



Interview: Marjane Satrapi – p. 54



Never Forget – p. 19



Journey of A Life Time – p. 40



Interview: Babak Ebrahimi – p. 47

**FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK** 6

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR** 8

**NEWS BRIEFS** 11

**COMMENTARY** 13

**The Other Side of the Coin** (*Karim Mansouri*) 14

**Whose Coin?** (*Farhang Sadeghpour*) 17

**Paradigm Shift in the Middle East in Full Gear** 18

(*Davood Rahni*)

**Persian — The Mother of Urdu** (*Dr. Samar Abbas*) 20

**History of Terrorism — Part VII** (*David A. Yazdan, M.D.*) 23

**The Road From Baghdad Leads to Tehran** (*David Peyman*) 26

**Russia-Azerbaijan Agreement in the Caspian Sea:** 27

**What Does It Mean for Iran?** (*Bahman Aghai Dibai*)

**Do Persians “Hate” Arabs?** (*Negar Ahkami*) 30

**Is Our Language Dying?** (*Vahid Isabeigi*) 31

**THE ARTS**

**Only Once (Poem)** (*Amil Imani*) 34

**The Hopeful Vagrant (Poem)** (*Mohsen Diba*) 36

**Persian Music Community is Mourning** 37

(*Pejman Akbarzadeh*)

**Life (Poem)** (*Mother Teresa*) 37

**Yellow Scene (Poem)** (*Shahzad Kavooosi Farzad*) 37

**YOUR PERSIAN HERITAGE**

**Great Minds Think Alike** (*David Yeagley*) 39

**Journey of A Life Time** (*Shahri Estakhry*) 40

**Physicians and Society** (*Amir Ghaferi*) 41

**Interview with Babak Ebrahimi** (*Persian Heritage*) 47

**Iranian Satellite TV Channels As Cultural Mirrors (II)** 50

(*Yahya R. Kamalipour*)

**FEATURE**

**INTERVIEW WITH MARJANE SATRAPI** 54

*Shahrokh and Negar Ahkami*

**BOOK REVIEW** 58

**FILM REVIEW** 59

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Turbulence in the world continues and questions about what to do with Iran remains unanswered. Persian television and radio stations continue to implement their resources to stimulate and mobilize the masses within Iran. For what? To overthrow the government?

This spring and summer brought numerous demonstrations throughout the US, Canada and Europe in support of the Persian students in Iran who are calling for a change. The demonstrators were filled with excitement over the prospect of change and believed any support of these students, even from distant shores, could and would expedite a turnover or change.

The faces of these support demonstrators reflected sincerity but this genuine sympathy often contradicts the decisions made in their personal life. Though it is not our intention, some of us, living outside of Iran, are hypocritical and hypocrisy on the issue of "freedom" can be destructive to a cause, if not fatal. Again, we are sincere in uniting against the injustices that are happening in Iran but we are plagued with a plethora of reasons not to unite. Not completely uniting as a group will void any validity we wish to obtain through our own demonstrations. We must unite even if that means personal risk. We must show the same courage we had when we left our homeland many years ago.

"What is he talking about?" I am sure you are asking. The best way to answer your question is through a recent personal experience. Three years ago, a few young Ghouchanis, now living in the United States, wanted to organize a reunion of the Ghouchanis and the Kurds of the Northern State of Khorassan, now living in the United States and Canada. Their goal was to develop a social event where these Ghouchani's would have an opportunity to be reacquainted with old friends classmates and neighbors. Part of this goal has been achieved, people have been reunited. The joy on their faces over these reunions is "priceless." Joy overwhelms them when they discover the person they sit next to in present time is the same person they knew many years ago.

Ghouchanis are a distinguished and accomplished group, and have been fortunate to be successful in their professions. For this reason the organizers of this event were certain that attendance at this reunion would significantly grow each year. It has not, and this year I fear it has been because we incorrectly blamed poor attendance on distance and personal and professional obligations.

Anticipating a more glamorous event and larger attendance, my drive to Washington was filled with anticipation ... what new faces would I see, would I recognize them, would they recognize me? When I got out of my car, I noticed a distinguished looking gentleman coming my way. His face was familiar. I tried to exchange greetings with him, but he turned and walked away. I knew he was Ghouchani by his gait. I shrugged my shoulders and entered the lobby of the hotel where I was met by friendly faces. One asked me if I had seen a gentleman in the parking lot. I nodded and then he informed me that he was an old classmate of mine. When he heard I was arriving he left. I couldn't think of a reason for this but I also was not going to let this behavior spoil my day.

Once inside the room I met a woman I had not seen for more than thirty years. She was there with her son. Not being from Ghouchan she was reluctant to stay. I convinced them to linger and by the end of the evening they were considered "honorary Ghouchanis." During my conversation with her and her son, I discovered that he was best friends with the son of an old Ghouchani friend. I asked him why they didn't attend. I was told they had a previous engagement but extended their greetings. I was disappointed, but thought perhaps next year. Then I noted that we had better send out "save the date" letters earlier.

Over the next few hours we laughed, conversed, reminisced, danced and then went to dinner at a Persian restaurant. As I entered the restaurant, I was overjoyed to see a very dear old friend off in the corner. After we greeted each other, I offered him a seat next to me. Politely he declined and told me that he would have to return to the table where he was sitting with other people. Once again I was disappointed, but the music began to play and it grabbed my attention. It was the music of a famous Ghouchani musician. At the end of the evening I congratulated him on his recent CD and then purchased one. I then suggested that I would like to give him a gift of a complimentary advertisement for the CD in the next issue of *Persian Heritage*. His warm smile turned into one of panic. He begged me not to do that and promised to call me when the time was right.

By this time the events in the parking lot, restaurant and now this musician made me suspicious to some underlying circumstances. It occupied my mind the entire drive back to



## Persian Heritage

www.mirassiran.com

**Persian Heritage, Inc.**

110 Passaic Avenue

Passaic, NJ 07055

E-mail: mirassiran@aol.com

Telephone: (973) 471-4283

Fax: (973) 471-8534

or: (973) 574-8995

**EDITOR:**

**SHAHROKH ANKAMI**

**EDITORIAL BOARD:** Dr. Mehdi Abu-Saidi, Shirin Ankami Raiszadeh, Dr. Mahvash Alavi Naini, Mohammad Bagher Alavi, Dr. Tafat Bassari, Mohammad Ali Dowlatshahi, Mohammad H. Hakami, Ardeshtir Lotfalian, K. B. Navi, Dr. Kamshad Raiszadeh, Farhang A. Sadeghpour, Mohammad K. Sadighi, Ghahremon Soleymanpour, Dr. David Yeagley.

**MANAGING EDITOR:**

HALEH KIA

**ADVERTISING:**

LAURA HOLT AND TERRY FAZIO

The contents of the articles and advertisements in this journal, with the exception of the editorial, are the sole works of each individual writer and contributors. This magazine does not have any confirmed knowledge as to the truth and veracity of these articles. All contributors agree to hold harmless and indemnify *Persian Heritage (Mirassiran)*, Persian Heritage Inc., its editors, staff, board of directors, and all those individuals directly associated with the publishing of this magazine. The opinions expressed in these articles are the sole opinions of the writers and not the journal. No article or picture submitted will be returned to the writer or contributor. All articles submitted in English must be typed.

The appearance of advertising in this magazine does not constitute a guarantee or endorsement of the products by *Persian Heritage*. In addition, articles and letters published do not reflect the views of this publication.

Letters to the Editor should be mailed, faxed or e-mailed to the above addresses and numbers. The journal reserves the right to edit same for space and clarity or as deemed appropriate.

All requests for permissions and reprints must be made in writing to the managing editor.

**PUBLISHED BY:**

**PERSIAN HERITAGE, INC.**

A corporation organized for cultural and literary purposes

Cover Price: \$5.00

Subscriptions: \$20.00/year (domestic);

\$30.00 & \$50.00/year (other countries)

Typesetting & Layout: FARABI PUBLISHERS

New Jersey. A few days later I ran into another Ghouhani who had not attended the event. I relayed what happened to him and he began to laugh. When I asked him why, he explained that the reason they did not want to be associated with the event was because they frequently travel to Iran. They believe their association with this group may cause problems with the authorities in Iran. I was shocked to hear this and then I asked him if this was the reason he didn't attend. Much to my disappointment he said yes! What headache could this meeting be to anyone I asked? He said he wasn't sure but he didn't want to test it.

Since this person had never even mentioned any desire to visit Iran over the past twenty years I was really shocked with his response. I was so angry and frustrated and shouted at him "how can you be so hypocritical? You sympathize with the men and women in Iran. You cry out and support their struggle for liberty, equality, freedom of speech, freedom of choice and separation of church and state and now you tell me you fear the same government that you are telling them to rise against? You support demonstrations against incarceration and killing of students but succumb to a "not sure" fear of the same government? I simply do not understand your thinking?"

"The students of Iran have developed the courage to stand up and fight for their rights, to fight for a change. This has cost them their freedom and their lives. They are encouraged by this worldwide support, yet you are afraid to have attended a social event to eat, drink and be merry with old acquaintances and friends because of a difference in political opinion that may impact your two-week vacation to Iran to purchase a carpet?"

I ask all of you what message are we sending the students by these cowardly actions? Even worse what message are we giving to those in control? Is this the thought process we want to give them or our children? To fear and not exercise their freedoms? If it is, I see no hope for change in Iran. It is beyond my comprehension why anyone would exchange friendship for a two-week visit to a country that is no longer home. With this thinking and actions, how can we ever speak out on behalf of the students or the general population in Iran? How can we be effective supporters of their cause when we harbor the fears they are conquering? Shame on all of us who think this way. We must be willing to sacrifice just as the students are willing to sacrifice. We are eager to place the blame for all that has happened on a regime, because it is easier than

placing the blame on ourselves. Placing the blame on a non-tangible "thing" lessens our guilt of self-censorship.

