

Persian Heritage

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The winter issue of *Persian Heritage* was ready to go to press and I still had not written my editorial. My staff had been pressuring me for weeks. In truth over those past weeks I was completely depressed, anxious and distant and lacked any desire to put pen to paper. I looked for every excuse to avoid writing. This morning I was again greeted by one of my staff, who demanded that I write the editorial by that night. I went into my office picked up a pen and held it there until one of my nurses saved me. I had to see my patients. Later that day I was approached by one of my editorial board members. Once again I was able to avoid the assignment since I had to rush to the hospital to do a delivery. After I went to my house, with the intention to write. There I received another excuse. I was to baby-sit for my grandson ... one of my greatest pleasures. Unfortunately, he was asleep, and I was left with no more excuses. I kept looking at him, how much I wanted to see his lids stir and eyes open, but, he too was giving me a message, I had a responsibility and an assignment to write this editorial.

I looked at him and found myself analyzing my life. At my age I thought my work would have passed onto the next generation. I thought that I would by this time be sitting in a corner watching them figure out the world. At this age, I thought, I would not be so affected by world events. While my grandson slept peacefully, these thoughts haunted me. His presence always calmed me, surprisingly this time it did not. I found my anxieties increasing. Any calmness I had was fading. My trials and tribulations intensified. I asked myself out loud, why is my work loud increasing every day? Why I asked myself, have my trials and tribulations increased? Why do I feel as if the weight of the world is on my shoulder and that everyone is demanding just one more thing? My answer came simultaneously with a deep sigh from my grandson. Why? Because this is who I am and I can be nothing less. Certainly I have the capability to walk away from everything, certainly I could wash my hands of all problems. That, however, is not me and in my world "silence is not GOLDEN."

At my age I believe I have earned the right to speak my mind and feel what I feel. And at my age more than ever before, I feel the need. A few weeks ago I had the wonderful opportunity to interview a great Persian artist. After the interview was over, he asked me a question. He wanted to know why I felt it necessary to write things I knew would irritate people. I responded to him by stating that I was not the type of person who avoids a statement just because it may irritate someone. I guess I come from the group that needs to be involved and not from the one that could stand aside and watch the world flood. Besides, I truly feel it is my right to state my opinion as it is everyone else's right to act as they do. One thing is certain, regardless of the way one acts, the action is apt to offend or irritate another. I guess I have my own way of evaluating people's actions. I have my own way of looking at the world. The world I see today is suppressive and oppressive and I feel deeply for the people affected. I am upset by injustice.

Over the last year and there has been an increased fever to attack Iraq and rid the world of Saddam Hussein. This man, not the country is responsible for more than one million Iranian deaths and at least one half million of Iraqi deaths. This man has used, electrocution, chemicals, bullets and biological warfare on Iranians and his own people. This man has caused two countries to be soaked with the blood of their youth.

While I am not a supporter of war, I also cannot support such brutality by one individual. I am amazed that political intellectuals in both America and Iran now seek to defend him. What is worse, are the frequent visits and dialogues between Iranian and Iraqi officials? Again support of a man who has massacred so many perplexes me. How could any Iranians rally around a man who ordered the burning and leveling of Khorramshahr and other cities. I cannot figure out why Iranians would rally around a man who spends millions of dollars in collaboration with other countries to change the name of the Persian Gulf, to The Gulf or Arabian Gulf.

Has anyone ever heard a sympathetic voice for Iranians from any country in the Middle East? ABSOLUTELY NOT. Instead we see the development of a superficial friendship evolve between them and other Muslim countries. They have a single goal, the complete destruction of Iran. It saddens me to see Iranians any where in the world, hyphenated or not, sympathize with Saddam and see it as a payback for the present regime. Are they unaware that by sympathizing with him they increase the chance of more Iranian blood being spilled? Where is their sense of loyalty to the people? Where is their



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sense of fairness?

On many occasions and without valid reasons, Iranians are depicted as something they are not. One of the prime examples of this came during the war between Kuwait and Iraq, when the movie *Not Without My Daughter* was released. This film was filmed in Turkey and Israel, but the story focuses on the brutality of one husband and the audience is left to believe that all Iranians have similar traits. Sure some of us who continue to protest against this notion but there is not enough to make a change. Why do we as a group allow ourselves to be depicted like this? This administration has finally realized the evils of Saddam, Iranians have known these evils for many years. Yet it is the Iranians who are getting the backlash of the administrations feelings. Are Iraqis' harassed at the borders or denied visas?

I ask you, is there any justification for Iranians being denied visas to this country? Is there any reason they need to be scrutinized and fingerprinted at the borders? Is there any reason for the elderly parent to be united with their children, possibly for the last time. The terrorists responsible for the attacks on this country on September 11, 2002 were identified as Lebanese, Egyptians, Pakistanis and Saudi's, not Iranians. Why then are Iranians included in the visa restrictions, fingerprinted and harassed? Why would this country suddenly deny a visa to a famous Iranian director and artist? Are the Iranian people guilty by association? Is this American justice? Are Iranian people to be punished forever for the acts of a few in the 1979 hostage taking, an act 99% of the people deplored, is this the American way? Granted after September 11 we all walk nervously and are unsure of the future, but to make enemies with people who have nothing but admiration and love for this country will only seek to fuel the fire of hatred.

While I ask the question, I receive my answer. Iranians have done this to themselves. Yes, we are bright and yes we are strong but we have difficulty uniting, unless it is for a party. I remember a trip to Virginia, where my daughter attended school. On the way, we stopped for lunch. The restaurant was very crowded. Since we were on a schedule, I wanted to know how long our wait would be. I approached the hostess and maitre de. Greeting them in Persian, I asked the anticipated wait time. One gentleman turned to me, and then loudly in English told me that when my time had come I would be notified. I was shocked by his reaction. My face reddened and sweat poured from my forehead. My kids took the opportunity to remind me that not all Iranians are happy to meet another Iranian.

That weekend the school was honoring students who were in their third year. I was standing in one corner of the field and was fascinated by the diverse group that stood in front of me. Though different in many ways they shared one common thing, a bright child. I noticed three Iranian couples off to the left and again became excited. I walked over and greeted them in Persian. They all turned and greeted me but as I carried on a conversation I could notice them stepping back, looking around and walking away. In two days I had met a dozen Iranians, hyphenated and not, who were embarrassed by their mother tongue, embarrassed by their ethnicity. Over the next few days whenever I ran into these couples I would intentionally turn away to avoid any additional discomfort. This was and is something that I will never understand. How can people from the same soil, who speak the same language and look the same way, want to distance themselves from one another?

Are these the same people who support Saddam, a man who enjoyed inflicting pain on Iranians? Do they not understand the price Iranians in Iran will pay for this support? Do they have no sense of fairness? All of this made me remember a BBC radio interview I heard the night before. An Iraqi official was being interviewed. He was asked how he felt about Saddam's brutality and his attack on Halabcheh, a Kurdish village in Iraq. He answered with an uncanny calmness in his voice that the acts were inflicted on that village by Iranians, not Saddam. I could not believe what I was hearing. Shame on him for this blatant lie. And shame on all of us who support this brutality and without reservation accept this and other lies. How can you support such a man? Is it because you have issues with the present regime in Iran? If that is the case my friends then rethink your position. This regime like so many other governments and dynasties will not end in time, but your roots are ever lasting. Shame on all who turn their back on the people they left behind.

