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Persian Heritage

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Spring has arrived and there is a buzz in the air. The animals and the birds have been stirred from a winter's sleep. The naked trees are slowly being dressed in their greenery and the perfume from the flowers that have pushed themselves through the cold dry earth, freshens the air. The sky's grayness has disappeared and the people, dressed in their new spring attire, take to the streets. They are eager to exchange stories accumulated behind the closed doors that protected them from the harsh winter air. Another No Rouz is upon us.

Each new edition of *Persian Heritage*, I liken to Spring. It carries the same excitement I feel with the anticipation of NoRouz. Though the break between the issues is welcomed, the office becomes invigorated with the arrival of the first Op/Ed commenting on the last issue. It generates the same emotion I feel seeing the first crocus break through the thawing ground readying itself for the season. It is your support and comments, my gentle readers, that keep this magazine alive.

We extend our best wishes to you and to the world and hope that this year will see no tree, no flower and no human being die as a result of war. Maybe this year we will see a kinder world.

Almost one and one-half years have passed since the tragic events of September 11, 2001. The days, weeks, months and years have failed to assist in healing our pain. Neither have the days, weeks, months and years that have passed since the events of 1979 in Iran, assisted in removing the pain Iranians in Iran and around the world suffer.

We must ask ourselves what is it that prevents our healing? Iranians reached out their hands to the families of the victims of September 11, yet as people we continue to be looked at with hostility, hatred and uncertainty. Why I ask? Always the answer is clear ... because we stand passive while we are being aligned with terrorist regimes.

Not one Iranian hand was found amongst the perpetrator of September 11, yet skillful and envious hands have involved us, envious and clever hands that can also destroy our identity. I wonder if Iranians, regardless of where we make our home, will ever return to a normal and routine life (WILL THE WORLD)? Or with each mention of the Middle East will Iranians constantly be forced into a defensive position. The brief reprieve we received after the events of the hostage taking has vanished. The anger and hatred for us in 1979 have intensified with the events of September 11. Why I ask, do we continue to allow this to happen? Why do we not remove ourselves from the safety of the Internet and verbally protest injustices being caused against us as a group of human beings, not as part of a government? All of us did not have a hand in those unspeakable and hateful acts, yet all of us have become victims. All of us have made sacrifices, some greater than others, whether we remained in Iran or left for different shores. Some sat still and decided to wait out the storm. The storm, however, rages on and it will not end UNLESS.... We took menial jobs in order to provide for our families and educate our children. We did so without question. It was our Persian pride that allowed us to continue to go on even in our darkest hour. The results of our sacrifices are now reflected in the success of our children. They, thankfully, hold positions we were forced to abandon. They are the promise of the Iranian ethnic survival.

Yes, these past twenty some years since the hostage taking has not been easy, but I fear the worse lies ahead UNLESS...! The "unless" I am referring to is leadership and the lack thereof. We need leadership and organizations that are effective. Without these two elements Iranian-Americans and Iranians throughout the world will slowly, but surely, lose their identity.

An example of the strength of ethnicity follows:

On December 7, 2002 the discussion of war against Iraq had escalated. It was the lead story for every television station, journal and newspaper. All eyes were on a tiny country in the Middle East called Qatar, and no one knew how to pronounce it. This was brought to the attention of the media, by the Arab community. The stations were



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flooded with complaints of the pronunciations. As a result, the journalists were forced to go to the streets in Qatar and question its citizens on how to pronounce their country's name. It was the pride of a nation that taught the world how to say their name.

At the same time this was going on, a CNN female reporter from Iraq and reporting from Baghdad continually referred to the Persian Gulf as the Arabian Gulf or in short The Gulf. Immediately I e-mailed CNN and asked them to correct the reporter. The next day I watched CNN and found the same reporter still referring to The Persian Gulf as The Arabian Gulf. I was shocked. Surely I could not have been the only Iranian American, or Iranian to have heard this and become annoyed. Surely more than my office staff e-mailed CNN and demanded a correction! Surely, I was wrong! Why? Because most of us have become complacent. Why take the time to e-mail our displeasure? What personal gain would be received?

Well, e-mails alone will not make a change. What will is leadership and a re-

spected voice that will guarantee that the e-mails, letters and voice messages make their way to the proper desk to affect change.

Protecting our geographic identity is as important as protecting our cultural and historical identity. Without geographic recognition Iran's soil will soon blend into the borders of the other countries in the Middle East. Look at the Spanish and the Black communities. They are proud of whom they are as a group, but are quick to identify their country of origin. I am proud to be from the Middle East, but each Middle Eastern country has its own pride and identity. I am proud to be from the United States but eager to identify my State. It is who each of us are. We cannot be and should not allow ourselves to be politically muscled into giving up our geographic, historical and cultural identity.

I do not profess to be an authority on this, as suggested in a recent Op/Ed letter sent to me. What we are at this magazine are watch-dogs with a duty to report a mistake in the facts. It is a mistaken fact to call the "Persian Gulf,"

"The Gulf" or "Arabian Gulf." Historically "The Persian Gulf" is "The Persian Gulf"! May I remind you that should we ignore protection of our geographical identity our grandchildren will have no point of reference.

So I do commend the proud people of Qatar. Their outrage by a mispronunciation of their country has led to world recognition of Qatar and its people, as individuals with individual identity both historically, culturally and geographically.

I do know I am repeating myself, but it seems repetition is the only way we will finally understand the importance of good leadership and representation. Iranians must recognize and protect its geographical borders, every country must. We all know what happens when the borders of one country consume the borders of the next. Yes my friend's repetition is needed because the obvious has been ignored. Perhaps repetition will prevent history from repeating itself.

Shahzad Akbari

Best Wishes to Persian Heritage

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A LETTER TO PRESIDENT BUSH

Mahrokh (Mimi) Pourzyna

Dear *Persian Heritage*,

I recall, when I was a teenager and writing for the top circulated magazine in Iran, a reader wrote to me, "Allow me to kiss passionately your thoughtfulness and feeling that flows through the tip of your pen and is delivering your messages, your way of thinking, your concepts and ideas about the important events of our time which reflect in your Short Stories and touches the hearts of your readers."

I feel the same way about the editor and the readers of *Persian Heritage*. Please publish this letter, perhaps someone would tell him about it!

Dear Mr. President,

How could I penetrate into your soul and heart with all my difficulties in choosing the right words and sentences, to impress you to read my letter to the end, even with your time limitation?

