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Perisan Parade 2004

Persian Heritage

Vol. 9, No. 34

Summer 2004

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

March 27, 2004 was a day that will go down in the history books for Persian Americans;

March 27, 2003 was a day when Persian Americans understood the power of unity and cooperation;

March 27, 2004 was a day when personal agendas and political and religious differences were set aside;

March 27, 2004 was a day when the hearts and souls of all Persians were eased of their pain of separation. For a few hours they were not lonely. For a few hours, the Afghans, Armenians, Assyrians, Balouchis, Bakhtiari, Azaris, Fadispas, Guilakis, Kurds, Lurs, Parsis, Quashquais and Tajiks, Constitutionalists, supporters of the Islamic Republic, Mossedghis, the Mojahedeens, Royalists and Tudehis, Muslims, Zoroastrians, Bahais, Christians and Jews, the young and old, the rich and poor, the healthy and ill, put political and religious differences aside and walked together;

March 27, 2004, was the day when the world witnessed the American and Iranian flags together in peace and friendship;

March 27, 2004 was a day when spectators lined Madison Ave., NY and witnessed the depth of Persian culture, from the guards of the Achamene Dynasty, ethnic dress, music, and dance to the haft seen in horse drawn carriages (*Haft Seen* is seven different items whose names, in Persian, begin with the letter "s" and represent the Persian New Year);

March 27, 2004 showed the world that Persians are peace loving people and though from the Middle East they have a distinct culture and history;

March 27, 2004 ended with the spectators and participants having a new sense of pride and respect for themselves;

March 27, 2004 was the day that marked the first Persian Parade held in the United States.

This wonderful day would not have actualized without the founders of the event, Mahshid and Cyrus Assadi, Nahid Ahkami, Nina and Zia Ghavami, Shabnam and Rudy Rezazadeh and those individuals who graciously responded to their pleas for support. I will be forever grateful to all these courageous people who, for forty five days and nights prior, gave up their personal lives for this event.

March 27, 2004 showed the result of a community working together, but the 45 days of preparation also revealed and reinforced a powerful weakness in our community. I remain confident, however, that the great success of this day, will lead to future cooperation for even greater achievements.

For whatever reason, working together as a group seems to be difficult for our community. This event was not lacking in obstacles, but it was refreshing to see the organizers and their team overcome them. I witnessed them neutralize untruths about the parade being linked to political parties.

The forty five days of preparation opened my eyes to the extent individuals will go to destroy something positive. Fortunately, the attempt had the reverse effect. It enhanced, rather than weakened, the bonds of friendship.

I witnessed journalistic manipulation at its best. For example, a newspaper, without factual basis, stated the cost of the parade to be in the millions. Was this a gross exaggeration or a purposeful attempt to connect the parade to a political organization? And other television and radio programs encouraged people to boycott the event, stating that if they attended, they may never be allowed to return to Iran.



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 AHKAMI

EDITORIAL BOARD: Dr. Mehdi Abu-Saidi, Shirin Ahkami Raiszadeh, Dr. Mahvash Alavi Naini, Mohammad Bagher Alavi, Dr. Taleh Bassari, Mohammad Ali Dowlatshahi, Mohammad H. Hakami, Ardeshir Lotfalian, K. B. Navi, Dr. Kamshad Raiszadeh, Farhang A. Sadeghpour, Mohammad K. Sadigh, Ghahreman Suleymonpour, Dr. David Yeagley.

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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

Some of the community, out of fear, did not attend the parade or watched from the sidelines in painful silence. But, the parade's success is evidence that the foundation of this event was not destroyed or shaken, it became stronger. And those fearful of their faces being memorialized, in the unofficial archives of political organizations, now vow to actively participate next year.