When I make these statements I am often misconstrued. I am, as most of us here are, American. This is the country that I decided to make my home, the country where my children were born. Their roots and my roots grow deeper as they give birth to the next generation. This country gives me the ultimate freedom to speak out for or against our policies. I am not afraid to exercise this freedom. I am not afraid of being looked at as a foreigner. America, since its inception, is made up of foreigners. But all of these other ethnic groups Israelis, Italians, English, Polish, Spanish, Dutch, Africans, Irish, Orientals, etc. have united themselves within their group. They

do not do this to remain close to their traditions they do this to have strength to fight injustices forced upon them by virtue of their race, creed and color.

On so many occasions I have asked our readers to leave the change in the Iranian regime to those trained for the mission. On so many occasions I have asked our readers living within or outside of the United States to concentrate their efforts on matters that directly impact our children's lives and the lives of future generations. We must understand that we are all part of a new ethnicity (American) but because it is such a new identity strength must be found in the subcultures that make up America. We therefore must rally together and seek to be strong as other ethnic groups in this country or abroad. We must seek to be represented in all walks of life. We must seek to be represented in all levels of our governments. And, we must never be ashamed to be who we are! **Assimilate** but do not **acquiesce** out of fear!!! Our voice must be strong to defuse the injustices inflicted on Iranian -Americans and Iranians all over the world. Our voice must be strong enough to change the direction of the finger that always points at Iran and Iranians, with every unpleasant event that arises in the world. Why is it that only Iranians are the recipients of the arrow of hate when the true culprits masquerade as friends? Only when we have a strong voice will we be able to fight against legislation that keeps parents from being reunited with their children, our children from visiting the country of their roots or being fingerprinted at the borders. Only when we have a strong voice will we be able to legitimize our existence!

Fortunately for you my grandson is awake. He has been staring at me the past few minutes. I now have another excuse to stop writing. A smile formed on his face as I returned his stare. This makes my eyes fill with tears, tears that I wipe before I hold him. I let out a deep sigh, pick him up and place a long kiss on his forehead. Suddenly my body is relaxed. In my arms I know that he feels secure. He is the epitome of innocence. Will this innocence be lost? Can I, can we, as a world, prevent this? I pray that all the children of the world can feel safe forever. May he and they never have to experience the turmoil of my life. As I am thinking this thought, he grabs my finger. With the touch of his hand, I receive a message. Yes, my love you are right! My pain and suffering do not near the level of the pain and suffering of so many others. Perhaps the words I write to you, my dear readers, in this editorial are harsh but I truly believe that they need to be said to ease the pain of those who share my culture.

Shahrokh Alavi

Film Review:

IRAN VEILED APPEARANCES**A Documentary Film
by Thierry Michel****Negar-Anna Ahkami**

A handful of Iranians in New York were fortunate to discover a screening of a documentary on contemporary Iran, discreetly advertised as part of a Belgian film festival at the Walter Reade Theater. The documentary, *Iran Veiled Appearances* (*Iran sous le voile des apparences*), was made by Belgian filmmaker Thierry Michel, who had decided prior to September 11th, 2001 to explore and unravel the stereotypical Western views of Iran as the “cradle of fundamentalism.”

As one Iranian audience member pointed out during the Q&A with the Director, it’s curious that it took a Belgian man to reveal about Iran what Iranians could not. Mr. Michel was quick to respond that the restrictions placed on him by the religious authorities in making the film were still less harsh than those imposed on his Iranian counterparts. And while the effectiveness of the film is a product of Mr. Michel’s sensitivity to the subject matter and his persevering through theocratic hoops to get the film made, it also must be attributed to the warmth and openness of all of the Iranians he interviewed. Iranian viewers recalling an era when political dissent could not even be whispered, for fear of being heard by government spies, will flinch at the candor of the pro-reform secular Iranians brazenly frontal on camera.

The documentary begins at a funeral for an assassinated Iranian journalist, and depicts the outcry of the intellectuals who mourned him. The ensuing scenes witness, and even humanize, Islamic extremists in acts of worship and praise of their martyrs (from Hossein, to Khomeini, to the soldiers of the Iran-Iraq war). This juxtaposition creates interesting parallels: on the one hand Iranian intellectuals mourn the political martyrdom of proponents of freedom of expression; on the other hand, the religious extremists mourn (and celebrate) their martyrs for Islam. When the filmmaker shifts to a scene of spirited Iranian teens seeking refuge from this climate of mourning, violence, and enforced obedience in the mountains surrounding Tehran, it becomes clear that Mr. Michel’s interest lies in highlighting the polar extremes in contemporary Iran, and not in sensationalizing fundamentalism (although the scenes focusing on the religious Iranians were unquestionably disturbing).

While the subject of defiant Iranian youth has gained popularity among Western journalists in recent years, the moving scenes of Iranian teenagers indulging in small

acts of freedom in the mountains, out of the Bassijis’ reach — and other scenes of youth in a drama school, in a college dormitory, and a gorgeous final scene which I won’t describe here — capture the anger, frustrations, and spirit of the Iranian youth more intensely than anything I have seen or read on the subject. Perhaps this lies in the Director’s warmth towards his interviewees and his restraint in using devices to frame their words with voiceovers or leading questions. Directly witnessing the passionate dissent without intrusive journalistic filters was an intensely raw and powerful experience.

It is clear that Mr. Michel cares about the struggles for freedom in Iran and that he regards Iranians (even those devoted to the ideals of the Islamic regime) as humans with dignity, and not as the veiled Others and turbaned monsters often appearing in one way or another in the American media. Nor does he have the agenda or preconceived notions of American journalists covering Iran since the Revolution — with their tendencies to frame Iran through the premise of the hostage crisis, terrorism and anti-American chants, as if they were appropriate starting points for “understanding Iran.”

My criticism of the film is perhaps a matter of what was edited out or not shown. In its emphasis on youth as symbols for dissent, *Iran Veiled Appearances* risks simplifying the Iranian secular reform movement as one that is largely a product of fed-up children of Islamic revolutionaries. In not mentioning the secular aspects of the Iranian Revolution (simply referred to here as the “Islamic Revolution”), and the complexities of how the Islamic regime took power, Mr. Michel unwittingly perpetuates a media stereotype of a fundamentalist Revolution. Although this secular dissent was perhaps less visible and evidently less photogenic to journalists and photo-journalists during the Revolution and the years thereafter — the outright failure of American journalists to mention a secular dissent that existed long before the fashionable subject of Khatami-era youth, reflects their general failure to look far beyond the stereotypes perpetuated by their peers. While it is otherwise clear that Mr. Michel is willing and able to see beyond the veil, it is a pity that he fell into this one trap.

My other criticism with this brave film rests with the gentleman who did the narration voice-overs, in his cringe-worthy pronunciation of “EYE-ran,” “EYE-raq” and “Shit-ism.” While this was laughable given the film’s sensitive treatment of Iran — and forgivable given that Thierry Michel is a French-speaking Belgian who probably didn’t pick up on this it would still be worth a trip to the editing room to dub these words with improved pronunciations, given that this is a film so worth seeing by both Iranian and American audiences.