Let me tell you how I feel at this very moment while I am sitting and writing to you. I feel like a child who just started to mumble or chew the words, trying to show or express his or her feeling of needs, the word comes to his or her mind, slips on to the tongue, but the child helplessly cries out his frustration and anger through tears.

I feel like a pregnant woman who is not carrying a child in her womb but having the whole world of words inside of herself and is unable to deliver it. It feels as painful as any word to a speech-

less person.

I feel like a woman with Alzheimer's disease, who is lost in her own world, her own environment, including her own home, dealing with confusion, loss, anxiety, frustration, anger, fear and insecurity, but nothing comes out of her mouth except, "I want to die."

In fact, you may imagine me as a woman, unmarried, in her fifties, with two countries, struggling and dealing with two ways of living, facing different kinds of cultures and traditions, thinking, speaking and even dreaming constantly in two languages. An individual who was searching for an ideal place or, a paradise to live in peace, but finally ends up away from her native country Iran, and lands in her idolized dreamed paradise, "America."

For a while, I thought, I found my paradise, even though I was feeling homesick for several years and I was thinking of going back to Iran. Then I got over it.

In this new world of mine, I lived the way I wanted to live. I went wherever I wanted to go. I wore whatever I desired to wear, I did whatever I wanted to do. Nobody ever questioned me why I did this or that. I became self-sufficient and independent, I never had to answer anyone about right or wrong as long as it wasn't against the law. I felt free and content.

Life was going on smooth and pleasant. Happiness and sorrow were passing by as usual. It was joyful to solve the problems when I was coping with them. Nothing harsh or extraordinary, like now-a-days was happening, I was learning through my experiences

and mistakes. I felt so secure that nothing could disturb it.

I searched and searched trying to discover the facts of life and the mysteries of death. I did this without realizing that my youth was fading away. The passage of time is leaving a trace of lines on my forehead.

The years were passing by without any major tragic incident. Then all of a sudden, "The Twin Towers of The Trade Center," and a new chapter of our history book, stamped by the tragedy of "September 11." Terrorism showed its ugly face, sharpest claws and teeth. I am sure that you are more aware and knowledgeable than anyone else about it. The loss of humans lives, the tears of sorrows, the economic disaster, and damages that this tragic incident caused, is undeniably condemned. The remembrance of it makes me speechless.

Now, we are facing another problem, "The War" with Iraq, and the entire world opposing it.

Mr. President,

Where are you heading? Is there another planet that we can flee to, to protect ourselves from World War III?

Please, allow me to come to the point: "My Two Countries: My Two Hells."

This is the title of my new book. Perhaps you are wondering why or how my **paradise** is turning into **hell**?

In one of my poems, "The Two Veils," (which is enclosed), I tried to explain how my homeland turned into a hell. In response to the question of "why this country is also rapidly changing into the stage of hell?" I desperately need the speech, ideology and power of yours, to express.

P.S. Now I am thinking and dreaming about my third country. It is smaller than a drop of a tear in our galaxy. It has five continents, with one central government. Above all, it has one flag, waving through the wind above it! I am convinced that my dreams one day will come true. Perhaps not in my time! Can you name that country?

Now, Mr. President,
Please read the poem of "The Two Veils."

*Truly Yours ,
Mahrokh Mimi Pourzynal*

The Two Veils

At the peak of sunrise,
When the day was waking,
The king of Persia,
The king of the king,
Reza Shah The Great.
As a dictator.
With image,
of fear,
With wisdom,
and wit.
Was just awaking,
To come to power.

Then, His Majesty,
Declared, to nation,
"The veil of disgrace,
Of cotton or lace,
Ought to be removed,
Off the women's face."

Within his decree,
Learning in the schools,
Becomes compulsory.
For the young and old.
For the rich and poor.
And above all,
With in his decree,
The man and woman,
Become an "Equal".

We got the freedom,
With gaining knowledge.
We become aware,
of the "rights" of woman.
Now we acknowledge,
Within his decree,

All women were free!

I grew and blossomed,
As lovely, as flower.
As rooted, as tree.
Within his decree,
For years, I was free.

The Second Veil

At the end of a day,
At turning point,
Of the new century.
In depth of darkness,
Comes the time of horror,
Of fear,
Of terror.
Comes the clergy — man.
With the robe and turban.
Smart, witty,
Experienced.
Master minded well.
As the way he claims,
Stoops down of heaven.
To create a "Hell"!

The clergy, moves us,
Into "Dark Ages"!
The world is changing.
The East is burning,
In fire of war,
Of gun-shot,
Of blood.
But, the world still,
Gently, is turning!

With the "Laws of Heaven."
The veil of disgrace,
Then covers my head,
My vision,
My face.
In hide of darkness.
I lose, my dignity.

With losing myself,
My ... pride,
My ... grace.

The clergy demands,
"The laws of the land"
We attend to school,
Of theology.
We are forbidden,
Of the free speech,
Of disobedience,
Or reading the books,
Of geology,
We are not allowed,
To learn the science
Of biology.
The news are covered,
Only from "heaven".
We only hear,
The stories of "hell".
The world is turning,
on his way so well!

At the dawn of day,
When the sun is rising,
You, ... Woman of today!
Look at your image,
Your ego,
Yourself,
In your conception,
or your perception.
You, woman of today.
See, your reflection
How simple you are.
How easy you change,
How careless you fall,
In cage,
In lock,
In chain
You, woman of today.
For your survival,
High price you pay.
Come to think,
And wonder,
Why, You ... Surrender?

US-IRAN THROUGH AN EXPERT'S EYES

Scott Peterson

The Christian Science Monitor (January 8, 2003)

(TEHRAN, IRAN) Hard-line clerics in Iran tried to prevent it. But on Sept. 11, 2001, as the ruins of the World Trade Center still smoldered, sympathizers half a world away mourned the victims with spontaneous candlelight vigils in Iran — the only Islamic nation in the Middle East to witness such spontaneous solidarity with America.

This solidarity, in a region filled with intense anti-Americanism, is an irony that Louise Firouz has seen evolve in her 45 years as an American living in Iran.

Mrs. Firouz has lived through much of what has made the US-Iran relationship one of the most extreme and enigmatic in the Middle East. She was witness to the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the US hostage crisis, and the birth of the chant, "death to America." In the past decade, she has watched students and democratic reformers butt heads with hard-line clerics in a battle that still rages daily. And now, she has seen President George W. Bush label Iran as part of an "axis of evil."