WHY DID IT END IN SUCCESS? Because, finally the Persian community was brave enough, honorable enough and willing to suffer any consequences, in the name of Persian history and culture. No longer will they hide in fear or tolerate threats that attempt to polarize them from the rest of their community. They now realize that the exercising of their freedom of choice should not be used as a weapon of division. And, while we all make different choices we are joined together by our Persian ethnicity.

Yes, my friends the forty five days before the Parade was like a violent storm. But the storm ended and with its end came a beautiful day, March 27, 2004. What started as a dream developed into a reality we always hoped for. I trust, with the success of the parade, that we, as a community, can repair any damages caused during the organizational phase and build a stronger community, one which will not be destroyed by anyone.

Shahrokh Alavi

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ZARATHUSHTRIAN ETHICS AND CULTURE

Ali A. Jafarey

Ethics, the dictionary defines, is the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation. It adds: "ethics has been called the science of the ideal of human character." The second definition reads: "The principles of conduct governing an individual or group."

A deeper study takes us to the gigantic tree of philosophy and there we see it as a branch of normative science as distinguished from the formal sciences. History of thought in the so-called Western civilization begins with Greece. So the earliest signs of Ethics begin in the 5th century BCE. Since then, we have the Greek schools of Ethics, early Christian Ethics, Ethics after the Reformation, Ethics since Darwinism, and the recent trend, since Bertrand Russell, is that Ethics should mean complete participation in the life of society with the freedom to express one's nature.

As to what is good and what is bad, each school of ethics has its own definition, from cynicism to existentialism. And we have lists of prescriptions and proscriptions, do's and don'ts, prepared by each school. From the Doctrines of Pythagoras through the Bible and the Quran to the published writings of George Edward Moore, we have books that run into several hundred pages each.

And it has been these prescriptions and proscriptions of Ethics that have shaped and reshaped the culture/s the Western civilization cultivates.

Keeping in view the above process over 2500 years, now we turn to Zoroaster, or to pronounce his name in his language, Zarathushtra, to see if he had anything that would fit with the variety in this wide field. He precedes the date. He lived 3770 years ago. He is not from the West. He lived his life in eastern Iran. What did he say and how much did he say? He lived before the age of writing. Are his sayings retold by his disciples or narrated as a part of his life story by a third party well after him, and then later put in writing?

That brings us to the Indo-Europeans, particularly the Indo-Iranians. They had their way of preserving their literary com-

positions: Poetry, a precise practice of preservation. A song becomes popular, is precisely sung in the words and tune of the composer, and lives as long as its singers live and like it. No paraphrasing, adulteration, no third party narration, only the very words of the poet.

Zoroaster, like his contemporary Rig Vedic *rishis*, composed his songs that have survived in his very words to this day. The same holds true about volumes and volumes of Indo-Iranian poetic literature. They are the proof of the capacity of human memory. We had a Professor of Persian Literature in the Tehran University who had over 70,000 couplets in his memory. One thousand to 20,000 couplets are a common thing in the memories of literature teachers in the Indo-Iranian countries.

How many couplets did Zarathushtra compose to preserve his Doctrine? Only 241 stanzas that make 17 songs! They are Gâthâ, meaning "Sublime Songs." The songs define what is good and what is bad, and at the same time speak of the full freedom of will to make the choice. Learning wisdom helps to make the right choice. Ignorance keeps one in dark. Good brings better returns and bad results in bad consequences. Experience makes one grow wiser, a process that helps every individual to ultimately make the right choice. The good choice leads to perfection and perfection knows no defect, decay or death. It means eternity. They explain the establishment of a free democratic way of life by the wise people for the wise people. And the songs guide one to study his/herself, the society, the environment, and the universe to realize, through his/her good mind, the wisdom that creates, regulates, maintains and promotes the Cosmos. That wisdom, a reality, an essence, is the Creator, Maintainer, and Promoter of the Universe. Zarathushtra coins a name for it. *Mazdâ*, which means Super-wisdom and since it is a reality, it is also Ahura, the Essence, the Being. He has two words to describe what we say 'God': *Mazdâ Ahura* or *Ahura Mazdâ* — The Super-wisdom Essence.