Iran Veiled Appearances (*Iran sous le voile des apparences*) has not yet been released. Be on the lookout for possible screenings in the next few months. The filmmakers are presently in negotiations with distributors for a U.S. release sometime in the spring of 2003.

BETWEEN WORD AND IMAGE

Modern Iranian Visual Culture

Grey Gallery, New York

Most art exhibitions are meant to move the viewers through the use of its aesthetics. The exhibitions are usually a representation of the artist's talents. *Between Word and Image, Modern Iranian Visual Culture* now on exhibit at the Grey Art Gallery in New York not only provides artistic beauty but also takes the viewers on an emotional roller coaster ride that is meant to shock the senses; it does in truth succeed.

The exhibit spans art achievements in art from the '60s to the '70s through posters, paintings, collage, sculptures and photographs. On their face the works exemplify the talents of the creators but a deeper look into their work reveals a hidden and deeper message. The art in this exhibit is meant to send a message, perhaps not at the time of their making, but certainly in retrospect. When you enter the exhibit you are met with an oversized collage by Hossein Zenderoudi entitled *The Hand*. Its size alone demands your attention but as you step back the image of the hand grows stronger. A bronze sculpture by Parviz Tanalali is called *Heech*. The title in and of itself is significant because the word interpreted means nothing. The sculpture means everything and nothing as the curves and bends show the pain of the model. The most significant sculpture of the exhibit is another by Parviz, *We Are Happy Locked Within Holes*. Though completed pre-revolution the title allows the viewer liberal interpretation. Who were happy and where are the holes that locked them away into this bronze tomb?

Another area of the exhibit is dedicated to the photographic works of Abbas. The photographs are displayed in yearly. The scenery and expressions of the subjects change as the years pass by. The carefree faces of the women in the *Hairdressing Salon* are replaced with faces of *Bewilderment in Young Girl at Anti-Shah Demonstration*. The faces of bewilderment change to joy in



Parviz Tanavoli
We Are Happy Locked Within Holes, 1970.
 Bronze on travertine, 30 x 7 1/4 x 10 3/4 in., including base.
 Grey Art Gallery, New York University

Women Welcome the Ayatollah Khomeini Upon His Return From Exile. What makes this photograph so powerful are the faces and hands swinging in a background against the black material of the chador. Why, you wonder, are these women so joyful? And then you realize that they are unaware of how their future plays out. The photographs allow the viewer to get a flavor of the change in decadence in the new regime. The generals who under the Shah were adorned with colored with golden braids and medals, with boots of fine quality leather, are stripped of the glitter after the Revolution. Perhaps this is a way of showing less is better. Yet, is less really better?

Abbas's photographs range from the depth and beauty to horrific ugliness. Once you make your way through the section, you are ready for a reprieve. This is temporally given in the basement where you will find the poster display. From a distance your eyes focus on a poster by Monterza Momayez. At first the images are clean and colorful. The closer you get, however, the beauty becomes distorted. The colorful tulips seen from the distance become fists whose stems are buried into the fallen body of a man or a woman. The poster bares the inscription "Tulips have bloomed from the blood of the nation's youth." Other posters display the importance of the women's role in the Revolution and still others unveil the hatred of America's control over the Shah and Iran's oil.

This exhibit was put together under the direction of the director of the gallery, Lynn Gumpert with co-curator Fereshteh Daftari. Ms. Daftari has brought to New York a collection of art mediums that will remain forever in the minds of those who see them. If she was intent on showing the good, the bad and the ugly from her motherland, she has flawlessly succeeded. Her choices in truth are a clear representation of how the winds of peace and war can change the face and landscape of a nation.

What is presented to the reader here is a brief account of the life of one of the most distinguished personalities of Iranian music, literature, and art, well known among music scholars. He is one of the musical icons who forged an unbreakable bond between Iranian and Spanish musical traditions. His name is Zaryâb. In fact, he who took eastern arts to the farthest reaches of the western world, has been the subject of much discussion and writing which has given birth to the field of "Zaryâb studies" and his role in cultural history and civilization, particularly the Andalusian music in Spain has been well known.

The life of young Zaryâb, who left Fars, the ancient Persian homeland, and traveled to Baghdad to study music, is sensational but is not a Fable.

After two disastrous centuries of early Islamic rule, particularly the Omayyid Dynasty, Baghdad became the seat of Abbassid rulers, including Hâroon Al-Rashid and his sons. Living in pleasure and feasting and drinking, which were perused by Arabs of that era was clearly visible.

Celebrations and mirth of the Sassanid court was the pattern to be followed in the Califs' Court. Singers and dancers from far away lands would serve the Calif and Arab generals. In Califs' celebrations and audiences they would sing what they remembered of songs of past times and what they had learned from Iranian captives. These songs became the bases for new songs and music. Musicians who were familiar with songs and music of Khosrovani Court gained fame and fortune thanks to their artistic acumen.

Baghdad at that time had become the center of artistic activities, particularly music. However, prior to Zaryâb's travels in North Africa and his arrival in Spain, music for the victorious Arabs of this land had not progressed beyond the music of the era preceding Islam which was known as the "Jaheliyat" era and "no other personality before or after him became the subject of so much public respect and adoration."

What has so far been written and said

about this Iranian musician has been the result of research by musical scholars and historians writing articles and books on Arab music and many more about Spanish music particularly Andalusian and Flaminco. Among them one can name Erlanger in *The History of Arab Music*, Christiansen in *Music in the Sassanid Era*, Henry Farmer in *Arabic Ood (lute) that has a turning handle and makes sound with a Bow*, and *The History of Arab Music and Its Influence on European Music*, and again Farmer in an article on Eastern music entitled "*Ibn-e Sina's Steps on the Ood*," Larrea in *The Music of Spain and Arab*, and by the same author, *Flamenco Music*, and by Leblon, *The Music of Zigan and Flamenco*.

In his book, *Al-Aghâni*, Abulfarag Esfahâni writes about Zaryâb as no more than he was a pupil of Es-hâgh Mooseli.

regarded beauty and art the same manner as Zaryâb. A well-dressed man himself, he was able to influence the fashion of his time and teach people the fine art of dress. Albeit he spoke Arabic with a Farsi accent, his command of Arabic made everyone enjoy his company. Even in his culinary skills he showed much artistic taste and elegance. But above all, his experience and training was in playing the Ood.

Louie Provençal, the renowned historian of Spanish civilization says about Zaryab, "he was a genius and his influence in Spanish society of the time not only encompassed music but also all aspects of society." Titus Burkhart the German historian of Islam writes, "he was a genius musical scholar and at the same time the one who brought Iranian music to Spain and consequently to all of the western world. He was able to replace the primitive ways of Arabs of that time with Iranian elegance."

Julien Ribera, the great master of Spanish music, emphasizes the Iranian aspects of Zaryâb's work and personality. In a speech delivered in Cordoba Academy, he asserts, "the style and method of Zaryâb

must be seen as a tradition that began in the East which represents the movement this musical genius and innovator brought about. The continuation of this movement was instrumental in the development of the Arab world. And let us not forget that Zaryâb was an Iranian artist."