After spending more than half her life in Iran — one of very few Americans to have done so — this horse breeder from Great Falls, Va., embodies the seemingly contradictory feelings that many Iranians here share: admiration for the freedoms the US represents juxtaposed with disgust over hypocrisy and imperial attitudes emanating from its government.

"I'm still erred to as the American," Firouz says at her horse farm, a leafy green patch of paradise 25 miles west of Tehran, with a sign sign on the gate that reads: "Private Property: Entry by Invitation Only."

She offers carrots and apples to a handful of Turkman and Caspian horses, the latter an ancient breed she rediscovered here years ago.

"The official view now is very

anti-American. We walk over American flags on the streets, but I have a feeling there may be a lot of negotiations going on behind the scenes," says Firouz. "It's two different worlds, what is in the newspapers and on TV, and what is really going on."

US Values Respected

While deep respect remains for the values that Iranians see in America, she says — freedom, justice, and equality, the values that were the focus of the Sept. 11 candlelight vigils in Iran — they are under strain as never before.

"There was an enormous sympathy for the US" as the Twin Towers fell, Firouz says. But the reasons why that goodwill is eroding is simple, she says, listing grievances commonly cited in Iran: the US conduct of the war on terror, the virtual lack of American involvement in Middle East peace efforts — bar giving Israel an apparent blank check in dealing with Palestinians, and concerns over the looming war with Iraq.

This is on top of widespread incomprehension here over why Iran, which helped the US military with critical intelligence during the war against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, rated membership in Mr. Bush's "axis of evil." Election results last November that gave Bush and the Republicans a resounding vote of confidence confused Iranians even more.

"People tell me: 'If this large portion of the American people are going to vote for Bush, they deserve the next Sept. 11,'" says Firouz. "It's amazing, America's backing of Bush and all this war-mongering. Do you think Americans have done this because they are scared?"

"As empires come and go, maybe this will simply hasten the end of the Ameri-

can Empire. It's beginning to look a bit like the last days of Rome," Firouz says. "Iranians think — they are hoping, anyway — that Bush is a passing wonder, and maybe the US will recover from this, one way or another."

The Horse Whisperer

Firouz first traveled to the Middle East during a junior year abroad from Cornell University — she was forced to give up dreams of becoming a veterinarian after failing physics. During her year at the American University of Beirut, in Lebanon, she met her Iranian husband-to-be. After finishing her degree in classics and English literature, she moved to Iran in 1957.

Today, Firouz is working to export 60 horses to Canada for national-level endurance racing. She stables 35 horses on her farm here, and more on land near Iran's border with Turkmenistan. She also operates adventure horse-treks in northern Iran, through a company called Magic Carpet Travel, Ltd., with a range of clients — from Americans to Australians. The journeys have been listed by *The Times* (London) as among the top 10 rides in the world.

"People are constantly asking me why I've stayed here, why I haven't gone back to America, since everyone here seems to want a green card," says Firouz, noting that roughly half her time in Iran has been spent during the rule of the pro-US Shah Reza Pahlavi and half following Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution.

"This 'death to America' is a mantra, repeated without anybody thinking about it any longer," Firouz says. "Nobody hates America.... They all see the vast amounts of money that Americans make, and drive around in new cars, and with satellite TV, they see this life and think it is much better."

Young people's rising expectations

The tide of rising expectations is highest among the 60 percent of Iran's population who are under 25, and whose dreams are rarely met inside the Islamic republic. "I don't think in this age of electronic news and information transfer that you can actually keep people like that ignorant any longer. It's becoming a mental melting pot."

While that melting pot may sound like democracy in action to most Americans, ironically, in Iran and elsewhere, it also one reason for a hardening of anti-American views.

"All these people are going to start thinking the same way, which is why your average Iranian understands why people are criticizing the US, and why [the US] is attacked like Sept. 11," Firouz says. She is concerned that broad Iranian understanding of American culture — through bootleg smuggled films and satellite dishes that remain illegal here — contrasts sharply with most Americans' views of Iran.

"They probably can't tell the difference between Iran and Iraq," says Firouz. "I don't get the impression that Americans really know much about the geography of the rest of the world, or that they really care. Because, just like the sun [once] never set on the British Empire, now it doesn't really set on American influence."

"Americans have created a lot of hatreds," says Firouz, noting the US rejection of a number international accords, from the Kyoto environmental restrictions, to the international criminal court, to the ban on land mines. "I think America has lost direction of what it is supposed to be doing [globally], for its own safety, and the safety of the world."

Despite those criticisms, Firouz says that the shine of what America represents abroad is still very bright and that, in many quarters, America still represents the good guy. "it still projects this idea of freedom and equality, and the whole overall image of prosperity and freedom is stronger than the events of today, and will persist until something catastrophic happens," she says. "It is still the place everybody wants to go — especially Iranians."

TRUE STORY

His name was Fleming, and he was a poor Scottish farmer. One day, while trying to make a living for his family, he heard a cry for help coming from a nearby bog. He dropped his tools and ran to the bog. There, mired to his waist in black muck, was a terrified boy, screaming and struggling to free himself.

Farmer Fleming saved the lad from what could have been a slow and terrifying death. The next day, a fancy carriage pulled up to the Scotsman's sparse surroundings. An elegantly dressed nobleman stepped out and introduced himself as the father of the boy Farmer Fleming had saved.

"I want to repay you," said the nobleman. "You saved my son's life."

"No, I can't accept payment for what I did," the Scottish farmer replied, waving off the offer.

At that moment, the farmer's own son came to the door of the family hovel.

"Is that your son?" the nobleman asked. "Yes," the farmer replied proudly.

"I'll make you a deal. Let me provide him with the level of education my son will enjoy. If the lad is anything like his father, he'll no doubt grow to be a man we both will be proud of."

And that he did.

Farmer Fleming's son attended the very best schools and in time, he graduated from St. Mary's Hospital Medical School in London, and went on to become known throughout the world as the noted Sir Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of penicillin. Years afterward, the same nobleman's son who was saved from the bog was stricken with pneumonia. What saved his life this time?

Penicillin.

The name of the nobleman? Lord Randolph Churchill. His son's name? Sir Winston Churchill.

Someone once said:

"What goes around comes around."

A GLIMPSE OF THE WORLD

If we could shrink the Earth's population to a village of precisely 100 people, with all the existing human ratios remaining the same, it would look something like the following:

There would be: 57 Asians; 21 Europeans; 14 from the Western Hemisphere, both north and south; 8 Africans; 52 would be female; 48 would be male; 70 would be non-white; 30 would be white; 70 would be non-Christian; 30 would be Christian; 6 people would possess 59% of the entire world's wealth and all 6 would be from the United States. 80 would live in substandard housing; 70 would be unable to read; 50 would suffer from malnutrition; 1 would be near death; 1 would be near birth; 1 (yes, only 1) would have a college education; and 1 would own a computer.