In order for the Persian community to effectively and legitimately support the students in Iran we must first overcome our fears and our own inadequacies. We must find the courage and self-confidence to confront our fears. Political views should divide us only during debate. Political differences make up a small percentage of a Persian, the remainder is all the same. That percentage, my friends, does not want anyone in the world to suffer, that percentage wants to see the Persian citizens finally share the same freedoms we do in the United States: FREEDOMS, some of us take for granted or give bogus reasons not to exercise them. Until we exercise those freedoms, without fear in this country, our demonstrations in support of these freedoms by students and Persian citizens are futile and ineffective. What is worse, we are nothing more than "amusement" for the forces that be. Never forget the courage it took to leave Iran. This bravery still exists in all of us and united that bravery may help move a mountain.

*Shahrokh Alavi*

## Best Wishes to Persian Heritage

### Vitafol-PN<sup>®</sup> Prenatal Caplets

*The Smallest Complete Prenatal Vitamin  
Ensuring the Health of Mother and Baby*

Prescription Vitamins, Nutritionals and  
Ethical Pharmaceuticals

Everett Laboratories, Inc.  
West Orange, NJ 07052



The Russian Federation and Republic of Azerbaijan agreed on Sept 23, 2002 to divide their parts of the Caspian Sea's seabed. The Division was based on the Russian proposed formula of Modified Median Line (MML). Previously, the Russian Federation has agreed with the Kazakhstan to divide their seabed using the same method. The Republic of Azerbaijan, also has reached general agreement with Kazakhstan to use the same method for delimitation of their maritime boundaries in the Caspian Sea. At the same time, the concerned states are putting pressure on Iran and Turkmenistan to join the others in using MML and end the problems regarding the legal regime of the Caspian Sea.

The formula of Modified Median Line, as the concerned countries in the Caspian Sea have used it, means:

1. Dividing the seabed of the Caspian Sea, according to a median or equi-distance line from the shorelines of the concerned countries.

2. Changing (or modifying) the line of demarcation, according to selected natural elements, such as seabed elevations and man-made elements, such as established installations (by mutual agreement).

3. Leaving the superjacent waters free for navigation by all littoral countries of the Caspian Sea.

The effects of using MML formula in the legal regime of the Caspian Sea are:

**I. As far as the Russians are concerned:**

A. Removing the problem of a new legal regime of the Caspian sea and therefore, opening the way to concentrate on the issue of turning the oil and gas resources of the Caspian Sea into much needed hard cash.

B. Proving the leadership of Russians in the Caspian Sea as the country, which defines who gets what in the Caspian Sea. This will be a good precedence for the Russians, especially after they had the greatest military maneuver after the col-

lapse of the USSR in the Caspian Sea (it was performed last month).

C. The most important of all, leaving the waters over the seabed of the Caspian Sea as common area for free navigation. Taking into consideration that the other countries around the Caspian Sea, including Iran, do not have any considerable naval units or commercial ships to navigate in the Caspian Sea, the formula means to give the highly equipped fishing ships of the Russians to go all over the Caspian Sea for fishing activities all the year round, while the other states are catching fish with the old dated and even primitive methods of fishing in the areas near to the shore. Also the naval fleet of the Russians in the Caspian Sea that are now equipped with new advanced units can navigate all over the Caspian Sea.

D. The MML gives the Russians the

ing the resources in the last century.

B. "Under the five-way equal division that Iran advocates, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan would claim 2.84 billion tons of the sea's estimated hydrocarbon reserves, compared with 2.34 billion for Russia and slightly less for Turkmenistan and Iran. Under the "modified median line" approach, Azerbaijan would control access to 4 billion tons of reserves, twice Russia's allotment and more than four times Iran's share." ([http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/business/articles/ea\\_v092502.shtml](http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/business/articles/ea_v092502.shtml))

C. If Iran agrees with the MML, then even the disputed oil fields of Alborz will be placed in the Azerbaijan's territory.

D. If Turkmenistan accepts the MML, then the important oil fields of Sardar/Kapaz will be in its territory.

It is clear that the situation is not in Iranian favor with the MML, made in Russia. Iranian authorities in different levels, including the president Khatami, have called the bilateral treaties of the Russian Federation with Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan as null and void because they were contrary to the previous agreements of all concerned countries to make decisions regarding the new legal regime of the Caspian sea by consensus (agreement of all five coun-

tries) in several occasions. The Iranian position is that the 1921 and 1940 agreements between Iran and the former USSR are valid until the five countries find a new regime accepted by all of them. Also, Iran believes those treaties are forming a kind of condominium in the Caspian sea which is a good system, but if the concerned countries decide to go another way and divide the territories then the whole sea should be divided into 20% sectors for each and that will include the superjacent waters. Therefore, Iran has opposed the MML that gives Iran:

a) 13% of the seabed of the Caspian Sea.

b) The Iranian section is free from any known oil and gas fields.

**RUSSIA-AZERBAIJAN AGREEMENT IN THE CASPIAN SEA**

**What Does It Mean for Iran?**

**Bahman Aghai Dibai**

possibility of keeping their maritime connection with Iran. Iran does not have a land border with the Russian federation, and if the Caspian Sea is divided into national sectors (which includes the waters) then there will be no maritime border. As far as Iran is concerned, having a "Buffer Zone" with a great power is a positive point.

E. The Russians will get almost 20% of the Caspian Sea seabed.

**2. As far as the Azerbaijan is concerned, the MML means:**

A. Azerbaijan gets Almost 21% of the Caspian seabed according to the MML. The area is one of the places known to have vast oil resources and the Azerbaijan Republic and before that the Russians were exploit-

c) The Iranian side is very deep and any exploration and exploitation of resources is more difficult than the shallow areas of the Caspian Sea, which are in the upper parts.

d) The Russians ships can come close to the Iranian shores any time. If one remembers that one of the articles of 1921 treaty of Iran and former USSR (the same treaty that Iran is insisting that it is the basis of the existing legal regime in the Caspian Sea), gives the right to Russians to intervene in Iran, then, this freedom will mean more than it looks. Of course the Iranian governments before and after the revolution (1979) have repeatedly declared that Article 5 of the 1921 treaty is null and void because its subject is the White Russians, and the issue is dead, but the Russians never accepted the Iranian interpretation of that article. In fact, one of the reasons that Russians keep mentioning that 1921 and 1940 treaties are still valid, although they are actually violating them, is the same point.

Although Iran is not seriously in need of the Caspian sources, there are many places in the Iranian territories, especially in the Persian Gulf, untouched, and they much easier to exploit and other activities, still the issue of the Caspian Sea is very much of interests for the Iranian government because:

1. Historically Iranians have been an important country in the region, and it is embarrassing for Iran the some newly independent countries, without all suffering of Iran in the course of history for safeguarding at least a little of its interests, is now losing the game in the Caspian Sea and has to (or in fact is forces to) get 13% of the worst parts of the Caspian Sea.

2. Many Iranians consider the failure of Iranian government in the Caspian Sea as a sign of inefficiency of the present regime in securing the national rights, for the sake of bad conduct of foreign relations, including bad relations with the regional and out of region countries, especially the US.

3. The Caspian Sea issues are related to several important strategic and also, prestigious points for Iran, among them: failure in the confrontation with the regional countries, failure in confrontation with the US and its friends in this areas, failure in the diplomacy of pipelines (because of Baku-Jeyhan and also Turkmenistan-Afghanistan pipelines), failure in influencing other aspects of political and economic life in the countries

of the region especially in comparison with Turkey and later Israel.

The bottom line is that once the Caspian Sea was a common body of water between Iran and the USSR. After the demise of the USSR, Iranians were hopeful that they would be full partner in the region, and if the inheritors of the dead man (USSR) were going to divide the shares, then they would divide their own 50% (and Iran would retain its 50%). The Iranian government, for any reason, never started the negotiating for its rights from this point. First they spoke of condominium and later asked for 20%. But the new countries were not even ready for that. They are dividing their shares according to Russian formula. Iran is left isolated and frustrated. What can be done?

1. The Iranian government must continue to reject the bilateral treaties between the littoral states of the Caspian Sea as null and void. The continued rejection of Iran has a clear meaning in the international law and this fact may help Iran if the case is ever referred to an international court or arbitration.

2. Is it in favor of Iran if the case of the Caspian Sea's legal regime is referred to an international court? First of all, whenever we think of the international tribunals, the most important place is always the International Court of Justice in The Hague. ICJ has a special system for referring the case: the parties to the dispute must have agreed before or after the emergence of the dispute to take the case to the ICJ. In the case of the Caspian Sea, there is no such agreement at the moment. But suppose that the littoral states of the Caspian Sea agree to refer this case to the International Court of Justice or a place like that.

I do not think that the outcome will be in favor of Iran because:

I. The vagueness of the 1921 and 1940 treaties.

II. The bad reputation of Iran in such international forums (such as the case of American Hostages in Iran in ICJ that the court voted against Iran.)

But there are things that Iran can do before reaching this point. First are of course better relations with the western countries and especially the USA. The second thing is to work through expert groups for preparation of the case from Iranian rights point of view.

In that framework several points should be regarded:

a. The delimitation of maritime areas has been done according to several

methods. But the main idea in all those methods is the satisfaction of the parties. The median line and equidistance method are well known methods but no country is obliged to use it exclusively.

b. The historical rights. The case of "historical bays" in the 1982 UN Convention on the law of the Sea may a useful model for a start. The arguments regarding the historical rights of Iran should start from the point that following the demise of the USSR, the inheritors of the Dead man should divide their own share and Iran must get 50% of the Caspian Sea.

c. The size of population of littoral countries and the degree of dependence of local population to the Caspian Sea must be taken into consideration.

d. Refer to No. 4-1, in the following part of the present article regarding Russians treatment.