According to historians, the Mooseli family was Iranians who had settled in Baghdad. Ibrâhim son of Mâhân, born to a woman named Shâhak, was born in the city of Ray. Because he was musically gifted and blessed with high intelligence, he went to Baghdad where he first performed for Calif Al-Mehdi and later served in the Court of Hâroon Al Rashid as the head of the singers and musicians. He was the first musician to construct Arab music on the basis of Iranian musical doctrine.

His son, Es-hâgh, who was similarly known as Mooseli, became the most celebrated musician of the Court after the

ZARYAB

A Genius Iranian Musician

Ghassem Talebzadeh



Unfortunately, in past and present writings, Iranian musical scholars' understanding of Zaryâb does not exceed that of Abulfarag Esfahâni while Arab writers have written considerably more about Zaryâb. Thirteenth-century A.D. Moroccan author Al-Tiffasi writes, "with the arrival of Zaryâb in Cordoba in Andalusia, the Arab music, which up to that time was the music of Camel riders of barren Arabian desert, was noticeably changed." Dozy writes, "Not only was Zaryâb a distinguished musician but also an outstanding poet and astronomer and what was the source of astonishment was his spirit and understanding of things beautiful. No one cared about art and other life's phenomena as did he."

These special appreciations were evident in his musical performance. Zaryâb had an outstanding personality and showed clear good taste and aptitude in his profession. In that period no artist had

death of his father. Among his most notable contributions was to arrange Iranian music, which at that time was performed widely in Arab Courts and gatherings. He arranged music on the basis of finger placement on the musical instrument Ood.

In *Al Aqâni*, Abulfarag Esfahâni reports, "Es-hâq's library was one the largest and richest in Baghdad". Esfahâni also reports Calif Al-Motevakel claimed that, "with the death of Es-hâgh my empire has lost some of its esteem." Many of the young who were thirsty to learn music, studied with Es-hâgh and later achieved position of mastery. Among them was a young man named Ali Ibn-e Nâfe also known as Zaryâb, who according to all accounts was among his best pupils. He possessed such talent that he surpassed other students with ease and in a short time became the talk of the town.

Soon word of his talent reached Haroon Al-Rashid who asked to hear songs and tunes. Zaryâb performed before the Calif with such skill that Hâroon became immediately enchanted with him and ordered Zaryâb to be included among the Court's musicians. However, envious of his gift, Es-hâgh viewed the young Zaryâb as a threat to his position and gave him a word of warning, and advised him to move to another place away from Hâroon Al-Rashid and even suggested he should select the western-most part of the Moslem land for himself.

Ibn-e Hayyan and many other Arab writers and scholars who have narrated Zaryâb's life story readily accept this story. However, the research by Dr. Shojaedin Shafâ leads him to view this story with caution and not to accept it simply. "Hâroon Al-Rashid died in 809 A.D. and Zaryâb reached Andalusia in 821. Even if we assume that Zaryâb had left Baghdad in the last years of Calif Haroon's life, he must have spent 13 years between Baghdad and Andalusia.

However, given the events of his life one of which is his relatively short stay in Ghairouân, the most important period of his stay in north Africa, this period has to be considered as too long. It is conceivable that an attempt is made to conform his life to that of Bârbod, the musician and singer of the Court of the Sassanid King, Khosrow-Parviz. He too was the target of jealousy of the head of musicians. The fabulous story of Barbod, the skilled musician of the Sassanid Court, is written by Ferdowsi in his book *Shahnameh* or "The Book of Kings." Borhan-e Ghâteh says

about this well-known musician, "his origins were in the town of Jahrom, near Shiraz. He was unmatched in the skills of playing the Barbat ... and the Songs of the Kings are of his work."

In *Shahnameh* we are told the story of Sarkesh who was the leader and best musician of Khosrow-Parviz Court's minstrels, one day heard the news that a highly talented young Ood player with a divine voice had come to the Court in hopes of having an audience with the Shah as a musician. Sarkesh became disturbed at the news and tried to keep him away from the Shah, bribing the courtiers with money and charity not to speak of Bârbod.

However, Bârbod learned of the plot against him and asked the royal garden guard where the Shah rested to inform him of Shah's arrival and to allow him to climb a tree where he waited. When the Shah finally came into the garden, Bârbod, dressed in a green outfit, began to play his Ood high above the ground. The music pleased the Shah immensely. He inquired after the musician's identity to no avail and ordered servants to look for him.

Finally, after the third song, Shah demanded that the performer reveal himself. Bârbod climbed down from the tree, and kissed the ground as a sign of respect for the Shah. Khosrow-Parviz praised him, his music, and singing and placed him in charge of minstrels and musicians in the Court. However, Sarkesh's jealousy and distrust did not subside. He lied in waiting and eventually succeeded in killing Bârbod by poison.

It has been said that Bârbod had composed seven pieces of music for the seven days of the week, thirty for the thirty days of the month, which are also known as See Lahan (Thirty Melodies), and 360 pieces for the 360 days of the year, all of which are known as Khosravâni. The common thread between Zaryâb and Bârbod is known to be Zaryâb's 24 Nowba which are composed for 24 hours of the day.

Another narrative about Zaryâb has it that after Hâroon Al-Rashid, his son Amin (809 AD) became the Calif. Soon thereafter, his other son, Ma-moon rebelled against his brother, taking away the Califate from him (813 AD) and doing away with all his brother's agents and supporters under the pretext of corruption and treason. To avoid being seen as among Amin's supporters and admirers, Zaryâb fled Baghdad.

Zaryâb's name has been the subject of varying interpretations. Arabs and Eu-

ropeans have called him "Ziryab." Others have said that since Zaryâb had added a fifth string to the Ood and this string is the lowest string on Ood, he is called the founder of Zir-Persian word for beneath or Ziryâb. Others have thought that Zaryâb's name was the same as and linked to a black bird. The name of this bird that looks like a crow is "Abu Zaraq" which Europeans call Béo.

This bird is very intelligent and has a good memory. The comparison of Zaryâb to this bird was due to Zaryâb's dark skin. However, it is acknowledged that Zaryâb is completely an Iranian name. Its meaning as "the founder of gold" or "melted gold" is more reasonable and convincing. Ferdowsi has used the name Melted Gold. In *Al-Aghani*, Abulfarag Esfahâni believes the name Zaryâb is made of two words, gold and water — Zar meaning gold and Ab is the Farsi word for water — and has translated it as water like gold or melted gold. Ibn-e Al-Arabi believes the name Zaryâb is from the Farsi term Melted Gold.

Arabs consider Zaryâb to be from Baghdad because of their desire to connect this major personality of music to Arab nationality and civilization. They claim him as of their own on the basis of the time Zaryâb had lived in Baghdad. However, according to Dr. Shojaedin Shafâ, in that time period (809 A.D.), Baghdad was a young metropolis and had not yet achieved its identity and importance.

As Henri Pèrès reminds us in his book, *Andalusian Poetry in Classic Arabic*, being from Baghdad meant to be Iranian since the city had become Hâroon Al-Rashid's capital only in 762 A.D. and at that time the major political and artistic personalities of the Court were Iranians.