When one considers our world from such a compressed perspective, the need for acceptance, understanding and education becomes glaringly apparent. The following is also something you should be thankful for...

If you woke up this morning with more health than illness... you are blessed. Thank God for his gift to you.

Taken from Internet (authors unknown)

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NoRouz is a celebration by Persians of all religions, regions and ethnic groups and is the most joyous holiday of the year. The Holiday signifies the importance of friends and family. Preparations for the holiday commence weeks before the actual event. The house is cleaned and decorated, special foods are prepared and the family will usually purchase new holiday clothing. Obligatory visits to friends and families strengthen the meaning of the holiday. Should a visit not be possible the New Years greeting is exchanged in greeting cards.

For over 2000 years, this celebration, alleged to have been originated by Shah Jamshid, has been memorialized in literature and folklore. It is a tradition containing many rituals. The old traditions are said to have been established by the Zoroastrians.

Here are a few myths or facts as you chose to believe regarding the development of the Holiday:

It is said that the Shah Jamshid was so delighted by the warmth of the first day of spring, that he had his jeweled throne placed on a hill in Azerbaijan. There with his crown upon his head he sat facing the sun.

One day while on his throne he was gently lifted in the air and carried across the sky. During his flight he met a swallow who was concerned for her newly laid eggs that rested in a nest directly in the path of the Shah's throne. The Shah feeling the fear of the mother swallow quickly changed his course. So grateful was the mother swallow that when the Shah landed she offered the Shah the log of a locust and sprinkled water over him.

Today we recreated this in the passing of gifts and the sprinkling of the rose water.

Ahriman, the evil spirit was said to have cast a spell on the land causing all vegetation to die. Ahura Mazda the great lord of all creation came before the people and gazed long and deep into what the people believed were two suns. His powers caused the rivers to flow, the trees to bloom and the flowers blossom. Today we signify this event with the planting of the barley seeds in a tub to germinate.

sending sweetness in life, Sabzi (sprouts of vegetables and herbs) representing fertility, Sonbol (Hyacinth Flower), Seer (garlic), Senjed (dried fruit from an Asian deciduous tree) and Serkeh (vinegar) wards of bitterness. Modern tradition has added a mirror, boiled eggs, sweets, candles and a bowl with a goldfish and are symbols of good luck

As the New Year hour approaches the family will gather around the table.

If the Koran as been added to the table the male figurehead will usually read from the Koran just before and just after the equinox.

This sacred table must not be touched until one stroke after midnight. It is not a surprise that the first items on the table to be consumed are the delicious sweets

The holiday concludes on the thirteenth day (which is the 13th day into spring). At this time, the Sabzi, which has been growing, is taken with the family on a picnic. Depending on where the families live the Sabzi is either planted in the ground or thrown into a water stream. It is believed that the Sabzi will then grow and enrich the earth with seeds of life and fertility.

Who is Haji Firuz?

He is none other than the black-faced mistral, dressed in red costume and a felt hat. He roams the streets, during

NoRouz, entertaining the people with plays, poetry and song and is rewarded with food and gifts. One of Haji's favorite melodies is as follows:

*Wind and Rain have gone
Lord NoRouz has come
Friends, convey this message,
The New Year has come again.
This spring be your good luck,
The tulip fields be your joy.*



NoRouz

What is Haft Seen or the "Seven S's"?

Haft is the Persian word for Seven (7), and *Seen* corresponds to the English letter "S" and thus we have the Seven S's. The Seven S's are assembled together on the holiday table and represent the happiness that all families will strive for in the New Years.

The Seven S's are made up of Sekkeh (coin) representing wealth, Samanu (sweet wheat pudding) repre-

NoRouz

Syma Sayyah

NoRouz is ...
A time for happiness,
A time for new clothes,
A time to smile.

NoRouz is ...
A time to be with your family,
A time to make new memories,
A time to remember those not there,

NoRouz is ...
A time the birds sing,
A time the flowers bloom,
A time life is reborn.

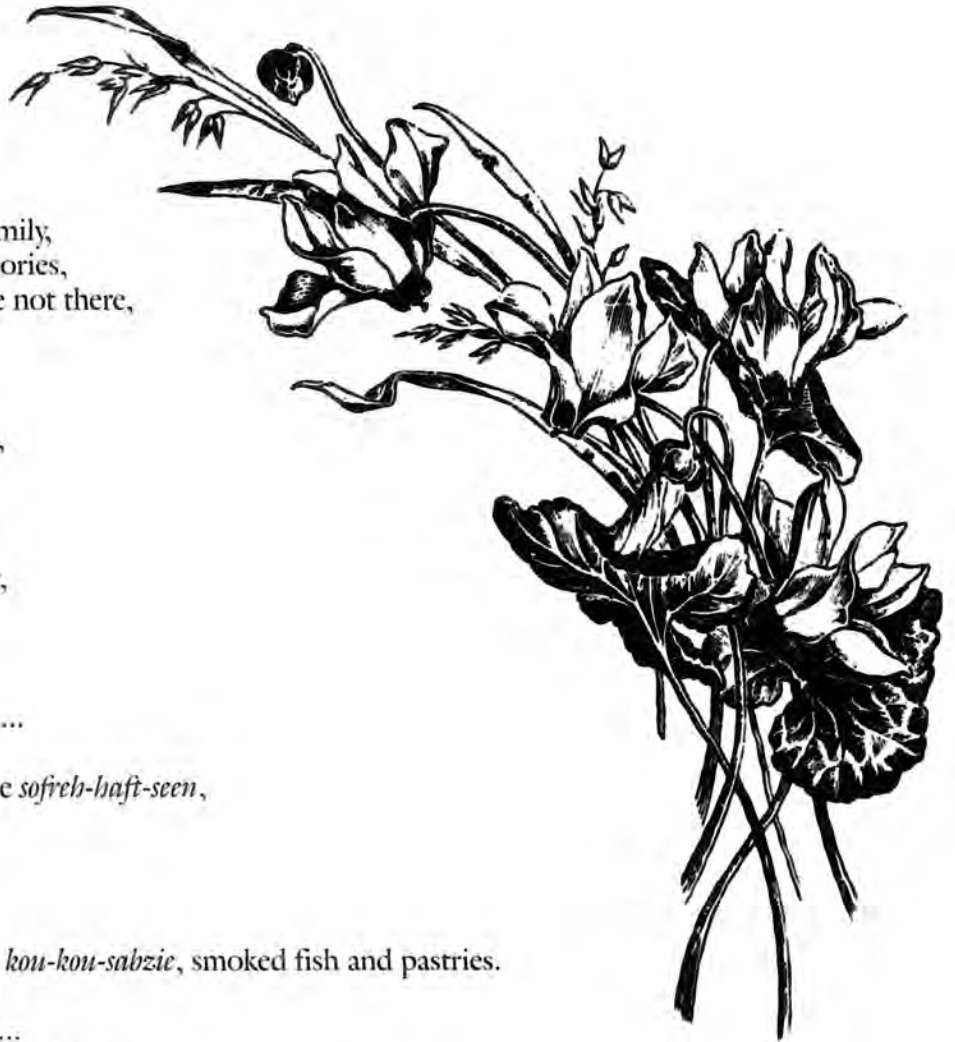
NoRouz is...
A time children love most,
A time to give,
A time to receive.