3. Iran can take the case to the United Nations as an issue threatening the peace and security of the region. In the case of dispute between Iran and the United Kingdom regarding nationalization of Iranian oil industries by Dr. Mossadegh, the British authorities took the issue to the Security Council of the United Nations and the Council ordered the two sides to refer the case to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Of course the ICJ later rejected its jurisdiction on the matter and this was considered the victory of Iran. It is highly doubtful that Iran can take the issue to the Security Council directly, because at least two permanent members of the SC are against Iranian positions, but it is possible to start from the General Assembly and convince the Assembly to refer the case to the Security Council.

4. Iran must put more pressure on Russia. The pressure should be focused on several things:

I. The Russians had the same position as Iran. They suddenly changed their position couple of years ago. This is a matter of serious study in the international law that a country takes a certain position. Make the other side (Iran) assured that they both are in the same boat. It issues numerous declarations, writes letters and speaks through the words of all kinds of officials, including its president and foreign minister that it is supporting the idea of commonwealth or common administration of the Caspian Sea, and it says that all bilateral treaties are null and void and even threatens others to military action for acting out of five countries consensus. Then one day it changes the story.

What are the legal commitments of Russian officials for repeating the same position as Iran for at least ten years? What are the legal consequences of violating all letters that the Russians have sent with Iran and separately to the United Nations and requested them to be distributed as the official documents of the United Nations?

II. Iran should pressure the Russians for buying all the low level commodities that buys including the Chernobyl type nuclear power plants and Topolev aircraft. Russians are not compensating the Iranian gestures.

5. Iran must try to use the Turkmenistan card in the best possible way. This may be the last defense line of Iran in the issues related to the legal regime of the Caspian Sea. The Russians are putting great pressure on Turkmenistan to adopt the MML, and solve its problems with Azerbaijan through bilateral talks. Iran has convinced Turkmenistan that it is going to lose more in such arrangements. This may take more than talks with Turkmen authorities and may need some material assistance to Turkmenistan to keep it convinced. Iran has done this in the case of Syria for issues that possibly had no effect of its national interests. Why don't they (Iranians) do it for the national interests this time?

6. Iran has been suffering from the bad relations with the US in the Caspian Sea. There is no basic reason for not having good relations with the US. By the presence of the US in Iraq, the reasons are getting more.

Dr. Bahman Aghai Diba is a consultant on international law affairs for several US companies.

## DO PERSIANS "HATE" ARABS?

Negar Ahkami

Extremism, violence and restrictions of civil liberties all in the name of Islam in post-Revolutionary Iran probably contribute to feelings of resentment towards the Islamification of Iran, and to a glorification of Iran's pre-Arab past. The Arabs become a convenient target and symbol of such Iranian resentment. The humiliation that Iranians have suffered by portrayals of their country in the media as a barbaric, fanatic, terrorist country have perhaps made many Iranians abroad (whether they be Jews, Christians or Muslims) disown on some level the Muslim influences on Iranian culture in favor of their pre-Islamic Persian past.

I also think there is an aspect of self-hatred in this presumed Iranian resentment/hatred of Arabs. I assume that many Iranians also have Arab blood and I question this notion of a "pure Aryan race" that many Iranians hold onto, almost in a defensive manner (What race is "pure" in this day and age?). Often people think of anti-Semitism as anti-Jewish—but I also think it applies to peoples' hatred towards Arabs. I think that there is a desire to disown the Arabs within ourselves, perhaps as a product of the racism against Arabs in Western society and the equation of Islam with terrorism in Western education and mass media.

Perhaps Spain and Italy have similar issues. I have found that there is a desire to disown the more Arab/Islamic influences in those countries and to instead emphasize the European or Greco-Roman aspects of their histories. Perhaps the discrimination of often darker and more Arab-looking Southern Italians and Southern Spaniards by their northern counterparts has something to do with this desire to disown the Arab part of one's history, culture and race. I think we have something similar in Iran, but even more extreme because Westerners are generally a lot more ignorant about Iran's history and culture than they are of Spain and Italy, which of course are in Europe. That Iranians abroad are often mistaken for Arabs (educated people often don't know that there is a difference) must on some level contribute to a defensive need to say "we are not Arab," "we are superior to Arabs" and "we are Caucasian, like you."

## IRAN AND THE PERSIAN GULF: WRONG MAP

The Metropolitan Museum of Art continues to use maps, which label the Persian Gulf as the Gulf. Keep sending cards and letters to the museum to correct this.

### Group Tours

with

**Pars Travel**

**800-343-0208**

DON'T FORGET YOUR

**Persian  
Heritage**

**SUBSCRIBE!**

**(973) 471-4283**

[www.persian-heritage.com](http://www.persian-heritage.com)



# IS OUR LANGUAGE DYING?

Vahid Isabeigi

Most of us, Iranians, have been rather vigilant about not to be culturally classified in the same category as Arabs for the sake of endeavoring to retain the intrinsic facets of our Iranian culture. In fact, this vigilance has reached such considerable levels that great majority of Iranian-Americans and other Iranian expatriates, rather than mustering up to stave off the pervasive anti-Iranian xenophobia that has been existent in the USA for the past two decades, have almost been spending their entire energy on trying to point out the fact that we Iranians aren't Arabic and that we, as Iranians, possess highly distinguishable features such as our language and our pre-Islamic traditions to tell us apart from Arabs. On the other hand, the perseverance of Iranian expatriates and a considerable number of Iranians inside Iran to try to promulgate the fact that Iranians aren't Arabic, despite being completely rightful and highly indispensable, has not really gained Iranians anything; in other words, their efforts have been completely in vain since nothing has been done in practice. In fact, the language we speak, Persian, attests to the fact that nothing appreciable has indeed been done.

This could sound to be rather convoluted; hence, let me explicate my point as follows: Although we Iranians arguably speak a different language, an Indo-European Language, as opposed to the Semitic nature of Arabic, our language has been completely inept at fighting against the encroachment of Arabic hot on the heels of the advent of Islam. In fact, an estimated 45-50% of today's Persian Language in daily use is comprised of Arabic words. This tendency of incorporating Arabic words into one's speech and writing has notably gained momentum after the outbreak of the revolution, as a result of which, the regime, with an outright policy, has been encouraging the further *Arabization* of the Persian Language. Presumably, our post-revolutionary press ranging from our newspapers to maga-

zines and everyday written language is now completely awash with Arabic Words. In fact, this propensity has reached so extreme levels so as to incorporate our everyday colloquial language, which is the clearest manifestation of this preposterous tendency.

Unfortunately, our exiled press consisting of expatriate-writers and newscasters also seem to have been caught up in this trend. This is the clearest indicative of the fact that although Iranians are rather attentive when it comes to taking pride in being endowed with one of the oldest and most affluent languages of the world, there has hardly been a significant maneuver, except for the matchless piece of *Shahnameh*, with respect to the promotion of Persian Language and minimizing the effect of Arabic. This, in turn, very explicitly exhibits our inadvertence despite, paradoxically, our arrogant stance about our language.

Arabic, in spite of being far more expressive and having a far greater amount of vocabulary as opposed to Persian, has inevitably dominated the languages of most Islamic States varying from Turkish to Urdu and Malay. However, in none of these languages has the effect of Arabic Element been as cumulative as it has been in Persian. In Fact, most people insinuate that if it wasn't Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, which resuscitated our language in the midst of invincible impact of Arabic in the bulk of the Middle East, our language would have faded into oblivion like the way the intrinsic languages previously being spoken in Syria and Egypt have fallen victim to the domination of Arabic.

Nevertheless, it would be erroneous to affirm that the effect of Arabic element has been totally futile in Persian. In fact, the affluence of Arabic Language, which has filled the gap of expressiveness in Persian, has enabled most of our poets to produce glamorous masterpieces, each of which are highly appreciated by Iranians from various ages and from various strata

of the society. Arabic has immeasurably enriched the Persian Language with some of the words and concepts that were completely non-existent in our pre-Islamic Persian Language. Nonetheless, current influence of Arabic, which has not only subdued our literature, but has trespassed on as far as our colloquial language, needs moderation. In fact, some of the Arabic words already have their equivalents in Persian. One should research the still extant dialects of the Persian (Gilaki, Tati, Lori, Kurdish), to see the equivalents of some of the very widely used Arabic words really existed in the ancient Persian Language. There certainly are ways in which the Arabic element cannot be eradicated from Persian. On the other hand, in contrast to Turkish or Urdu, in which communication would be rather arduous without the inclusion of foreign words, our Persian Language is rich enough to minimize this intense effect of the Arabic languages with a huge profusion of words it is already endowed with to replace their Arabic equivalents.

Furthermore, it would be timely to note that the efforts of moderating the Arabic element in Persian by resurrecting some of our own words should by no means exhort one to espouse the notion of "purity" since in today's circumstances there doesn't exist a pure language all languages in the world have unavoidably borrowed a multitude of words from others to enrich their expressiveness capabilities. In this case, purity, though sounds very mesmerizing to most patriots, is the number one of enemy of the progress of a language. We can give some paradigms for this from Iranian Languages: For instance, some of the dialects of Persian such as Tati, Gilaki, Lori and Kurdish (which is my mother tongue by the way), have never been able to develop as fully as the Persian Language has. As a result, these dialects have barely been able to get out of their confines to fully develop themselves and have largely remained as rural languages. Although many people especially many patriot Iranians, preach the necessity of possessing a very pure language, not many are aware of the adverse repercussions of such a desire in terms of the expressiveness capability of a language.