Because of Zaryâb's efforts, Arab Music and poetry was transformed from its primitive form. The elegies of desert nomads were influenced by Iranian poetry, literature and music. Joy, freedom, grace and elegance penetrated Arab art. The Court of Abasid Califs moved away from Islam's strict rules. No longer music and wine were considered to be sinful.

In that period a window of hope opened to music scholars and poets alike. Music scholars such as Ibrahim and Es-hâgh Mooseli were able to leave their imprint on history. Similarly, beautiful Iranian dancers, music scholars and musicians entered Arab courts, bringing with them joy into the gatherings of Arab gen-

erals and Calif's celebrations. Music scholars gained the prestige that they deserved and many Iranian artists laid the foundations of Arab music and art at the same time.

Sâdeq Neshât, the Aranian scientist and professor at the University of Cairo, describes Zaryâb in the following manner: "Zaryâb was a tall and thin man who, while he had maintained his Iranian accent, could speak and write poetry in Arabic. He could speak Farsi to Farsi speakers and overall his manners and habits testified to his rich cultural background."

Many Western writers and historians have objectively referred to Zaryâb as an Iranian musician. Among them are Dozy in *Het Islamism*, R.A. Nicholson in his book entitled, *The Literature of the Arab*, Farmer in *A History of Arabian Music* and Henry Pèrès in *La Poesie Andalouse en Arabe Clasique au 10th siecle* and Henry Levy in *The Legacy of Persia*.

The journey from Baghdad to Cordoba was wrought with hardship for Zaryâb. From the start, his heart was filled with fear and anxiety. To make matters worse, he was forced to make multiple stops on the way. His first stop was the court of Sultan Aglabide in the city of Ghairouan where he was received with much warmth and affection. He continued to enjoy peace and quiet in the Sultan's palace until he performed a newly composed song, recounting the story of a black mother, likening her to a crow. This angered the King. As it so happened, the King's mother was a black woman herself. While he did not order Zaryâb's execution, he was sentenced to 80 lashes and deportation. Once again, Zaryâb left his residence and the city in a great rush for Algeciras by way of Afrigyya (Northern Africa), and the Gibraltar where he was enthusiastically awaited.

Zaryâb met the Emir of Cordoba through a Jewish musician named Abu-Nassre-Mansour, also a townsman. Abu-Nassre-Mansour had heard Zaryâb's performance in Ghairouan and told Emir Al-Hokm, successor of Abdol-Rahmân Omvi, what he knew of Zaryâb's work and good reputation. However the Emir died before Zaryâb arrived. The Emir's son and successor, Abdol-Rahman the Second honored his father's wishes and in so doing provided Zaryâb with a thirty-year contract, in effect ensuring his lifetime stay in Cordoba, where Zaryâb lived until his death.

Ibn Khaldoun writes, "When Zaryâb

entered the Royal Court, Emir Abdul Rahman the Second personally greeted and welcomed the beloved musician. Between 822 and 857 A.D. Zaryâb remained in Cordoba, and devoted all his time and effort to the improvement and innovations in the music of Andalusia."

Zaryâb lived in the Emir's palace for some time but soon moved to his own palace, offered by his royal patron, where he lived in the lap of luxury on a 40,000 Dinars stipend until his death thirty years later. Without ever leaving Cordoba, Zaryâb was able to establish himself as a major and innovative modern Andalusian musician.

Among the innovations of the time, aside from societal events, establishment and management of a music conservatory are of special importance. It is rather difficult to imagine the establishment of an educational institution in the third century solely for the purpose of teaching music. Nevertheless, what Zaryâb accomplished is considered to be one of the most genius cultural innovations of his times.

Zaryâb's music conservatory provided music instruction in a systematic and methodical fashion whereas until then, not only was music taught one-on-one but it was also a forbidden fruit in the Islamic world. Soon numerous schools and conservatories modeled their own music instruction programs after Zaryâb's institution. Various authors point out to the remarkable fact that many nations, government and educational institutions across Europe began to follow and implement Zaryâb's instructional methods. Further, he was the first artist ever to wed orchestra to chorus.

It is said Zaryâb created an Orchestra that included one hundred flute and Ood players. One can assert with confidence that Zaryâb's orchestra created the foundation of modern orchestras.

While today's experts agree, an orchestra made up of one hundred flute and Ood players hints at an imbalance and further warn us to approach the subject with caution, it is also widely accepted among scholars and researchers that Zaryâb's innovations and orchestral organization revolutionized principles and practices of the era.

The techniques Zaryab used in his musical teachings were completely new and unprecedented for his time. He based musical composition on the three fundamental factors of rhythm, melody and understanding. Rhythm is the basis for the

marriage between music and words. Melody is the fabric of beauty and emotion; and finally, understanding and knowledge convey the preceding two factors and play a crucial role in the marriage of melody and rhythm.

Zaryâb discovered these three fundamental factors of music making, thus undoubtedly impacting western musical arts, for in his era church music was making great strides in new musical innovations and research. Zaryâb paid special attention to syllables and correct and clear pronunciation of lyrics. Today's conservatory pupils are taught to observe proper phonetics as clarity, manner of expression and accent are prized qualities any experienced vocalist must possess.

In addition to his technical genius, Zaryâb studied music from a psychological and astronomical standpoint as well. He believed music played a prominent role in the psychological relationships between individuals and helped to increase empathy among all people. He further believed in a special connection between the art of music and astrology. This connection is manifested in various forms in pre-Islam Indian and Persian compositions. Zaryâb believed in an eternal bond between the four strings of *Ood* and the four essences that ruled the human spirit. Even modern Iranians hold dear certain beliefs which may very well be remnants of ancient beliefs. Among these is the belief that a rhapsody played in morning-time would cause flowers to bloom, and birds to sing and twitter.

Iranians divided each of their musical scales into groups so as to correspond to parts of the day. There's no definitive information available on the four musical scales, which Zaryâb divided into 24 sections. To make this riddle more complicated, what Zaryâb himself had written on the topic was forever destroyed during the siege of Cordoba by Moroccan Berber tribes.

The twenty four sections of Zaryâb's composition called *Nobeh*, can be found in many Andalusian and Flamenco songs, many of which carry Iranian names such as *Dogâh*, *Segâh*, *Chahargâh*, *Panjgâh*, *Navâ*, *Zirkolâh*, *Norouz*, *Esfahan*, *Mâyeh*, *Nahovand*, *Dastân*, *Rast*, and *Shahnâz*. To name a few.

After the fall of the Califate in Cordoba in 1031 A.D. and the defeat of Nâsseri kings in Cordoba, the art of sing-

ing and music making based on Zaryab's Nobeih principles spread throughout Northern Africa. According to Al-Maghrī, Zaryab had composed 10,000 pieces, all of which he had memorized. The pieces were called "Marassem" (ceremony) or it can be also mime and remember the Iranians musical Dastgahs. There are some who believe that today's Iranian musical organizations are based on Zaryab's musical conventions because he used a triad of tempos in his work. Even though this is not a convincing explanation, because, after a long time, the Iranian music was rebuilt by Fārābi, Ibn-e Sina [Avecina] and others, musical compositions were placed on the Khorassan and Baghdad lute and thus regained their identity. However, what is important in this discourse is the link and correlation between the music of Iran and that of Andalusia. Zaryab's music influenced all neighboring countries. In Morocco it was called Gornati and in Tunisia Aulof, but regardless of the names, all these musical traditions found their roots in Zaryab's methods.