NoRouz is this and more ...

It is the seven "S's", on the *sofreh-haft-seen*,
The gold fish bowl,
The growing, greens,
The colored eggs,
The sweet candy,
The smells of *sabzie-polou*, *kou-kou-sabzie*, smoked fish and pastries.

NoRouz is the sounds of ...
Haji-frouz and his minstrels playing,
The family rushing to the window to hear the music,
The sounds of the family singing along,
The throwing of the coins to *Haji*

NoRouz is this but it is also ...
A time to remember old, friends, neighbors, teachers and family.
A time to reflect,
A time to compare,
A time to make change,
A time to be thankful to God for all you have rather than to mourn for what you have not.
NoRouz is a special time , our New Year and may this one for all be filled with happiness, health and joy.



Khosrow Eghbal was born in Mashad, Iran in 1910. He was the seventh of eleven children of Mirza Abu Torab Khan Moghbel-as-Saltaneh (Eghbal-at-Towlich), a well-known and well-liked landowner who represented Kashmar, in the Fourth Iranian Parliament.

Mr. Eghbal attended elementary and high school in Mashad and Tehran and graduated from the judiciary branch of the Law School, Tehran University, in 1935. He was then employed by the Ministry of Justice where he was promoted to the rank of the judge, heading the seventh branch of the circuit court of the Tehran Province.

His commitment to work for his homeland, Iran, began at an early age. The turbulent conditions that resulted during the invasion of Allied troupes in Iran and their interference in the political and governmental affairs of the country tormented him. He was angered and frustrated by the fact that the government refused to stand up against such interventions. Continued frustrations motivated him to enter the political arena and fight for his ideals. In 1942 he founded the "Peykar Party", an outspoken nationalist party which advocated Iranian independence and governmental reform. Simultaneously, he began to publish *Nabard* newspaper as the voice and organ of the Peykar party. The frank and fearless articles of Peykar sparked nationalist feelings among its readers and its criticism of prevailing situation in Iran with regard to the country's integrity and independence caused considerable stir. It pressed the government to eliminate corruption in the government circle and demanded reforms in the state's affairs.

Nabard was repeatedly stopped from publishing on account of its sharp criticism of the government. On one occasion, in an editorial *Nabard* suggested that England and Iran should have good relations based on mutual respect and complete equality; it further stated that in order to achieve this, England needed to have a competent and effective ambassador in Iran. The British Ambassador in Iran at the time was Sir Reader Bullard who was known as an arrogant, supercilious, condescending, and colonial-minded diplomat who looked down on Persians and interfered in Persian affairs as if Iran was a British domain. When Sir Bullard read the article in *Nabard*, he filed a suit against Eghbal and pressed Ali Soheili, the Prime Minister, to ensure a guilty verdict against him. Feeling the pressure, the Prime Min-

KHOSROW EGHBAL

A Bright Torch of Humanity, Goodness and Charity



Since my childhood, while my friends were reading and reciting Persian poetry, I would be found reading magazines, newspapers and books. I was fascinated by those individuals who were making the news. Interesting enough, many of those who were critical in the alteration of history are not mentioned or given their just credit. One of these people is Khosrow Eghbal.

His name since I was able to read always captured my attention. It seemed as if he appeared everywhere. As a journalist I felt compelled to somehow tell his story, to give him his just reward. It was a life dream to meet him and that honor came in the mid 90's. Since then I have had the honor of being in his company. Numerous times I have asked to interview him and numerous times my request has been declined.

This year Mr. Eghbal was being honored at the Friends of the Encyclopedia Iranica's gala event. This would be the night, I thought, that I would convince him to tell his story for my readers and the world. Much to my disappointment, Mr. Eghbal because of a physical injury, did not attend. He did, however, prepare an acceptance speech that was read by Dr. Yarshater. He addressed his illness, dreams and age, now ninety. The power and fragility of his words brought tears to my eyes. I knew at that moment that with or without his permission I would have to write about Mr. Eghbal. I approached Dr. Yarshater and asked if he would write something. He graciously accepted.

When the article was finished, I went to pick it up and was told by Dr. Yarshater that Mr. Eghbal wanted to speak with me. I returned his call and in his charming voice he informed me that he did not want me to publish the article. He added that whatever he did in life was personal and for the betterment of mankind and Iran, not for praise. For a few seconds my thoughts were to give in to his request, but then I responded to him. I explained that we were not writing this article to please him but rather to insure that our children were able to read another page of Iranian history to other children.

I held my breath through the silence which was broken by soft words granting me permission. I was excited and relieved because I would never have printed the following article without his permission.

Shahrokh Ahkami

ister approached Eghbal asking him to agree to a two-months purchasable jail sentence to silence the turmoil. Eghbal refused the offer vehemently and protested to Soheili that as Prime Minister he had to defend Iran and Iranians, and not to comply with an anti-Iranian foreign ambassador. Eghbal's refusal resulted in a trial that last three years and a half with a verdict in favor of Mr. Eghbal.