Meanwhile, it would not be an exaggeration to affirm that the Persian Language, by virtue of its intrinsic richness, is endowed with the capability to reduce the Arabic Element from the current ratio

of 45-50% to as little as 20% by employing its existent words more often, which will indubitably promererate the incidence of the usage of Persian words as opposed to their Arabic equivalents. The examples of this are innumerable, as indicated below with just a handful of examples. Here are some examples denoting the fact that moderation of Arabic element in Persian is likely.

— *vatan*: This Arabic word meaning "homeland" is used more frequently in our language than its Persian equivalent, *mihan*, which is gradually fading into oblivion for being less frequently used.

— *mariz*: Meaning ill, is deployed more often in both colloquial and written Persian, while our own word, *bimaar*, has a relatively low incidence of usage. In the mean time, the same word's derivative, *maraz*, meaning trouble, though not used as commonly as *dard*, is somehow has gradually started to be favored more in colloquial speech.

— *tashakkor*: One of the most widespread Arabic words that has found refuge not only in Persian, but in most other non-Arabic Islamic world, is a typical paradigm of a non-eradicable Arabic words. In fact, *tashakkor* has become so prevalent in Persian that our own word *sepaas* has become rather obscure due to

seldom usage.

— *kalimeh*: Mostly used in the context of "word". Nevertheless, the prevalence of this word has mounted so immeasurably as to surpass that of *sokhan*, our Persian equivalent for the same word in the same context.

— *so'al*: Despite some visible effort made by our writers and journalist to steer clear of this word and instead resort to its Persian equivalent, *poresh*, which is unfortunately that common even in colloquial language, not a considerable achievement seems to have been attained.

— *javaab*: By the same token, the word *javaab* is way more common than its Persian equivalent, *paasokh*.

— *lahzeh*: One of the words that is probably more in the ascendant amongst the speakers of colloquial of Persian. In fact, this word has so much superseded the Persian one, *hengam*, that the new generation, both inside and outside Iran, has grown completely inconspicuous to its Persian equivalent.

*makhsos*: This is one of those words that has prompted its Persian equivalent, *vijeh* to start to gasp for breath for the battle of survival.

Evidently, these are just a handful

of those striking examples denoting the intense effect of Arabic Element in Persian. It is timely to point out that despite the meager efforts of some scholars, whose efforts in the realm of language have been met with the frowning stance of the regime whose authorities are undoubtedly averse to the moderation of Arabic element, no considerable scheme has been implemented in this highly relevant issue. In fact, even during the reign of the so-called patriotic outgoing shah, no substantial effort seems to have been made in deeds despite the some very flowery rhetoric put forward in this field just in words.

In conclusion, solemn efforts need to be made to deal with this highly paramount issue. On the other hand, there lies a very relevant question: should we totally discard the Arabic Element in Persian? Absolutely not. There should be a momentous and entrenched policy of further encouraging the usage of Persian words while Arabic ones should remain as choice to embellish writings or orations for eloquence. On the other hand, priority should invariably be given to Persian. In other words, when one speaks of the word "homeland," the first thing that should come into mind should be *mihan*, rather than *vatan*. ■

## NEW FACE OF THE HIJAB

A former computer engineering is bringing delight to the fashion conscious in Iran. Now a designer bent bringing the hijab to the 21st century, Katayoun Alf has nipped and tucked at the baggy chador into a tighter more "figure showing" piece of clothing.

Her clothing design is so hot the stores can't keep them on the rack. In response to this protest by the women in Iran the government decided to crack down on the shopkeepers who sold the fashions. They have been warned that the sale of "un-Islamic garb" would bring heavy fines; among the rules, nothing tight, slide slits and hemlines not above the knee.

Thrown into this mix of prohibition are bright colors. It is doubtful that these mandates will stop the designer, seller or wearer. One is still apt to find them but more secluded than the other traditional clothes. As far as the designer is concerned "crackdowns" help business."

# Deals!

## More for Your Miles!

### Buy & Sell



## SMARTER TRAVEL

# 800-693-5424



## ONLY ONCE

By: Amil Imani

Only once,  
 Only once listen to my call  
 Then, forget me like a tale  
 And entrust me with  
 The tranquility I have been waiting for.

You prefer a garden to a kiss  
 And entrust my hand with the night  
 A dark night!  
 A naked night!  
 A night like the stillness of silence  
 A night like the sound of wind  
 A night like the dark chambers  
 A night like the dark summer light  
 A night that never turns!  
 A night that never dies!  
 A night that is always weeping!  
 A night that is always melancholic!

Now at night  
 You wrestle tie with me  
 Now you are frightened by my shadow  
 Now you don't talk to me  
 Now, a star makes you tremble  
 And you are frighten because you can see  
 And you tremble because you are frightened!

Alas!  
 We were happy  
 Alas!  
 We were cheerful  
 Alas!  
 Now we are cruel  
 Alas!  
 Now we loathe  
 Now my eyes are full of tears  
 Now my eyes are full of awakening moments  
 Now your eyes are full of contempt and pain  
 Now your eyes are full of moments of separation

In the orchid of life,  
 We taste love!  
 Love is filled with dizziness  
 Love is wakefulness  
 Love is a curse  
 Love is beauty  
 Love is a Cure

Love is landscapes of melody  
 Love is still trembling in my eyes  
 Love is full of human vengeance  
 Our people do not understand love  
 Our people think love is lust

Love is life  
 Love is an open window  
 Love is the movement of a cold-leaf  
 Love is full of dull moaning  
 Love is the overflow of a rebellious pain  
 Love is the reflection of a season  
 Love is found in warm seasons  
 Love is pouring water  
 In an empty glass  
 Love is the deepness of the palm

Love comes  
 Love goes  
 It comes, because it craves to come  
 It leaves, because it comes  
 Love is wandering  
 Love is bewilderment  
 Love is a long lasting convulsion  
 That forces me toward the longest path  
 And abandons me in the longest fall  
 Love is a fire  
 Burning in the grieving fumes of fire  
 Love is a dream  
 That repeats me in itself  
 Love is a deception  
 That separates me from my self  
 Ah! I will have to get up  
 And enjoy love  
 Like wandering clouds  
 And lay the strikes of love  
 In the eyes of a pretty maiden  
 I might drag the silhouette of my body  
 To the highest points of eternity!  
 In this landscape  
 I see love  
 Weeping!  
 I see love  
 Silent!  
 It is Weeping,  
 For it's parting,  
 It is silent,  
 For it is long dead!

## Preface

The article that follows was written as a research paper by Amir Ghaferi, a second-year medical school student at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. Since his sources for preparing this piece were mainly Western or Arab authors, his references to most of the historic personalities in the article are as Arabs or Muslims.

We know that most of the scientists/physicians were non-Arabs; more specifically a majority of them were Iranian. I will try to clarify this point as much as I can. His reference to "How Islam Shaped Medicine" is a result of the fact that the article is covering an era during which all of the governments in "the Islamic Empire" were directly or indirectly related to the Abbasid Caliphs in Baghdad; and the language of science was Arabic, just as it was Latin in the West.

We cannot deny that all of these men of science were either Muslims or supported by Muslim rulers. I will, very briefly, explain about their so-called "nationalities" in the order in which their names appear in this article.

Ali ibn Abbas was a native of Ahvaz in Khuzestan; Al-Razi (Mohammad ibn Zakaryai-e Razi), obviously from Rey near present day capital of Iran, Tehran; Ibn-Sina was from Bukhara, which was a part of Great Khorasan; Ibn-Zuhair was from Spain; Sinan ibn Thabit bin Qurrah was from Harran (?), Abu al-Qasim Khalaf ibn Abbas Al-Zahrawi was from Cordova in Spain, where Omayyid Caliphs ruled well into fourteenth century; Ibn al-Haytham was from Basrah in present day Iraq; Yuhanna bin Masawayh was a Christian and from Jundi-Shapour in Fars; and finally, Hunayn bin Ishaq al-Ibadi was from Neishbour in Khorasan.

The flourishing of research in many science fields was a result of social and religious tolerance throughout the "Islamic Empire." Mohammad Zakaryai-e Razi was practically a non believer. To say the least he denied the concept of the prophecy and called the prophets "imposters." Nevertheless, he was appointed the chief of Baghdad Hospital, one of the largest in the "Empire." As soon as this spirit

of tolerance and open-mindedness diminished, by the rulers and the society alike, the advancement of science was weakened, and later on stopped, and people inclined towards seclusion and solitude, i.e., Sufism and mysticism — they concentrated on their inner self rather than worldly affairs of life.

This brief explanation will shed some light on the fact that the "Islamic Civilization" is a product of cooperation and collective endeavor of many individuals from every corner of the "Empire" despite the structures of the names of the participants that might be very misleading.

## INTRODUCTION

Medicine, as it stands today, did not develop overnight. It is the culmination of the efforts of millions of people, some of

era's contributions in the areas of medical education, hospitals, anesthesia, Surgery, ophthalmology, and pharmacy, one will see that Islamic Medicine was 1,000 years ahead of its time.

## THE SPREAD OF ISLAM

In order to understand how medicine developed in the Middle Ages, one must look back at the major events of the period that helped Islam become a dominant force. In 570 A.D., Muhammad was born in a small city in the Arabian Peninsula, called Mecca. In 610 A.D., he declared a new religion — Islam. The Prophet Muhammad was able to unite the Arab tribes who had been torn by revenge, rivalry, and internal fights to produce a strong nation. His successors acquired and ruled, simultaneously, the two known

empires of the time, namely the Persian and Byzantine Empires. The Islamic Empire extended from the Atlantic Ocean on the West to the borders of China on the East. Just 80 years after the death of their Prophet, the Muslims crossed over to Europe to rule Spain for more than 700 years (Haykal 1976). Adhering to their teachings, the Muslims preserved the cultures of the conquered lands which helped further their knowledge and

understanding of past achievements. However, when the Islamic Empire became weak, most of the Islamic contributions in art and science were destroyed. The Mongols burned Baghdad in 1258 A.D., out of barbarism, and the Spaniards demolished most of the Islamic heritage in Spain, out of hatred (Hitti 1977).

