

Who would have thought after all these years, with so much happening in all of our lives, that one day Monir's lovely and talented daughter Zaza, with her darling children, Alexandra and Arian, would bring their beloved mother/grandmother to life, as they have by producing this warm and touching CD.

Although we lost Monir to a most tragic car accident, her ever-present spirit continues to live on, inspiring and elevating us through her beautiful artistry.

I cherish this CD as a precious Norouz present, for it gives me the opportunity to relive the fond memories of those irreplaceable days when we used to attend Monir's unforgettable performances in Boston.

I wish to express my most sincere congratulations to darling Zaza and her loving family, for giving me this memorable gift – one which speaks not only to those of my generation, but also to the young generation of today, where we can all enjoy Monir's warm and heavenly voice together.



*Monir Vakili in Mozart's "the Marriage of Figaro".  
Rudaki Hall, Tehran*