During the occupation of Allied troupes there were a number of distinguished Iranian leaders who were against the interference of Britain and Russia in the Persian internal affairs. The group included Dr. Matin-Daftari (a former Prime Minister), Jafar Sharif-Emami (later a Prime Minister and a Speaker of the Senate), Dr. Sajjadi (later a Minister of Roads and Deputy speaker of the Senate), Khosrow Eghbal, General Agheveli, and General Ariana (later head of the Joined Staff). As a result of their political ideology British and Russian agents had them all arrested and jailed with the excuse that they were pro-German. Six months later, however, Eghbal was released from jail. No sooner was he free then he resumed his political activity, but again his political efforts were squashed by British agents. Eghbal, however, was determined to pursue his goals and continued with the publication of his newspaper. Whenever *Nabard* was shut down he, with the collaboration of the *Nabard's* staff and writers which included Hasan Arsanjani (later Minister of Agriculture who put through the Land Reform in Ali Amini's cabinet after 1962), Jahangir Tafazzoli, Esmail Pourvali (later the editor in chief of *Bamshad* and *Rouzegar Now*), and Mahmud Tafazzoli replaced *Nabard* by publishing *Iran-e ma*, a similar newspaper. And when *Iran-e ma* was shut down, he published *Daria* (he had earlier helped Arsanjani to obtain the permit to publish this newspaper).

In 1947, during the Prime Ministry of Ghavam as-Saltaneh the position of deputy commissioner of Iran with the British Oil Company in London occupied by Dr. Farkhr ad-Din Shadman became vacant (the Commissioner was Nezam ad-Din Emami); the Prime Minister offered the position to Khosrow Eghbal and he accepted. He remained in England holding the position for four years.

It was during this period that Burma nationalized the British holdings and companies in that country. As a result during an impeachment hearing in the British Parliament Ernest Bevan, the British foreign Minister in the Labor Government headed

by Clement Atlee, was questioned about the nationalization which was strongly opposed by the Conservative Party. Bevan defended himself in the Parliament by stating that fundamentally no country and no nation had any right to occupy and take over another country's land and natural resources and if the government of Burma indemnified the British government he had no objection to their nationalization.

When Eghbal who was always thinking about the Iran's interests, its integrity, and its independence, heard Bevan's statement, he immediately obtained a copy of the transcript of the hearings and sent it to Abbas Eskandari (a cousin of Iraj Eskandari, one of the Tudeh Party leaders, but himself not a member), who was a member of the Iranian Parliament. He suggested that Bevan's statement could open the doors for Iran to nationalize its oil industry. Eskandari, thanking him for the document, read it to the Iranian Parliament, and demanded that Iranian oil industry be nationalized. This was the beginning of the movement for nationalization of the Iranian oil industry that was realized by Dr. Mohammad Mosaddegh. L. P. Elwell-Sutton, author of the *Persian Oil: A Study in Power Politics* (London, 1955, p. 164) refers to Eskandari's statement and notes that this began the process of the nationalization of oil in Iran. As a matter of fact, if it was not for Eghbal's alertness and foresight and his placing the British document in the hands of Eskandari, the movement for nationalizing Iranian oil industry would not have started at that time and in that way. This is a point that the historians of Iranian oil industry will do well to bear in mind.

The British, of course, continued to oppose Mr. Eghbal's political activities. The Iranian government in an effort to keep peace with the British supported their position, but Eghbal did not give up to strive for making his dream of an independent and powerful Iran with a reformist government that would respect Iranian goals and would initiate social reforms. In this effort he had the collaboration of a group of friends that included Dr. Abdol-Hossein Raji (later Minister of Health), Dr. Mohammad-Ali Hedayati (later Minister of Justice), Dr. Mahmud Mehran (later Minister of Education), and Fathollah Jalali (later Minister of Interior).

In 1956 Khosrow's brother, Dr. Manuchehr Eghbal, who had previously held several ministries was appointed as Minister of the Royal Court. Khosrow Eghbal approached him and persuaded

him to obtain the approval of the Shah for forming a reformist cabinet with him (that is, Dr. Manuchehr Eghbal) as Prime Minister. The latter eventually succeeded in convincing the Shah and was appointed Prime Minister in 1957. Unfortunately, the cabinet failed to realize the intended reforms and was unable to become independent from the Royal Court. Disappointed in his hope and frustrated by the prevailing situation, Eghbal left politics and returned to the legal field.

In 1978 when Iran fell in the grips of social and political turmoil and a change of government was foreseen, Eghbal thought that another window of opportunity might have opened for Iran. With this in mind he traveled to France to meet with Khomeini who was leading the opposition movement. After a conversation with Khomeini he realized, however, that his idea of a democratic Iran, faithful to nationalist purposes was not in line with what Khomeini had in mind. Disappointed again, Eghbal forewent returning to Iran. After living a year in Europe (mostly in France) he came to the United States and settled in Washington D.C. The past 23 years of Khosrow Eghbal's life have been far from idle; his life and all his efforts have been dedicated to helping people and lending support to cultural, scholarly, and humanitarian endeavors. His humanitarian activities, though abundant, are difficult to write about because of his unusual modesty and his avoidance of all publicity. He never advertises the aids he gives so generously to friends in need, to various organizations, and publications. That is also the reason that he has never agreed to an interview even though he has generously supported such publications as *Ruzegar-e Now*, while Pourvali was alive, and Mehregan.

In 1989 Khosrow Eghbal began to support the Encyclopaedia Iranica Foundation, pledging one million dollars from his estate to the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, and two years later, he doubled that pledge. In 1990 he was unanimously elected Chairman of the Encyclopaedia Iranica Foundation's Board of Trustees and served in that position for ten years with strong commitment and dedication, until 2001, when, because of health issues, he resigned and was voted the Honorary Chairman of the Foundation.

People like Khosrow Eghbal are like bright torches whose humanity, goodness, and charity illuminate our life. *Persian Heritage* hopes that this torch will remain radiant for many years to come. ■

In Honor of Nader Naderpour

CONVERSATION IN THE DARK

By Nader Naderpour

To: My Dear Jaleh

In the middle of the night when I am sick and awake
there is no familiar light from any opening
the calm sound of your deep breathing
and the continuous ticking of the clock
harmonize with the rhythm of my heartbeat.
Then I realize that even though my thoughts are lonesome
my heart is no longer lonesome in my chest.

Slowly I bend my head over your bed
I kiss your sleep-filled eyelashes softly
You feel the weight of the kiss on your eye
You smile and I patiently kiss your cheek
Even though your laughter spreads in my ears.
But in the dark waves of the night
your smiling face is not obvious.

I calmly light a match
to light up your face from its illumination
But very soon that red sparking phosphor
falling and rising on my two burning fingers
dies in kinks and twists of dancing.
Once again the space of our small bedroom
is overcome with darkness.
I tell myself except for a short time,
at the moment of seeing your dear face:
my eyes don't have a chance of seeing you.