Ibn-e Hayyan reminds us in the 8th century that Zaryab's teachings were widespread in all of North Africa and his 'protocols' were performed over many years by professional singers and lay people of Andalusia alike.

Ibn Khaldoun also takes note of the prevalence of Zaryab's methodology and influence throughout Northern Africa. "The beauty of Andalusian music is evident in a series of concerts called Nobeih. In performance since the 12th century in Morocco, Zaryab's art is a grand legacy left for future generations. Not only did he teach us the new science of musicology, but he also educated us about music as a complete and inclusive art form.

Zaryab's music spread through North Africa and Andalus by Iranian musicians who introduced Iranian tunes and musical instruments to these nations. Indeed, Oriental scholars and researchers write at length about musical instruments commonly used in Arab music which have Iranian names such as Sournie, Robāb, Tanbour, Ood, Santour, Tār, Daf, Nay, Kamāncheh, and Chang. Among these writings are, *An Introduction to Andalus' Musical Instruments*, by Reynaldo Ferrandez Manzano; *History of Arab Music*, by Henry Farmer; *Arab Music*, by Erlanger; *Musical Instruments in the Muslim World*, by Jenkins; and *First Perform-*

mance with String Instruments, by Hanfi — an Arab writer.

Zaryab died in 857 A.D. in Cordoba, the city where he lived the last 30 years of his life and where also he had achieved fame and fortune. Zaryab's family played a critical and significant role in the preservation of his works and the stewardship of his artistic legacy. Zaryab had six sons and two daughters. However, scholars have not agreed on the number of Zaryab's children. Al-Maghrī reports 12 boys and tree girls while Ibn-e Hamzeh puts the number of his children at 10. What all historians do agree upon, however, is the fact that all Zaryab's children were musicians and singers. His eldest daughter, Alieh, married the Emir Abdul Rahman's Chancellor, Mohammad Ben Rostam, from the Iranian root, Rostamieh who ruled North Africa. His second daughter, Hamdouneh, married Hessam Ben Abdul Aziz. With the help of her brother-in-law, Asslam, she collected and published her father's compositions and tunes in a book called *Al-Aghāni Zaryab*. Sadly, this publication too was lost in the Moroccan siege of Cordoba.

Zaryab's influence on music and society at large is inconceivable; so much so that Henry Terrese, the 20th century French scholar writes, "undoubtedly one person alone cannot change a society so deeply." The Arab historian Al-Maghrī, who has written the most about the life and work of Zaryab, writes, "Never before or since Zaryab has an individual become the subject of this much affection and admiration."

Ibn Khaldoun, the most prominent Arab historian also addresses Zaryab's popularity: "Andalusian music was advanced by Zaryab and passed on to generation after generation. His influence was an ocean that swept over all of Africa and left us an eternal legacy." R. Nicholson, the distinguished British orientalist of the 20th Century, observes that, "he was a complete artist, leaving behind important works not only in the areas of culture and art, but also in every societal aspect. So much so that even kings imitated him as a model until the very last day of Islamic rule in Andalusia."

As we have said, nothing is left of Zaryab's music. This is a tragedy that nations who suffer invasions by savages and victorious tribes have faced. Throughout Iranian history, invaders, ranging from Alexander the Great, who was Aristotle's

pupil and thus could have been expected to be a civilized man, to the Arab nomads and the northern tribes who attacked Iran repeatedly and caused much death and destruction, all savagely eliminated the defeated nation's culture and art.

In the Western world, invasions of neighboring nations have caused much death and destruction. However, in these instances, the artistic works have not only been preserved, but also by recording the existing works and providing them to others, were saved from possible destruction. The invention of print prevented the destruction of numerous works. Thus, future artists can benefit from the works of the past and can help the development and dissemination of their nations' art and culture.

The history and the culture of European civilization suggest that western scientists and artists preserved their works for future generations. Even if those intellectual, artistic or spiritual works were in their preliminary stages or had not born the expected fruits, they were still recorded so others and the future generations could use them in achieving innovations.

Eastern artists and scientists, in particular Iranians, in contrast, locked their discoveries and works in their memories in the hope that someone can use them in the future. Often times artists and scientist who faced the wrath of rulers or the religious fanatics washed their writings with water to save their life from the executioners.

In the Western world, the extreme ravages of intellectual suppression during the Middle Ages, imposed by the religious fanaticism of the ruling elite, was mostly limited to this period of European society and politics. In Iran, however, it can be said, that Islam has been able to extend this kind of intellectual suppression for 1,400 years. As a result, in today's Iranian society there are scientists, writers and artists who are still burning in the fires of inhumane prejudices and laws. Their works are censored and banned. They are thrown into prisons and tortured or are quietly writing and creating fully expecting to be subjected to another cultural attack and massacre. ■

* Translated into English by: Kathy and Farhad Malekfazeli



An Interview with **ABBAS MOAYERI**

Shahrokh Ahkami

I arrived at the atelier of Mr. Moayeri in Paris after a metro ride. When I reached his studio, I was surprised to see its grandness. I entered quietly and looked at the many paintings that filled the walls and easels. Also, on the walls were confirmations of his talents, announcements and newspaper articles of his lifetime exhibitions and achievements. The smell of paint filled the room. I noticed that he was engaged in a teaching of Persian miniatures to a young woman who, though not familiar with Persian miniature painting, is an accomplished artist.

I did not want to interrupt their conversation and painting session so I sat there listening to their conversation.

After the class he walked over to me and greeted me with a genuine warmth. He was as I had imagined. His face is strong yet gentle as is his personality. We began our conversation....

Mr. Moayeri, how did this begin for you?

In December of 1970, after playing in a theater production of *Wis and Ramin*, a play written by Mahin Tadjadod and directed by Avanessian, I left Iran for France. There I began to teach the painting of the miniature and also ancient Persian artwork. In 1973 two of my paintings were exhibited at the Nice International exhibition, where I took second prize. This gave me the confidence in my talent and soon I participated in many exhibitions. One of the most important to me was at the Gallery Francois de Valmbrose on Rue Mouftard, Paris in 1976.

When did you become interested in painting?

Oh, since I was a child. By twelve I was a student of Master Ashtiani, who was a student of the Grandmaster Kamal-Almolk. My mother's uncle Professor Pour Davoud encouraged me to study with the Grandmaster Hossein Behzad, which I did. I attended school at the School of Arts and College of Decorative Arts where I graduated first in the field of sculpture. When Master Hossein Behzad passed away in 1967, I was approached by Mr. Pahlbod, the Minister of Art and Culture in Iran. He asked me to teach Master Behzad's classes at The College of Fine Arts. I was certainly honored and taught there until I left for France, three years later, in 1970.

At the same time I was studying my Professor Fereydon Rahnema, the aesthetics professor asked me if I would play the part of Siavoush in a movie *Siavoush* at Persepolis.