With Mazda Ahura in mind, the songs become simultaneously loving Prayers to God and kindly Guidance to Mankind. Naturally they have no myth, no magic, no miracle, no legend, and no story to tell — just a prayerful guidance.

Zarathushtra uses some twenty abstract terms to prescribe the way of promoting mental and physical faculties of soul to achieve perfection and immortality. He calls them "the Primal Principles of life." They are the universal principles of existence, the natural way of living. They, at the same time, make the faculties that have been endowed to mankind.

Of these *asha*, precision, has been mentioned more than 150 times and *merzhdika*, compassion, only once. We shall only briefly define those mentioned most in the Gâthâs:

Spenta Mainyu, the progressive mentality stands for the creative faculty of God. It creates, sustains, and promotes the creation. It leads to perfection and immortality. It makes mankind to be creative, maintainer and promoter of society and the environment.

Vohu manah, the good mind is the source of all that is good and wise. It was through his own good mind that Zarathushtra discovered, understood, and reached God. Good mind leads to refined speech, which, in turn, turns into noble actions. Zarathushtra's doctrine rests on three pillars — *Humata*, *Hūkhta*, *Hvarshta* — Good thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds. Good mind helps one to discriminate between good and bad. It defines the sources of happiness and sorrow. In fact, it is the bliss some call "heaven." Two other cognate abstracts are *khra*, intellect, and *chisti*, comprehension, which enhance one's knowledge for better work.

Asha or *arta* is the old Indo-Iranian law of "truth, precision, righteousness" that governs the universe—the stars, sun, moon, earth, seasons and all. It is precision and order in the universe that points to the Creator, Maintainer, and Promoter. It has been enacted to maintain the creation. It is the road to perfection. In human society, *asha* is the right thing, done at the right time and right place, and with the right means to obtain the right result. This promotes a society to perfection. It ensures justice for all. It safeguards the rights of every member of society. It provides every individual with what he or she has contributed to society. *Asha* in a society sees that neither the society nor any

individual exploits any person. And, above all, *asha* gives freedom of thought, word and deed to every member.

Seraosha is the divine voice one gets in tune with after one is fully conversant with good mind and righteousness. It is the guiding inner self of a person. It is divine inspiration.

Āthra, fire in the *Gāthās*, is mental light, warmth, and energy, three qualities that help one become as creative as one can. The physical fire, used as the best of altars, represents the mental *āthra*, a sublime object to observe and mentally to see the light, feel the warmth and enjoy the energy to translate Good Thoughts into Good Words and Good Deeds.

Ustā is enlightenment that comes through meditation, concentration of mental faculties. It is the true happiness that radiates happiness to others without any discrimination, social or otherwise.

Daênâ is clear conception. It is "conscience" in an individual and "religion" for a fellowship of individuals who actively join to promote the living world in accordance with the Primal Principles of Existence.

Good mind, precision and other principles create perfect order. Zarathushtra calls it *khshathra*. It means settlement, dwelling, domain, dominion, and sovereignty. It is the "desired," the "good," and the "chosen" government of the righteous, yet it belongs to God. It is the "ideal" order on the earth established by human beings who are wise, enlightened, experienced, sincere, and above all devoted to the promotion of the living world. It is mental and material, spiritual and physical democracy.

Fresho-kereti, continuous refreshing, renewing and modernizing keeps the good order up-to-date, in fact up-to-minute. Progress, progress, progress! A Zoroastrian pledges to modernize the world in his/her daily prayers.

Ārarnaiti, serenity and tranquility, thrives under a good progressive order. A tranquil order promotes health and happiness. Mind and body grow together to evolve into:

Haurvatit, entirety, perfection. Evolution to entirety means continuity, and continuity stands for immortal *ity* — *ameretât*. Entirety and immortality make human beings godlike and make them live in eternal bliss, the ultimate goal of the Zoroastrian doctrine.