The Islamic Empire for more than 1,000 years remained the most advanced and civilized nation in the world. Islam stressed the importance and respect of learning, forbade destruction, developed in Muslims the respect for authority and discipline, and emphasized tolerance of other religions. The Muslims, who recognized excellence and craved knowledge, were eager for the wisdom of the world of Galen, Hippocrates, Rufus of Ephesus, Oribasius, Discorides, and Paul of Aegina. By the tenth century, their zeal and enthusiasm for learning resulted in an essential Greek medical writings being translated

# PHYSICIAN AND SOCIETY

## How Islam Shaped Medicine As We Know It Today

Amir Ghaferi

whom we know and others whom we do not. The flame of civilization, including medicine, started thousands of years ago and has been handed over from one generation to another and from one country to the other. Depending on who took the sacred responsibility of hosting it, sometimes it got brighter and sometimes it got dimmer.

Between the ancient civilizations of the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Persians, Indians, and Chinese, and the Renaissance era in Europe, there was a gap, commonly called "the dark ages." During this period, the West did not host the flame, but rather another culture and people called the Arabs(?) of the Islamic Empire. The term "the dark ages" reflects the civilization in Europe between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, but by no means does it express the state of affairs of the Islamic Empire at that time, where art and science shone so brightly. Upon examination of the Islamic

into Arabic (Hamarnah 1971). Arabic subsequently became the international language of learning and diplomacy and the center of scientific knowledge and activity shifted eastward, as Baghdad emerged as the capital of the scientific world. The Muslims became scientific innovators with originality and productivity. Islamic medicine is one of the most famous and best-known facets of Islamic civilization, and the area in which the Muslims most excelled. The Muslims were the great torchbearers of international scientific research and in the words of the Islamic scholar Donald Campbell, "The European medical system is Arabian not only in origin, but also in its structure. The Arabs are the intellectual forebears of the Europeans." (Campbell, 1926)

## MEDICAL EDUCATION

In 636 A.D., the Muslims conquered the Persian city of Jundi-Shapour with its great university and hospital intact. The Muslims would seek to create a pattern of excellence in the training of new physicians. Medical education was serious and systematic with lectures and clinical sessions based on the apprentice system. The advice given by Ali ibn Abbas, a prominent Muslim physician, to medical students is as timely today as it was then.

"And of those things which were incumbent on the student of this art (medicine) am that he should constantly attend the hospitals and sick houses, pay unremitting attention to the conditions and circumstances of their intimates in company with the most astute professors of medicine, and inquire frequently as to the state of the patients and symptoms apparent in diem, bearing in mind what he has read about these variations and what they indicate of good or evil." (Broawe 1962)

The skilled physicians, such as Al-Razi (Rhazes: 841-926 A.D.), Ibn-Sina (Avicenna: 980-1037 A.D.) and Ibn Zuhr (Avczoar: ?- 1116 A.D.) performed the duties of both hospital directors and deans of medical schools. They studied patients and prepared them for student presentation, while for the first time, writing and preserving clinical reports of cases for teaching purposes (Podgomy 1,966).

### Training in Basic Sciences

Only Jundi-Shapour or Baghdad had separate schools for studying basic sciences. Candidates for medical study re-

ceived basic preparation from tutors through private lectures and self-study. In Baghdad, anatomy was taught through apt dissections, skeletal studies, and didactics. Alchemy, the study of medicinal herbs, and pharmacognosy were once prerequisites for admission to medical school. A number of hospitals even maintained gardens as a source of drugs for the patients and a means of instruction for the students. The preclinical education at these hospitals is an early precursor to the current medical school standard. Once the basic training was completed, the candidate moved to the hospital as an apprentice, where he was initially assigned in a large group to a young physician for indoctrination, preliminary lectures, and familiarization with library procedures and uses. (Hamarnah 1962).

### Clinical Training

During the clinical training period, students were assigned in small groups to famous physicians and experienced instructors, for ward rounds, discussions, lectures, and reviews. Early in this phase, students learned therapeutics and pathology. These schools placed a strong emphasis on clinical instruction. As the students progressed in their studies, they were increasingly exposed to the subjects of diagnosis and judgment. Professors would ask students to examine a patient and make a diagnosis of the ailment. Only after a student had failed would the professor make the diagnosis himself.

While performing physical examination, the students were asked to examine and report six major factors: the patients' actions, excreta, the mature and location of pain, swelling, and effluvia of the body (Garrison 1929). Again, one can see the strong resemblance to the current system of medical education in the United States. For example, the training at Johns Hopkins mirrors that of these early medical schools.

### Curriculum

There were slight differences in the clinical curriculum, of different medical schools; however, emphasis was always placed on clarity and brevity in describing a disease. For example, until the time of Ibn Sina the description of meningitis was confused with acute infection accompanied by delirium. Ibn Sina described the symptoms of meningitis with such precision and concision that there is very little that can be added after 1,000 years (Al-A'sar 1972).

Surgery was also a part of the curriculum, as many surgical procedures such as amputation, excision of varicose veins and hemorrhoids were required knowledge. Orthopedics was widely taught, and the use of plaster of Paris for casts after reduction of fractures was routinely shown to students. This method of treating fractures was rediscovered in the West in 1852 (Haddad 1942). Although ophthalmology was practiced widely, it was not taught regularly in medical schools. Apprenticeship to an eye doctor was the preferred way of specializing in ophthalmology. After completing the training, the medical graduate was not ready to enter practice until he passed the licensing examination.

### Licensing of Physicians

In Baghdad in 931 A. D., Caliph Al-Muqtadir learned that a patient had died as the result of a physician's error. There upon he ordered his chief physician, Sinan ibn Thabit bin Qurrah, to examine all those who practiced the art of healing. In the first year of the decree more than 860 were examined in Baghdad alone.

From that time on, licensing examinations were required and administered in various places. Licensing Boards were set up under a government official called the Muhtasib or inspector general. The Muhtasib also inspected weights and measures of traders and pharmacists. Pharmacists were employed as inspectors to inspect drugs and maintain quality control of drugs sold in a pharmacy or apothecary (Levy 1967).

The duties of the present United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) were present in Islamic medicine 1,000 years ago. The chief physician gave oral and practical examinations, and if the young physician was successful, the Muhtasib administered the Hippocratic Oath and issued a license. After hundreds of years, licensing of physicians was implemented in the West, particularly in the United States by the State Licensing Board in Medicine.

European medical schools followed the pattern set by the Islamic medical schools and even in the early nineteenth century, students at the Sorbonne could not graduate without reading Ibn Sina's *Qanun (Cannon)*. This promotion of a systematic approach to medical education progressed with the creation of teaching hospitals, similar to those of today (Keys 1971).



## HOSPITALS

The development of efficient hospitals was an outstanding contribution of Islamic medicine. Their hospitals served all citizens free, without any regard to their color, religion, sex, age, or social status (Lyons 1978). They also contained pharmacies dispensing free drugs to patients. The government funded the hospitals, while the directors and administrators of the hospitals were physicians. The services provided at these hospitals were rivaled by no other hospitals to date. They provided patients with unlimited water supply and bathing facilities. This amenity arose in response to the religious requirements of Muslims to maintain cleanliness while praying (Hamarnah 1962). Furthermore, only qualified and licensed physicians were allowed by law to practice medicine. However, these hospitals were teaching institutions, educating medical students on the various wards. Hospitals had their own conference rooms and expensive libraries containing the most up-to-date books. The library of the Tulun Hospital, founded in Cairo in 872 AD, had 100,000 books (Haddad 1942). The hospital and medical school at Damascus also had elegant rooms and an extensive library. In fact, healthy people are said to have falsified illness in order to enjoy its cuisine. Universities, cities, and hospitals acquired large libraries, such as the Mustansiriyya University in Baghdad, whose library contained 80,000 volumes, the library of Cordova which contained 600,000 volumes, the library of Cairo that housed 2,000,000 books, and that of Tripoli with 3,000,000 books. In addition, physicians had their own extensive personal book collections at a time when printing was unknown and skilled and specialized scribes put in long hours of manual labor book editing (Saxton 1950).

For the first time in history, these hospitals kept records of patients and their medical care. Treatment in the hospital was divided into an outpatient department and an inpatient department. The system of the inpatient department differed only slightly from that of today. At Tulun hospital, on admission the patients received special apparel while the hospital stored their clothes, money, and valuables until the time of their discharge. On discharge, each patient received five gold pieces to support himself until he could return to work.

The Al-Adudi hospital, built in 981 A.D. in Baghdad, contained the best equipment and supplies known at the time.

It had interns, residents, and 24 consultants attending its professional activities. An Abbasid minister, Ali ibn Isa, requested the court physician, Sinan ibn Thabit, to organize regular visiting of prisons by medical officers (Shahine 1971). At a time when Paris and London were places of mud streets and hovels, Baghdad, Cairo, and Cordova had hospitals that incorporated innovations in patient care that were amazingly modern. It was chiefly in the humanness of patient care that the hospitals of Islam excelled. Near the wards of those afflicted with fever, fountains cooled the air, the insane were treated with gentleness, and at night, music and storytelling soothed the patients (Eigland 1976).