Were you serious about your acting?

I have never took acting as seriously as my painting, but after this movie I did continue my acting career at a number of theaters including the International Art Festival in Shiraz directed by Bahman Mohassas at the Ogen UNESCO and at the Odip Shahryar, where I was directed by Iraj Anvar.

You also have musical talents.

Yes, I play the sitar and have given concerts in Paris with Jamshid Shemirani as well as other prestigious musicians. But I must say despite these wonderful opportunities, painting is my passion.

Has your work been ever published?

Yes, 1973 was the first time in *Amateur d'art*. It was of my painting "Attente" or "Waiting" in translation. I am proud to say that the original remains on exhibit in Italy. It was also published in the book called *Collectionairs and Beaux Arts*. Interesting enough this was printed before my first exhibition.

Can you speak a little about your life as a student under Astitanti and Hossein Behzad?

I personally prefer modernism but have always displayed in my work a background of Persian art. I believe one must respect the culture and identity of an artist. The Persian culture is very opposite to that of the west. Persians, as they approached the dawn of civilization saw God getting farther away from us, so we reached toward the sky.

In the West, on the other hand, God became closer to humans. An example of this is found with the Greek gods as they gathered in the Olympus hills. This, in a way creates a problem for us because we have two different sources for our thoughts and philosophy. The Persian, in painting and life, always sees things from inside

the soul and spirit, while the West, even during the Renaissance Period, sees things as they are. An example ... the west would paint nature as it is seen, Persians see nature and enjoy it, but then mix it with their inside spirit. This has led to their own school of painting.

What is a miniature?

A miniature is a word that the west has placed on the Persian painting. It means fine and delicate work. Most of the Persian paintings, were used for pictures in books, which the Westerners, while in Persia and the Ottoman Empire, made copies and compared them to their larger paintings, thus coming up with the word "miniature."



Most not acquainted with this matter think the miniatures means little people with little faces that look Chinese.

This is because of the book paintings, which minimize everything. If one goes

to Iran however, you will see larger paintings that exist in Persepolis. And remember before Islam the paintings of Mani were large murals and were of the same style.

So what you are saying is that the miniature did not come from the China to Persia or after Islam, therefore, paintings of this type still existed before Islam?

There is no relation between the Chinese and Persian miniature. The style of painting goes back to the 3rd century AC with Mani and "Manicheism." Mani was a painter who used his paintings to publicize and spread his beliefs and I quote

"my work as a prophet is very different from my other brothers and messengers who have not done their teachings in writing as I did. These words are taken from the book of Mani and his teachings written by Geovid. So Mani for most of his religious teachings used paintings and in reality he mixed his statements with his paintings.

When did the miniature painting adapt a more normal size of humans and animals?

Before I answer this question, I must give you some background. Mani and his followers were captured and buried alive under the ground. Some of his believers or followers escaped from Persia and went to Central Asia, which was under the rule of the Alghour Dynasty (Muslim China), who were Turkish Kings who converted to Manism.

In 1910 Russian, German, and French archeologists found the Tour Khan in the desert of Gobee. Among these archeologists was Frances Fonlecoq who found paintings printed on leather. They collected them and placed them in a German museum. Unfortunately, many were destroyed during the WWII bombings, but those that survived were printed in a book.

These paintings are similar to the Iranian miniature painting after Islam. They

are similar to the Persian miniature in technique and color (these kinds of paintings and the artists after the Moguls conquered Persia returned to Persia).

This is the reason the faces of these paintings of this period look Oriental or Chinese. Additionally, most of the rulers of the Moguls, Teimourian (oriental race) looked like this. Accordingly, most of the paintings were drawn to reflect their image. But, these paintings belong only to Persia and Persians. In Manicheism the artist tries to illustrate the hidden world (heaven) not the material world. They were trying in their painting to make everything perfect, meaning a heavenly world was a weightless world. That is why most of the people in these paintings never touch the ground, they seem to float and swim.

Again this is because the basis of the miniature is spiritual and philosophical.

in these compositions, which illustrates the perfection of humanity or evolution. Normal and larger sizes of people are always seen in the castles before the Safavid Dynasty but they have been destroyed.

In the Persian painting it is as if you mix water and fire together. The Persian painting is modern. Henry Matisse, the father of modern European painting, stated that he was very inspired by the Persian painting.

What kind of style is your present painting?

I am inspired by my Persian identity and even though I follow a modern vision I try to put the Persian effects on my work in the Persian miniature in the hope that it will improve it not ever destroy it.

Perhaps! For 18 years I studied the paintings of Persia especially the books and material I could find at the National Library of France where I intensified my studies for an additional two years. After doing this I made the decision to teach this art at my studio. At the same time an institution was created in Paris. It was organized to protect and preserve artwork that was on the verge of destruction. They came to me for help with the Persian miniature and to open miniature teaching classes. I opened these classes and studio and then in another called Space Amorc. I also worked in many other studios in Paris created by the Paris Ministry of Culture.

It is interesting to know that the Europeans today do not like the present miniature being painted in Iran. They do, however, respect the original miniatures that are found in the *Shahnameh* (Book of Kings), the Herat and the Safavid period. They do not like this new commercial miniature. They can immediately recognize this commercial miniature immediately and reject them. I would also like to say that I have had many students representing many different fields, painters, architects, intellectuals who have really done magnificent work in this field.

In my studios I have taught 50 French students, one Japanese, three Lebanese and one American. All of them came to Paris to attend my classes.

Persians have reached successful levels in business and trade, but in the international world of artists there is still a deficiency. Why do you believe this is the case?

We are constantly working to meet the international level of recognition and I really do not know why it has not occurred at this point, but I am confident that we will soon reach that level.

Can you please tell us a little bit more about your paintings?

The essence of my work is very



In these paintings there is no sense of time. The entire background is full of light as exhibited by the use of gold and silver. Today we still use this gold and silver. Gold symbolizes light and day, and silver symbolizes, which gets dark by oxidation over the passage of time.

During the Islamic period the same style of the Mani period was followed. The people in motifs are in a spiral shape

You spend most of your time teaching the young artists about Persian miniatures and painting. Perhaps this will echo out through Europe and farther and create an interest in Persian art for the rest of the world.

similar to the Persian composition and symbolism. As I stated earlier, I always try to follow this. This period was a time that was very geometric. I am a bit more liberal with the use of color but I still try, in my coloring, to keep the Persian inspiration pure whether it be the miniature painting, Qajar period painting or a Teahouse painting. I also always try to use my mind to create nature not copy it.

You brought up three different periods of Persian painting in the last question, the miniature, Qajar and Teahouse (Ghahvah-Khaneh). Can you



elaborate on this?

The artwork of these three periods never became disconnected by revolutions, change in governments or regimes. The artist and the art has continued in the same direction. I, on the other hand, change with the times.

Getting back to your work for a moment, I see that you often paint out of the borders can you explain why you do this?

This shows that the artist has stepped out of his life, his manmade borders and has reached toward the Earth and sky, to the other side of life. "celeste et la vie terrest." In my paintings everyone has their own life and does not interfere with the life of someone else's. "Coexistence Pacific."