Zarathushtra uses more principles among abstract qualities that could help

mankind to make the world an ideal place to live in peace and harmony with every living being, and to achieve the divine eternity ordained by God.

It is these Primal Principles that make his Ethics. They make a guiding map for the wise to reach the destination. And a map need not run into hundreds of pages of prescriptions and proscription. Forty pocketbook pages of Seventeen Songs suffice to make a good traveler to undertake the journey and reach the destination safe and sound.

The Seventeen Songs are a map that guides the traveler to reflect. The Zoroastrian Doctrine of Ethics is reflective and not prescriptive. Its seventeen songs provoke one's thinking faculty to think, to ponder, to consider and to decide on the basis of time, place and means. Yes, reflective, renovative and inventive. That makes it ever fresh, ever modern. Prescriptions and proscriptions fall behind and get outdated.

There arises a question: What is good and what is bad?

GOOD AND EVIL

Because of the sufferings in what appears to be a hostile world of natural disasters and human cruelties, the existence of "evil" has all along posed a perplexed problem. Intellectuals of all ages and lands have tried to solve it. Most of them have acknowledged it as a stubborn fact of life.

People's attitudes towards evil range from optimism, pessimism, cynicism to skepticism. There are those who do not believe in evil and state that it does not exist; those who argue that just as darkness is nothing but the absence of light, evil darkens where good does not shine; those who say that one cannot fight evil and therefore should submit to it; those who want to escape evil and retire from the world by leaving behind all human wishes and desires; and those who acknowledge shortcomings and want to overcome them by facing them. People necessarily do not belong strictly to one of these broad classifications. Many share a little of each theory and have mixed philosophies, or express different ideas at different times.

People are divided again on the source of evil: those who believe in a strict patriarchal/matriarchal divinity/divinities and see the sufferings as punishments for wrong deeds; those who think

that just as there are good and bad chiefs and kings, there are good and evil entities, which bring happiness or misery; those who believe that the gods have created human beings as their toys and enjoy playing around with them; those who believe in a rebel divinity who is causing all the trouble; those who are dualists and maintain that both good and evil are primal and co-existing; those who see the two as positive and negative poles that meet to create energy and existence; and those who see the world as imperfect or in its infancy, and that its sufferings are the experiences toward perfection. All have their logic, philosophy, stories, legends, or myths to elaborate. Many believe that evil exists in the universe and many confine it, some in vague terms, to the human world.

Zarathushtra observes the universe as a good creation of God and sees no evil in it. It is a cosmos—an orderly harmonious system. However, there are indications that he sees the universe in its infancy, complete in every form but growing to perfection and immortality.

As regards good and evil, he confines both to human mind, not outside, not in the cosmos. Man thinks and thinks constantly. His thoughts are good or bad, beneficial or harmful. When translated in speech or action, they yield the result — good or bad.

The two represent the duality only and only in the human mind and within the human society. The dualism in the *Gāthās* is pure ethical in nature.

The criterion for "better" or "more progressive" thought, word, and deed is the beneficial effect on the human society in particular and the world in general. If not, it is "bad" or "retarding."

THE HUMAN SOCIETY

The Gathic dualism lies only in "asha," "right, precision, righteousness" and "druj," "harmful, wrong". The human world is divided into two camps: the righteous, truthful and progressive, and the wrongful, retarding and destructive. The *Gāthās* advocate a free, peaceful, prudent, and progressive society, both in spirit and matter. Spirituality makes people realize the divine in creation, and conceive the force and order — the wisdom — behind it. It makes them conceive God. It promotes them to commune with God, and be godlike. Materiality makes people understand

their social environment and the living world. It teaches them the philosophy of living and letting others live, and of living in harmony with nature.