The *bimaristans* (hospitals) were of two types — the fixed and the mobile. The mobile hospitals were transported upon animals and were erected from time to time as required. The physicians in the mobile clinics were of the same standing as those who served the fixed hospitals. Similar moving hospitals accompanied armies in the field. The field hospitals were well equipped with medications, instruments, tents, and a staff of doctors, nurses, and cleaning staff. The traveling clinics served the totally disabled, the disadvantaged, and those in remote areas. These hospitals were also used by prisoners, and by the general public, particularly in times of epidemics (Hamarnah 1962). Ultimately, the Islamic system of hospitals provided a backbone for the hospitals of the future. Furthermore, the Muslim work in various fields of medicine, such as anesthesia, paved the way for future developments in medicine.

## ANESTHESIA

Ibn Sina originated the idea of the use of oral anesthetics. He recognized opium as the most powerful *mukhadir* (an intoxicant or drug). Less powerful anesthetics known were poppy, hemlock, hycosyamus, deadly nightshade (belladonna), lettuce seed, snow and ice-cold water. The Arabs invented the soporific sponge, which was the precursor of modern anesthesia. It was a sponge soaked with aromatics and narcotics and held to the patient's nostrils (Khairallah 1942).

The use of anesthesia was one of the reasons for the rise of surgery in the Islamic world to the level of an honorable specialty; while in Europe, surgery was belittled and practiced by barbers and quacks. The Council of Tours in 1163 A.D. declared "surgery is to be abandoned by the schools of medicine and by all decent

physicians." Burton stated that "anesthetics have been used in surgery throughout the East for centuries before ether and chloroform became the fashion in the civilized West."

## SURGERY

Abu al-Qasim Khalaf ibn Abbas Al-Zahrawi (930-1013 A.D.) known to the West as Abulcasis, Bucasis, or Alzabravius, is considered the most famous surgeon in Islamic medicine. In his book *Al-Tasrif*, he described hemophilia for the first time in medical history. The book contains the description and illustration of about 200 surgical instruments, many of which were devised by Zahrawi himself. In it, Zahrawi stresses the importance of the study of anatomy as a fundamental prerequisite to surgery. He advocates the re-implantation of a fallen tooth and the use of dental prostheses carved from cow's bone, an improvement over the wooden dentures worn by George Washington seven centuries later. Zahrawi appears to be the first surgeon in history to use cotton in surgical dressings to control hemorrhage, as padding in the splinting of fractures, as a vaginal padding in fractures of the pubis, and in dentistry. He also introduced the method of removal of kidney stones by cutting into the urinary bladder. He was the first to teach the lithotomy position for vaginal operations. He described tracheotomy, distinguished between goiter and cancer of the thyroid, and explained his invention of a cauterizing iron, which he also used to control bleeding. His description of varicose vein stripping, even after ten centuries, is almost like modern surgery in orthopedic surgery. He introduced what surgeon's today refer to as the 'Kocher's method of reduction of shoulder dislocation and the patelelectomy. This 1,000 years before Brooke reintroduced it in 1937 (Al-Okbi 1971).

Ibn Sina's description of the surgical treatment of cancer holds true even today. He says the excision must be wide and bold and that all veins running to the tumor must be included in the amputation. If this is not sufficient, then the area affected should be cauterized (Al-Okbi 1971).

Today, surgeons all over the world practice unknowingly several surgical procedures that Zahrawi introduced 1,000 years ago. The surgeons of Islam practiced three types of surgery: vascular, general, and orthopedic. However, ophthalmic surgery was a specialty that was quite distinct, both from medicine and surgery.

## OPHTHALMOLOGY

The Islamic doctors exhibited a high degree of proficiency and certainly were leaders in the treatment of eye diseases. In fact, words such as retina and cataract are of Arabic origin. In ophthalmology and optics, Ibn al-Haytham, (965-1039 A.D.), known to the West as Alhazen, wrote the *Optical Thesaurus* from which intellectuals such as Roger Bacon, Leonardo da Vinci, and Johannes Kepler drew theories for their own writings. In his *Thesaurus* he demonstrated that light falls on the retina in the same manner that it falls on a darkened room's surface through a small aperture; thus, conclusively proving that vision results when light rays pass from objects toward the eye and not from the eye toward the objects, as thought by the Greeks. He presented experiments for testing the angles of incidence and reflection, and a theoretical proposal for a magnifying lens, which would be made in Italy three centuries later. He also taught that the image made on the retina is conveyed along the optic nerve to the brain (Al-A'sar 1971). Al-Razi was the first to recognize the reaction of the pupil to light and Ibn Sina was the first to describe the exact number of extrinsic muscles of the eyeball, namely six. The greatest contribution of Islamic medicine in practical ophthalmology was in the matter of cataract. The most significant development in the extraction of cataract was developed by Ammar bin Ali of Mosul, who introduced a hollow metallic needle through the sclerotic and extracted the lens by suction. Europe rediscovered this technique in the nineteenth century (Keys 1971). Beyond the physical techniques of the Islamic physicians lie the medications that they devised in hopes of healing the ill.

## PHARMACOLOGY

Pharmacology took roots in Islam during the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Yuhanna bin Masawayh (777-457 A.D.) started scientific and systematic applications of therapeutics at the Abbasid capital His student, Hunayn bin Ishaq al-Ibadi (909-874 A.D.), and his associates established solid foundations of Arabic medicine and therapeutics in the ninth century. In his book *al-Masail Hunayn*, he outlined methods for confirming the pharmacological effectiveness of drugs by experimenting with them on humans. He also explained the importance of prognosis and diagnosis of diseases for better and more effective treatment (Al-A'sar 1972).

Pharmacy became an independent and separate profession from medicine

and alchemy. With the wild sprouting of apothecary shops, regulations became necessary and imposed to maintain quality control. A Muhtasib who threatened the merchants with humiliating corporal punishments if they adulterated drugs regularly inspected the Arabian apothecary shops. As early as the days of al-Mamun and al-Mutasim, pharmacists had to pass examinations to become licensed professionals and were pledged to follow the physician's prescriptions. Also by this decree, restrictive measures were legally placed upon doctors, preventing them from owning or holding stock in a pharmacy (Campbell 1926).

Methods of extracting and preparing medicines were brought to a high art, and their techniques of distillation, crystallization, solution, sublimation, reduction and calcination became the "essential process" of pharmacy and chemistry. With the help of these techniques, the pharmacists introduced new drugs such as camphor, senna, sandalwood, rhubarb, musk, myrrh, cassia, tamarind, nutmeg, alum, aloes, cloves, coconut, cubebs, aconite, ambergris, and mercury. The important role of the Muslims in developing modern pharmacy and chemistry is memorialized in the significant number of current pharmaceutical and chemical terms derived from Arabic — drug, alkali alcohol, aldehyde, alembic, and elixir among others. They invented flavorings extracts made of rose water, orange blossom water, orange and lemon peel, and other attractive ingredients (Hamameh 1971).

## CONCLUSION

1,000 years ago Islamic medicine was the most advanced in the world. Even after ten centuries, the achievements of Islamic medicine look amazingly modern. Every student and professional from various countries outside the Islamic Empire, aspired, yearned, and dreamed to go to the Islamic universities to learn, work, live, and lead a comfortable life in an affluent and advanced society. One cannot help but look with admiration upon the way the Muslims handled their responsibility toward mankind. They not only preserved, but also added to earlier achievements in medicine. They fostered the flame of civilization, made it brighter, and passed it on.

Today, in the twenty-first century, the United States of America has achieved such a position of responsibility. People immigrate to the United States in search of a better education and the freedom not afforded to them by other regions of the world.

America proves to be on the forefront of scientific discovery and medical advancements. Without the education and pursuit of knowledge of American scientists, whether born in the United States or not, science and medicine would not be here today. Ultimately, it is important to recognize the contributions of all people, past and present, to the current state of medicine.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Al-A'sar, Y. H., "Lights on History of Science. Famous physicians of the Western part of the Arab World." *Hospital Medical Practice*, Cairo, Egypt, 2:1-3, 1972.
- Al-A'sar Y. H., "Lights on History, of Science. Famous physicians of the Eastern part of the Arab World." *Hospital Medical Practice*, Cairo, Egypt, 1:14-29, 1971.
- Al-Okbi, M.D., "Lights on History of Science. Abu Al-Khasim Al-Zahrawi, the pioneer in surgery." *Hospital Medical Practice*, Cairo, 1:14-29, 1971.
- Broawe, E. G. *Arabic Medicine*, Cambridge at the University Press, 1962.
- Campbell, D., *Arabic Medicine and its influence on the middle ages*. Kegan Paul, French, Frubner & Co., London, 1926. Vol. I, pp. 69-77.
- Eigland, T., "Islam in Al-Andalus," *Aramco World Magazine* 27/5, Sept.-Oct. 1976.
- Garrison, F. H., *History of Medicine*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, W. B. Saunders Co., Philadelphia, 1929.
- Haddad, S. I., "Arabic Contribution to Medicine," *Anna. Med. Hist.*, 3:60-72, 1942.
- Hamameh, S., "The Physician and the Health Professions in Medieval Islam," *Bull. N.Y. Acad. Med.*, 47:1088-1110, 1971.
- Hamameh, S., "Development of Hospitals in Islam." *J. History of Med. and Allied Sciences* 17, 366-94, 1962.
- Haykal, M. H., *The life of Mohammed*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition, North American Trust Publications, 1976.
- Hitti, P. K., *History of the Arabs*, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition, St. Martin's Press, New York, 602-614, 1977.
- Keys, T. E., Wakim, K. G., "Contributions of the Arabs to Medicine," *Staff Meetings of the Mayo Clinic* 28:42-437, 1971.
- Khairallah, A. A., "Arabic Contributions to Anatomy and Surgery," *Ann. Med. Hist.*, 3:4 409-15, 1942.
- Levy, M., "Medical Ethics of Medireview Islam with Special Reference to Al-Ruhawis," *Practical Ethics of the Physician*, May 1967, Vol. 57, Part 3.
- Lyons, A. S., and Petruccioli, R., *J. Medicine — An Illustrated History*, H. N. Abrams, Inc. Publishers, New York, 1979.
- Podgomy, G. N., *Carolina Med. J.*, 27, 197-208 (1966).
- Sarton, G., *Introduction of the History of Science*, Vol. I, Baltimore, Camegie Inst. of Wash., 1950.
- Shahine, Y. A., *The Arab Contribution to Medicine*, Longman for the University of Essex, London, 1971.