Who is a real artist?

First, it is important for an artist to value humanity and humans. An artist must think freely and always preserve his thoughts. He should not sell himself or his art easily. An artist can either give in to the pressures of surviving or remain independent. I choose to be independent so that I can think and write and paint freely. It is with art, culture, poetry and music that one can liberate a society. I often tell my friends that in an oppressive society my sitar is more powerful than a thousand machine guns.

What is your message to the young generations of Persians and to Persians living outside of Persia?

Study more and more Persian history because always the past is a light for the future. Never forget the philosophers, poets and writers that have worked so hard for Persia. Read and study their work because most of their attempts have been for humanity, peace, equality and liberty. Read them and spread this knowledge to others. ■

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Interview with

FIRST LADY LAURA BUSH



Setareh Derakhshesh

On September 9, 2002, Setareh Derakhshesh, the Editor of Mehregan Magazine, who also works as a journalist at the Voice of America, interviewed First Lady, Mrs. Laura Bush. In interview, Mrs. Bush discusses women's rights, education, US-Iran relations and the September 11th tragedy.

We are two days away from the anniversary of September 11th. What has changed in your life since that day, not as far as your goals but as far as what you're more aware of right now?

Starting from the day of September 11th and going for this whole year, I'm so much more aware of our freedoms that we have in our country that I think a lot of Americans took for granted. Certainly, as we watched the Taliban in Afghanistan and we saw where little girls couldn't go to school and women weren't even allowed out of their homes without a male family member to escort them, it contrasted so strongly with the values and the freedoms that we have here. The freedom to be educated, the good public schools that every child of every race, of every religion, of every socioeconomic background can go to, those are the things that Americans really are so proud of about our country. But they are also the ways that we know that

other countries could get out of poverty. For instance, if they made sure that every single child had an opportunity to be really knowledgeable and have a really good education.

What do you think has changed in the lives of the American people since that day?

I think the American people have really come to find that they have the inner strength that they know other generations of Americans had. My parents' generation, for instance, who fought in World War II and defeated Nazism. I'm not sure we thought we had that. We might not have been so sure that we had that sort of inner strength and compassion, grace, that has been demonstrated since September 11th, the compassion that people showed when they lined up to give blood for the Red Cross, or when they sent cards. Or one town in Louisiana, for instance, raised the money and bought a new fire truck, a new fire engine, for New York City, to replace the one that had been ruined in the fall of the World Trade Center. All of those things really proved to us once again how strong these values are that Americans believe in.

What do you think the legacy of 9/11 is? What are the lessons that we've learned?

Well, I hope that we'll all look at our lives again, that we'll figure out ways to make our lives more meaningful since September 11th, to honor the lives of the

people who were lost on September 11th. People are deciding to become rescue workers, to become policemen or firemen or teachers, or all the jobs that serve other people. I like that. But, also I think people are wanting to volunteer for the Peace Corps, for instance. The President has asked that the Peace Corps increase their numbers, so that Peace Corps members can go out around the world and let people know about American values and what Americans are really like. We hear that there are 76,000 requests for applications for Peace Corps jobs for only 7,000 slots. I'm so proud of that. I'm proud that Americans really want to help and want to get the message out around the world about what Americans believe in and what Americans are like.

What came to your mind when you heard the news about the tragic events?

Well, when I first heard about the first plane, I was just leaving this room actually. I was going off to the Senate Education Committee. I was going to brief the Senate Education Committee on the results of the Summit on Education. As I got in the car, my Secret Service agent told me that the first plane had hit. Of course I assumed it was an accident, some terrible accident. But then, before I got to Capitol Hill, we heard about the second plane, so I knew it was an act of terrorism. That's what we all assumed. But, you know, for a long time that morning, as we watched those images on TV, we weren't sure, we

didn't really know. The flight members, the people who were on the flight, Flight 93, were the ones who started hearing, from their cell phones and from the in-flight telephones, about what had happened. They were able then to get up as a group and rush the cockpit and foil that plane from crashing into some other target. All of those things really, that's just another example, I think, of the strength that the American people have shown since the very first moments of what happened on September 11th.

You have said that education produces greater understanding and tolerance. Do you believe that lack of education could have been a cause for the tragic events of September 11th on the United States?

I think those events were caused by lack of tolerance, by hate, by evil. What I hope is that every child all over the world will have a chance, every girl and every boy, will have a chance to have a really good education, that teaches tolerance, that talks about the value of human life, that lets people know that human and innocent lives are valuable. Really, all civil society is based upon those ideas, that human life is valuable, that you don't attack innocent children and women and men, who have no idea, who are just going about their business of their own life. I hope that that's something that we can spread worldwide, because it's so important.

You have turned your passion for books into a full-time devotion for promoting learning, teaching, reading. What do you think the effect of education could be in the future of democracy and freedom in the world?

I think that, for one thing, we know that countries that have highly educated populations have more prosperity. Certainly it's a way to spread wealth around the world, to have more prosperous societies and less poverty, if people are educated. But I also think a really good education helps us understand each other. If

we understand each other's religions, if we understand that we have so many more similarities, because we're human beings, than we have differences, no matter what the difference of our culture or our skin color or our religion, that in so many more ways we're alike because we are humans. We have the same emotions. I think that if you really read a lot, if you read works of great literature from every culture, if you've read about the religions and understand the religions of every culture, then we can understand each other.

Mrs. Bush, if I may, I would like to ask you a question about Iran and Iran-U.S.



relations. In a July 12th statement, the President said, and I quote: "As Iran's people move toward a future defined by greater freedom, greater tolerance, they will have no better friend than the United States of America." Most Iranians, especially the younger generation, are in favor of establishing relations with the United States. How do you think they can get their message across, being under an oppressed regime, their message across to the United States and to the American people?

Well, I will say that Americans were moved by the feeling of outpourings of sympathy and support that came out of Tehran after September 11th, the memorial service that was held there, the candlelight vigil, those images from that were very, very moving to the American people.

I think, in any way that Iranians can let the civilized world and freedom-loving people all over the world know that they also seek freedom, that they want freedom, that it's really very inspiring to know that people take the risk — literally risk their lives — to let the rest of the world know that they want freedom. That's a very, very powerful message that comes out of Iran to the rest of the world.

You have raised awareness on the condition of Afghan women and Afghan children. What is your message and your recommendation for Iranian women who are also in a very difficult political and social situation, and women in general who have been denied their basic human rights?

I hope that women around the world will participate as much as they possibly can in their governments, to really let their governments know how important their rights are. When you think about a society with men and women in a society, and if you deny half of the society their rights, then you deny your whole country all the benefits

that come from having the whole society being involved in the laws that are made or the culture that is built. It's very, very important to make sure that women are also included. So, I want to encourage Iranian women and women around the world to do whatever you can to make sure that the people in power in your governments know that you want freedom, that you want to be involved. I understand that women actually tried to register to be in the last election in Iran, to be elected, and to be part and to participate in the government.

Yes, and a lot of them were eliminated.

I think that's so great that they made that step. Now, the next step is for the government to let them participate.

Thank you very much, Mrs. Bush. Thank you very much for your time.

Thank you.