Just like a child frightened by darkness,
I find my way to your arms.
Terrified by something unknown.
I whisper this secret in your ears:
O! Kinder than the world's kindest!
O fellow-traveler! O friend! O sweetheart! O mother!
Scream so loudly that even the heavy death of the heart
Won't be able to separate us at the moment of farewell
Because we both know, in the chaos of the world
from the crowded population
from what exists in the endless horizon
our lot is just our solitude
This house smaller than a boat
We its distressed passengers
Moving forward in the wide sea of exile
But in the frightening horizon of this sea
Night is overwhelming,
From every vicious side there is no path to tomorrow.

Translated by Farhad Mafie

CRYSTAL GAZING

By: Hafez
Translated by: F. Sadeghpour

*For years my heart desired
To have Jam's crystal ball!**
*'Though the heart possessed it all,
Yet of strangers it inquired.*

*The pearl unveiled and displayed
Upon the shell of heaven and earth,
The heart queried the splayed
And stranded ones with no berth!*

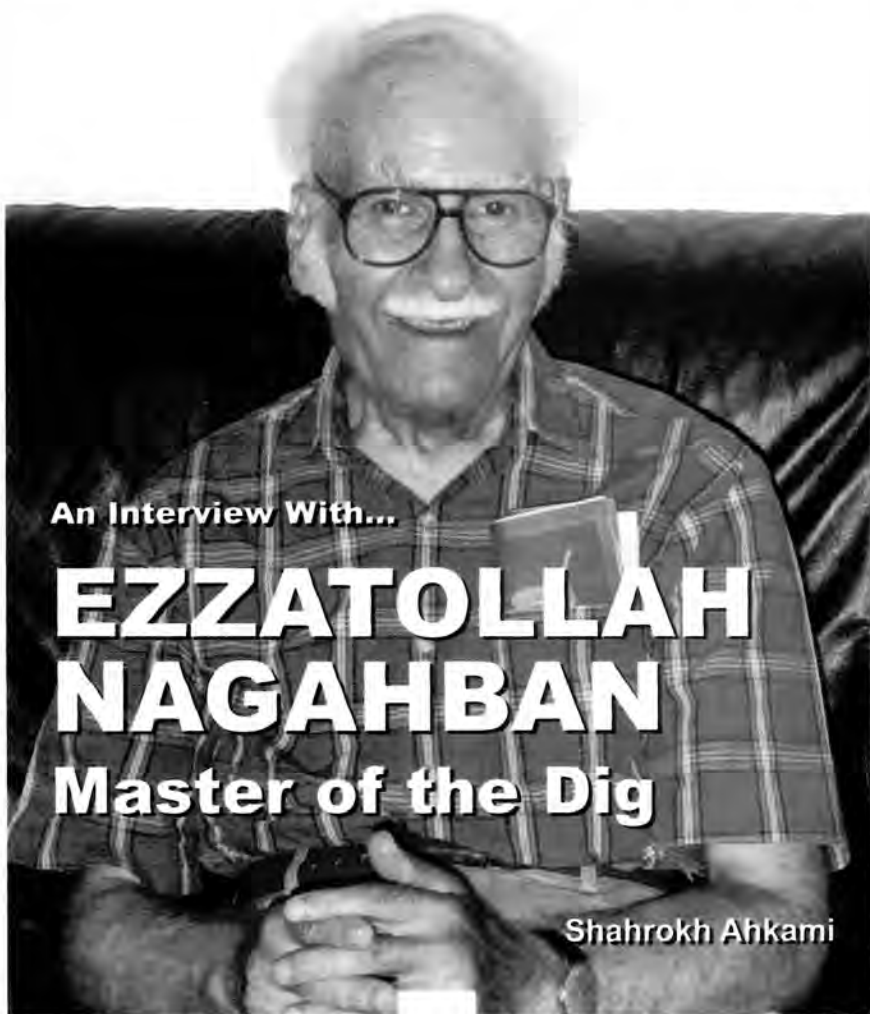
*Hence, I took this puzzle for inquiry
Before our noetic sage last night.
Who I've heard said he verily
Could solve any enigma upon sight!*

*I found him smiling with pleasure,
Had a bowl full of wine in hand,
Gazing within that world mirror
In a hundred ways to scan!*

*I asked, "When did you receive this
Cosmoramaic vessel from the Pundit?"
He replied, "The very same day of bliss
This blue dome was being built!"*

*"Perpetually a poor soul in all events,
God's Benison and grace have ensconced him;
Since he cannot see Almighty God
From afar constantly is calling out to Him!*

* In Persian Mythology, Jamshid (Jamshyd), the fourth king of Pishdadian Dynasty who had a crystal ball and could see the past, present, and foresee the future. All the good things in the world could belong to the keeper of the crystal ball. Hence, it is known as Jam's bowl or Jam's crystal ball. (Jaum-e-Jam).



An Interview With...

EZZATOLLAH NAGAHBAN

Master of the Dig

Shahrokh Ahkami

At a past Yalda night, an auction was held to raise money for the Persian Cultural and Humanitarian Association. One of the items was a Persian carpet that contained the image of a vase, a Marlik vase. The presenter, Dr. Said Fatemi explained that the real vase was discovered during an archeological dig in Iran at Marlik, by Professor and archeologist Ezzatollah Negahban.

After the auction I expressed an interest to interview Mr. Negahban to Dr. Fatemi, who was delighted by the proposition, but warned me that the professor was in a wheelchair due to an automobile accident in 2001. The interview was arranged, and I, along with Mr. Hassan Nahvi, Dr. Maboud Ansari and Dr. Fatemi, travelled to Philadelphia. There, we found Mr. Nagahban still in a wheelchair, but making progress and hopefully will make a full recovery.

After introductions, I began my interview. His first response was moving: "everything in my life is about Marlik and I have nothing else to say!" He held true to that statement throughout most of the interview, so I was forced to use the resources of my companions to fill in background information.

Mr. Nagahban was born in Ahvaz, Iran, which is located near the Persian Gulf. He later moved to Tehran and graduated from Tehran University. He continued his education at the University of Chicago where he received his PhD in Middle Eastern archeology. In 1963 he made his way back to Tehran and taught at the University of Tehran. While there, he formed the Archeology Society in the School of Literature.

How did you find your way to America?

After the revolution I was in a way forced to retire from archeology and return to an academic life. So, I started to travel to the States, as a visiting Professor at the University of Pennsylvania. There I was given an honorary position as curator for the University's Museum. Eventually, my family moved to Philadelphia.

Have your sons followed in your footsteps?