## Tailored Tours

with

# Pars Travel

## 800-343-0208

# A THEATRE FOR REFLECTION:

BY GOING BACK TO THE PAST, WE CAN  
LEARN HOW TO LOCATE THE FUTURE



Iranian-born theatre director Babak Ebrahimi has been staging and directing plays since 1986, when he staged the premiere of Samuel Beckett's *Fizzles*. He holds a Bachelors Degree from Cornell University and a Masters Degree in Directing from Stanford University. He also holds a Ph.D. in French and Comparative Literature from Stanford University. This December, he will be staging a new translation of Pierre de Marivaux's *The Island of the Slaves*, an 18<sup>th</sup> century French play at HERE Arts Center, in New York City.

*Persian Heritage*

*When did you first know you wanted to become a director?*

My family and I moved to Paris in 1980, after the Iranian Revolution. So as not to allow too much nostalgia or depression to take hold of me, I escaped by reading books and going to the cinema. I tried to go to whatever films I could see. It was during this period that I developed a fascination for cinema, and wished that I could be a film director. Later on when I went to college, during my freshman year I took directing I, and it felt right. So I started to direct play after play, as many as I could, and in different venues.

*You are directing Marivaux's The Island of the Slaves now. Could you tell us a little bit about this play?*

The play was written in 18<sup>th</sup> century France, during the Age of the Enlightenment. It is a comedy that examines the master-slave relationship. It is story of a master and his slave and a mistress and her maid who are all shipwrecked on an island. This turns out to be an island run by former slaves who have rebelled. A representative of the island finds them and tries to teach the masters a lesson in humanity by forcing them to switch roles with their servants. So now, the slaves are the masters and the masters are the slaves. The play continues with many comic scenes in which the masters begin to move toward discovering what slavery is really all about.

*How does this play relate to us today?*

On the most immediate level, I think that today, when we think of slavery, we think that it is in the past, that it is finished, that it is gone and it no longer exists. But this is not the case and we have to acknowledge this. For example, here in America, we had the case of the deaf and dumb Mexicans being brought to New York to beg on the subways. Also according to humanitarian organizations, we have 50,000 women being trafficked to the United States for sexual slavery. So, slavery is not over. We either hear and forget about it, or we don't hear about it at all, making us less sensitive and aware of the issue.

*Will you be touching on foreign and global issues with*



**this play?**

I think colonialization all over the world, and especially by the West with developing countries, is a reality that has been unveiled, and countries have gained their liberty. This said, the play does not touch on this reality, but rather focuses specifically on what it is to be a "master and a slave." This definition alone is very painful and complex on its own and worth examining in a play.

**Do you consider yourself an Iranian-American, and what does that mean to you?**

I do consider myself an Iranian-American, and that means embracing the best of both worlds. In a sense it means being open to an understanding of globality, where both the best of the East and the West are embraced. I embrace American poets such as Walt Whitman and A.R. Ammons as much as I embrace Iranian poets such as Sohrab Sepehri or Forough Farrokhzad; I embrace Louis Armstrong and Billie Holiday, as much as I embrace the classics such as Banan and Delkash; I love the contemporary works of Rauchenberg as much as I love the miniatures of Behzad.

To be an Iranian-American, then, means embracing and not negating. To be one does not mean you have to negate the other, and I find the attitude of negating to be a destructive one rather than a constructive one. Dialogue is important, and to have dialogue you have to have "two." I think it's important to have a cultural dialogue between the two countries, and not let politics get in the way of our human fellowship. Over and over again, I am reminded of Winston Churchill's quote: "You cannot blame a people for their government."

Both the Iranian and the American nations have much goodness to offer the world, and to one another, and we shouldn't prevent this exchange and dialogue, but encourage it.

**Looking at your Iranian-American background, why did you choose this play?**

The choice to do this play is purely independent of my background. Each great author, and great play, in each epoch hits notes that ring true today. This play touches on slavery through the lens

of a comedy, but it also touches upon other issues, such as social class and forgiveness. Therefore, this play can mean as much today as it did in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and it can mean as much in America as it does in Iran as well as other parts of the world. You just have to approach with care and bring out its sounds, and make the notes heard. With our production, for example, one thing that we have done to make the play sound clearly is prepare a new translation of the play from the original French.

That's just one thing. While we are not robbing it of its 18th century essence, we have also designed it with new concepts and with a new approach so as to highlight the play for today.

**You've written scripts and directed films, and taught films as well as literature. But you have always come back to directing theatre. Why?**

For me, theatre is an ensemble work in which you work with people to create a presentation of a play. It is an arena in which you see people as people, humans as humans; for me, theatre is the closest art form that replicates the world. As far back as Shakespeare, we read, "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players: They have their exits and their entrances." Theatre is an exceptional mirror of reality, and to understand reality we need to have a distance, and the theatre provides this distance: it is called, "the stage."

While cinema is based on images and photography, i.e., "cinematography," theatre is based upon an immediate rapport and relationship between the stage and the audience. It is immediate, and thus it has the privilege of inviting the spectators to join the journey being unfolded on the stage. It invites you, for a moment, to leave your troubles behind and glance at "another world, another time, and another reality," which appears before your eyes briefly and then disappears. Here, then, is a time for pause, a time for reflection, and, by going back to the past, we can learn how to locate the present.

I like working with people, I like collaborating, I like brainstorming, and I like solving problems, and under the umbrella of theatre and art, there I find my place.

**Do you think you will ever do an Iranian play?**

I don't see why not. Iranian playwrights also have a voice, have a concern, and have points to make. I am particularly interested in the works of Bahram Bei'zai, and I can see myself choosing to direct one of his plays.

**Why do you do theatre?**

I started off as a student of engineering at Steven's Institute of Technology. At the end of the first semester, I realized that mathematics may be beautiful, and that solving physics problems may be interesting, but that something essential was lacking. I didn't need to think about it; it was obvious. It was poetry, and everything that came under the rubric of poetics, namely, the arts: cinema, theatre, music, literature, dance, painting, poetry and new contemporary forms of art.

The power of art is to express, through emotion and the intellect, and towards feeding the soul while enlightening the mind, and bringing the person to a higher understanding of themselves and the world. So, after that first semester I transferred to Cornell University, the bastion of liberal arts. I was back with literature and the arts, back with cinema and theatre. I've always tended toward human problems, issues and realities.

Perhaps if I hadn't gone through a revolution, I would have had a different sensitivity and understanding, but I had gone through a revolution, and here I was. I think it's important for all of us to remember what it is to be human. I think Sa'di put it best when he wrote, "All humans are members of one another, since they were all created from the same essence. If one member is suffering, the others cannot remain at rest."

If you are not moved by the suffering of others, you are not worthy to be called a human being." This is even inscribed on the walls of the United Nations.

**Ultimately, could I ask what is the aim of your theatre?**

I think Stanislavski answered it best when he said: "All that matters is to drive a wedge into peoples' indifference." Other theatre masters, like Brecht, have also said the same. The opposite of love is not hatred, but indifference. I think we all have a tendency of falling into apathy and indifference, and that is exactly what we need to caution against, and perhaps theatre is one way to address it. ■

## AN IRANIAN SUPERWOMAN



In 1974 Akram Monfared Arya was a mother of five children between the ages of two and eleven. For most that would have been enough but she had a dream and that was to continue her education and to become a pilot. After receiving her license at Doshan-Tapeh School of Flight she trained on a variety of single and double engine planes at Ghaleh-Morghi School of Flight. These achievements led her to

be the first woman who received a pilot license in Iran, with the exception of Princess Fatemeh Pahlavi.

Ms. Arya also worked as the Director of Training and as a consultant for Tehran Insurance Company and Iran-America Insurance Company (Tavanah Insurance Company). Wanting to stay on equal footing with her male counterpart she learned how to drive a bus and truck.

Eventually she left Iran with her children and now calls Sweden her home. In 1994 she put together her poetic writings in 1998 "Pejvakeh Esg'h" (messenger of love) which was published in 1999. A second book was published in 2000 "Sargozashteh Pari" (Pari's Memories). One of her books has now been given the honor to be translated into Swedes by popular Swedish author Sara Lidman.



**Advertise  
Your  
Business  
or  
Services  
in**

**Persian  
Heritage**

**CALL**

**(973)**

**471-4283**

**Fax:**

**(973) 471-8534**

**[www.persian-heritage.com](http://www.persian-heritage.com)**

An Interview with

**MARJANE SATRAPI**

Shahrokh and Negar Ahkami



When Marjane Satrapi says the word Iran, pride explodes on her face. She is well read on world politics and the politics of Iran; after all she grew up in Iran during the revolution. *Persian Heritage* is pleased to introduce you to Marjane Satrapi and Iran according to her perception.

This perception has recently been translated into English in a book called *Persepolis*. It is a must read book regardless of your background, it is an education few of us receive.

*Tell us a little about yourself.*

I was born in Rasht in 1969 from Rashti parents and spent only twenty days of my life there. We then moved to Tehran, where I attended a French school. In 1984 because of the turmoil in Iran I was sent to Austria where I attended another French school and then I returned to Iran in 1988. Freedom didn't mean much to me anymore. What was more important was to be with my parents and in my own country. It was where I belonged.