My sons are in the fields of mathematics, engineering, physics, genetics, architecture and yes archeology. It was my hope that they would have continued my work at Marlik but circumstances changed that dream.

Before I asked him why he terminated his digging at Marlik, I wanted to know how he got there. He gives most of the credit to his professor and mentor, Professor Bahrami, who encouraged him to go to Europe and eventually to Germany. After Mr. Bahrami passed away, Mr. Negahban returned to Iran and became Associate Professor of Archeology at the School of Literature, Tehran University.

It was during this period that he became aware of a dam located between the Alborz Mountains and the Iranian Plateau. "The area was massive and I was certain that digging in this area would resolve many questions unanswered about our civilization before the Achamide Dynasty."

Were you the first team to excavate this area?

No, but while the excavations we accomplished were small, we did discover large and valuable artifacts.

Mr. Nagahban encountered many difficulties over the months he and his team were in Marlik. People interfered constantly with their dig by trying to bribe and scare them and demean the project.

But did you yourself quit the dig?

I am ashamed to talk about this, but for history sake, I will try to explain what occurred. It is important to note that, according to the laws of Iran, the govern-

ment is the sole owner of any archeological find.

When I was first assigned to this dig, I discovered many groups were digging illegally and smuggling the finds outside of Iran. They sold the artifacts for thousands of dollars. It was my intent to stop this removal of Iran's treasures, but I was met with great opposition. You see, on one side of the issue were the smugglers and on the other side the Department of Archeology. You would have thought that the government would have supported us, but we were the ones that were forced to stop the dig.

Prior to the termination of the dig, something incredible happened. About 3:00 a.m., we were woken by the noise of our camp being attacked. The camp was protected by three guards, and our attackers were a band of sixteen. We were forced to run into the darkness since we had no weapons to defend ourselves. I was badly cut on the arm and neck. Fortunately we escaped by making an incredible amount of noise, but we immediately returned to the camp to protect our find. If we didn't, the perpetrators would have stolen everything we had found.

At this point I could feel Mr. Negahban's disappointment, but it soon disappeared as he continued to discuss Marlik.

What is the value of archeology?

The value of archeology is to clarify the dark areas in the history of a civilization. Marlik would give clarification to a portion of Iran's history. I remember when the first time I stood in front of the hill made of natural rock, located in northern Iran in the Gibleon State and is made of natural rock. I had such dreams and aspirations and was unaware of the magnitude the next fourteen months would have on my life. Marlik has been the es-

sence of my happiness, my misery, my disappointment, my achievements and my setbacks. I have no regrets that I went to Marlik. I received much fame from

put the two together and named it Marlik.

What did you discover in Marlik?

The dig was a total of seventeen layers. Layers one through seven belonged to 2000 B.C. The next layers eight to thirteen belonged to 2000 B.C. to 1000 B.C. Layers fourteen through fifteen were remnants of level two. The Sassanid and Marlik period were found in the sixteenth and the last level of the dig. In this

level we found a defensive village of the Sassanid period, which existed between the 2nd and 6th centuries A.C. As stated, there were seventeen levels of the dig and in the seventeenth we found more remains of the Sassanid period. This level was repaired during the Islamic period.

Altogether, we discovered fifty-three tombs and sixty-four vases, plates, arrows, swords and knives. Some of the artifacts were exhibited one year after the discovery at the Museum of Archeology in Iran. A Marlik vase that was on display was allegedly stolen from the museum. It was later found to be sold in America for four hundred eighty three thousand dollars and is now on display at The Metropolitan Museum in New York.

Mr. Nagah-ban is retired. He is extremely knowledgeable on many subjects but remains silent on all but Marlik and Iran, even though he acknowledges that the two are droplets of water in an ocean of history. He remains faithful to Marlik and believes that the hill must be protected from smugglers and continue to be excavated. To him the hill still holds priceless possessions and answers to so much of Iran's history.

He fills his retirement remembering his



Marlik and have also received much pain. But, Marlik has never bored me and the dig advanced Iranian archeology.

Why the name Marlik?

The locals referred to "civilization" as "mar," and "lik" means "place." So, we



accomplishments and the dreams he was denied. He is artistic and loves calligraphy but the cut on his arm during the raid of his camp has affected his calligraphic skills.

In the world of Iranian archeologists are there any names that Iranians should be aware of?

If you are asking me if there are any others who are famous, I answer in this way: All digs are important and finds are valuable regardless of the period in which they are discovered. Therefore, all those who have discovered them are equally important.



Mr. Nagahban is a proud man, proud of his culture, his achievements and proud of his family. He states with pride that twenty of his students of archeology are now working as archeologists in Iran.

He has many memories, many he shares, many he keeps enclosed in his mind. His fondest is the dig at Marlik, and the worse the day the camp was attacked — the day that brought early closure to his goals and dreams.

My last question to him dealt with his children as Iranians born in Iran but raised in the United States.

You are now an American and have grandchildren and children here. Do they remain attached to their Iranian heritage?

Mrs. Nagahban stepped in to reply.

Our children grew up in Iran and they have many wonderful memories of that part of their life. All have been greatly influenced by their culture and their heritage. Their children do not speak Persian, I suspect with each generation Persian will be less and less spoken by Iranian Americans. Our grandchildren, however, have been taught the traditions

of Iran and I hope they will continue to pass this aspect onto their children and so on and so on.

When I left there, I recognized that this man and his family live in a great reality. It is a reality that has brought them much happiness and a great deal of pain and sorrow. Their reality has allowed them to continue to achieve despite obstacles. This is a family to be admired.

SUSPENSE

By: Amil Imani

*You love
How much you have made me suffer!
Without even knowing!
These heart-broken days
Is thoughtless of us
And thoughtless of the beautiful blossoms
That flourish everyday
In our backyard!*

*The garden comes to life little by little
Passes through imagination
Joins the trees
And weaves the gorgeous threads of fate
With slender gentle stems.*

*Now the two of us are standing alone
By a tree
Whose fruits are moist with
The dews of loneliness!
And the skirts of flowers
Smell of the scent of suspense!
Suspense!
How fatal it is!
It even corrupts the fruit!
The fruit that was on the peak of its power
And addicted to love!*

*You brother
Cover the whole garden
With flowers
Empower it
With love!
Beautify it!
With colors!
And pour the animating rays of the sun
On its soil!
And sacrifice the loving words
For its roots!*

*Worn out of hopelessness,
We made love!
In this soulless society
We'd disintegrate once more
And we'd have a share in memories!
That was my share!*