*Well you returned to Iran because it was where you belonged, but didn't you leave again?*

In a way the second time was for a different reason, to pursue my career. It was 1994 and I had just divorced from my husband; and Iran was not the place for my "visual communications" profession.



What I mean to say is that you could excel in Iran but you needed a lot of courage and stamina to fight the battle to get there. I just did not have that strength, but admire those who elected to stay and fought relentlessly to for their work. So yes, I left Iran but more properly I escaped.

But before I left, I had an idea to make a Disney-like park theme in Iran using Persian mythology figures. Too few people know much about this subject and it is one of our greatest treasures. Persians have a resistance to share our treasures with others. We have this jealousy with everything we have that is good. I like to believe it is because we want to keep it pure. We seem to be afraid it will become vulgar if we loosen control.

***Are you somewhat Persian prejudiced?***

No, not at all. I don't say things like this because I think to be Persian is to be perfect. I say it because the world needs to be set straight on certain misunderstandings of Iran and its history. You know the West is completely convinced that everything came from the Greeks, the Jews or the Christians. This is simply not true. The world needs to know the truth about our culture even if it means that it may be vulgarized.

What Persians need to know, what the world needs to know is that culture belongs to all mankind. Just as Ferdowsi belongs to the west, western pop music belongs to us. Universal ownership of culture is a necessity if the world is to become closer.

We all have our own cultures; we just label them differently. An interesting example of this happened while I was in Corsica. I was talking with a gentleman about Mowlana (Rumi). After I told him the story, he told me that his parents, also from Corsica, told

him the same story about two Corsicans. Of course I could have debated the issue with him but why bother, we all have the same myths. I believe that if there was a common thread that runs through all cultures, and if accepted, would make the world a better place. Maybe the world would have a longer life, but it does not appear that mankind is destined for a kind future.

***You don't believe a political change is the way for a better world?***

I would rather see an educational change. If the money we spend on bombs and missiles were spent on education there would be a longer lasting world order. The world needs to be reminded that we are all the same. Unfortunately the world focuses on the subjective not the objective. For example "dignity" is a word we all understand, and that is how we want to be treated. When a country, however, becomes an object of another and politics enters, dignity disappears.

I am amazed that here in the States the American people cannot comprehend why the Iraqis are not happy with the American presents in their land. The reason is their dignity has been compromised.

***I am almost afraid to ask the next question, do you see America as a democracy?***

That is a very interesting question and I wonder if it is because I do not see

a true separation of church and state in the US. Sometimes it is difficult for me to understand the difference between the leaders of Iran and the United States. Many years ago Iran had a leader with a beard who said, "read the Koran, it is good, we are good and we must go after



and destroy the Great Satan." Now the United States has a leader who says, "Read the Bible, it is good, we are good and we have to go after the 'Axis of Evil.'" So can you tell me the difference? Oh yes one has a beard the other doesn't and of course the one without the beard has a powerful army.

***On the subject of "Axis of Evil," how did you feel when Iran was labeled as part of this axis?***

I think the term, whether directed toward Iran or any other country is an abstract concept. I feel this way because behind this label are people and it is not fair to label something or someone based on the attitude and thought process of a few fanatics. Look at Iran, even if you say there are 60,000 fanatics in Iran that is only 1% of the population. How then do you have the nerve to label an entire country as "evil?" I also have to ask what is the function of the word "evil?" How is one good and another bad?

***What do you think is the fascination of the United States with Iran?***

***The world needs to be set straight on certain misunderstandings of Iran and its history. You know, the West is completely convinced that everything came from the Greeks, the Jews or the Christians. This is simply not true. The world needs to know the truth about our culture....***

Oil, oil, oil. That has always been Iran's problem and sometimes I wish we did not have it. You know in 1951 Mossadegh nationalized the oil, which conveniently ended with a coup by the CIA. If we didn't have the oil that would never have happened.

***I would like to move to your book now, why did you title the book Persepolis?***

Because to understand Iran one must know the history of the country prior to the revolution. The best way to get the interest of someone is to start with a concept they are familiar with and everyone has heard of Persepolis. They may have false information about it but they know about it. So, by choosing that name, I believe I gave historical depth to my story.

***How did you decide on the form of the book?***

As I stated before I wanted to write it in a way that would attract the attention of the people. I knew that I needed to bring humor to a very serious subject without losing the importance and the gravity of the matter. Also, I believed that words alone would not have the same impact as words with images. I could not just write, "someone was blown to bits." I needed to show it but show it in cartoon detail rather than real images.

I needed to show in my drawings my complete detest for bombs and killing. It is a concept that I cannot grasp. We are here for such a short time, so why do we want to end it earlier?

I knew a comic book format would grab everyone's attention.

When I first came to France, the image of Iran and Iranians were still distorted by the movie *Not Without My Daughter*. In Austria, everyone thought I was like the

image portrayed in the movie. They thought Iran was nothing but a desert. It was shocking for me to see the naivety of France and Europe in general.

Outside of Iran people thought the Revolution was an Islamic thing. They believed or were led to believe that the people of Iran wanted an Islamic Republic. How could they think that this is what we wanted. Why would we want a government that would be antagonistic its own people? After hearing these misconceptions about

my people and my country, I decided I had to write my thoughts down on paper. I needed to let the world know the other side to the story.

Please understand that I am not making a judgment on what is good or bad. That is not my intention. I am simply stating that I am a human being whose life has been destroyed by politics.

***This book in essence is your life in Iran during the Shah and after, is it cultural or political?***

It is neither. It is my exercising my freedom of speech in giving my version of the events. My version is only one of many who lived through it.

My purpose is to show the public what politics can do to the average people of a country. The Shah's and Khomeini's names are etched into the history of Iran but the people, like myself, my family, my friends, our stories and our names will be forgotten. This is unfair because we suffered and

lost the most.

***Who were the greatest influences on your life?***

My parents and my grandmother. My grandmother was a very different and modern person. She taught me to always speak my mind. In life she said, people will always criticize you so you may as well say what you mean.

***Have you ever denied your Iranian heritage?***

I am ashamed to say yes, while I was living in Austria. Remember, I was separated from my parents and my country and I got to see about Iran was the news coverage of the revolution. I constantly worried about my parents and wondered if my family and friends were alive. I finally got to a point where I could no longer watch it. That was when I started to deny that I was part of it.

***How did that make you feel?***

Isolated and I began to hate myself. I love my country, everything about it, from



the mountains, to the pollution, the way they drive, the way they dress and the way they walk. You know some see the driving as chaotic but it really isn't, it is just

Iran. The country has a uniqueness; the people have a uniqueness. You can spot an Iranian a mile away by the way they carry themselves and hold their hands.

***How do you see Iran's future?***

Progress is slowly being made. There is a division between church and state and eventually I believe Iran will evolve into a democracy. There will be a social evolution. You know democracy is not something you can paint on to hide what is underneath. Democracy is something you must live with and be comfortable with. If during this evolutionary period someone were to drop bombs on Iran for certain any progress made would be lost for a very long time.

***Evolution is a concept?***

Yes, it is! You see most of us think that the mini skirt was immediately accepted in Iran. It wasn't. No father or mother was happy to have their daughter in a mini skirt out on a date with her boyfriend. But eventually they accepted it.

***You really believe that Iran will evolve rather than revolt?***

Yes, and that is the way it should be. There is no need for bombs and guns. The best way for this evolution to take place is to not support the radicals. Instead of spending the money to arm them, educate them. Education is the better solution, but it takes longer to have an effect than a military event.

I long for the day to return to Iran and eat *kabab* and *deezi* at Darband. I hope that someday I will be able to take my children to Iran and show them the real Iran, not a superficial Iran. In other words I hope that Iran is not satisfied to have their problems covered

rather than fixed. Yes, Iran has problems but what country doesn't? But Iranians are strong in our commitment and culture. After all, what other country do you know that survived a lengthy Arab invasion?

***Spain?***

Perhaps but remember Spain was not invaded for 500 years.

***Why do you think Iran survived?***

I believe it is because it is our nature. Iranians have the ability of getting through things. You can close a door on an Iranian and they will come through the window. If you close the window they will come through the chimney and if you seal the chimney they will find another way.

***Do you have any political affiliations?***

No. I chose not to belong to any political group and put myself in a position where it is "them versus us." We all love our country and want it to be free.

You know the old story.... God created Iran and then made the mistake of making all the other countries.

***You mean Persians aren't perfect?***

We have a tendency to think we are, and that annoys me. We

have a tendency to blame all our misfortunes on a bad neighbor.

***But Iran was attacked?***

Yes we were, but where were our people in 1953, when they overthrew Mossadegh? What did we do to save Iran from the West who saw us as a cheap take?

We have to ask ourselves what we



did for our country. If we accept that our imperfections and our fallibility, something positive will evolve faster. The only way to create a future for Iran is to take responsibility for what has happened and not allow it to happen again.

***You are very critical about a country you love so much?***

Yes, I am. When you love something very much you have a duty to criticize it if it is wrong. If I didn't, I would be doing it a disservice.

***Do you have a message for our readers?***

I ask that all Iranians who say they love Iran to show it. I ask that those Iranians who are now hyphenated to always remember their heritage because everything we are today comes from our culture. So, we all need to stop pretending to love Iran if we really do not and embrace it and help it if we really do.

***Thank you.***

***I ask that all Iranians who say they love Iran to show it. I ask that those Iranians who are now hyphenated to always remember their heritage because everything we are today comes from our culture. So, we all need to stop pretending to love Iran if we really do not and embrace it and help it if we really do.***