Only responsible men and women make the Gáthic society. Carefree and parasitic people have no place in it. A person, be he or she wise, naive, strong, or weak, has his or her responsibilities in the society. Zarathushtra stands for freedom of thought, word and deed, and stands against suppression and exploitation. He condemns all -wrong done by evil power, deeds, words, conception, and mind." He repeatedly reminds people that good has a good reward, and bad has a bad consequence. And to be good is to be selflessly good.

In a true Zarathushtrian society, all are free to work for a better world without harming others. Every person receives in reward what one does in renovating human life. Every task is undertaken by fully qualified persons; the better the qualifications, the higher the position. Society is led by the very wise. Men and women are equal and their superiority lies in their wisdom and righteousness. Race, color, class, and nationalism have no place in it. The smallest unit in the society is the family, then the community, next the country, the fellowship, and last the world. The Zoroastrian society is global.

HEAVEN AND HELL

Zarathushtra speaks very little about a world from which no one has returned to tell us the tale. He never indulges in speculations. He does not thrive on speculations, but on conclusions from what one discovers and understands. He mentions certain terms, which give one an idea of a higher and sublimer spiritual life. They are the "House of Song," "House of Good Mind," and the "Eternal Best Existence of Good Mind." Only once, he uses the term "future existence." It is where one lives with God. The language is so that one understands that such a sublime state is both mental and physical in this world, but only mental when the soul attains its perfection and immortality.

But if a person lives a life of "harmful, wrong" in a human society, promotes an evil and deceitful government, sows seeds of discord among people, disregards social rules and regulations, and takes pleasure in harming the living world, he or she suffers the consequences

of his or her actions and teachings, and remains in the "House of Wrong." He singles out bad rulers and evil priests as the foremost among such persons. Another term for this is the "House of the Worst Mind." The soul of a wrongful person returns from the "sorting bridge" back into the world of deceit. This bridge separates the righteous from the wrongful. The righteous progress but the wrongful remain in the world to perfect themselves. Does this mean reincarnation or that the soul lingers on without a physical body until it is perfected? Perhaps, but only a thought provoking hint without any speculations.

This does not mean that there is no salvation for the wrongful. Their souls suffer the consequences of their words and deeds until they realize the divine truth and choose to turn righteous, and work for their own perfection and immortality. This life is but a refinery in which the souls are refined to perfection. To sum up, the pristine doctrine of Zarathushtra's "heaven and hell" is more of a mental bliss and torment than the two physical places reserved for ultimate sensual enjoyment or suffering.

The resurrection with all its details of how the dead would rise for the final judgment is again absent in the Gáthas. The consequences of people's words and deeds in this world and the progress toward perfection and immortality are a continuous process. There are no pauses, no waiting.

God's creation moves forward and we, souls and bodies, are a part of it.

Zarathushtra is the foremost in founding a universal religion. He taught to learn, consider and choose his Divine Doctrine first to practice and then teach and preach to others — all with a "sweet tongue" and with logic. He trained the first missionaries. Yet we have no reports at all of force, push, dictation, insistence, persuasion and temptation. The teaching was free and the listening free. "Hear the best with your ears, ponder over it with your bright mind and then, each of you, man and woman, decide for yourself to choose or not" was the watchword.

Through the history of one thousand years of Zoroastrian supremacy, we have not a single report of any religious war. No religious war with the Roman Empire and no religious war with the Christian Byzantine Empire. Religious wars between nations of different religions are only 1500 years old.

THE CULTURE:

It is with these guiding ethics that the Zoroastrian Doctrine cultivated a culture, a culture that was based on knowledge, order, participation, cooperation, federation, alliance, and devotion. We see it in bloom when Cyrus the Great (550-529 BCE) united the ever-fighting nations of Afro-Eurasia into the first so-called empire. We see the comparatively peaceful occupation of lands with no enslavement and destruction followed. We see the captive nations freed and fully rehabilitated. We see freedom of worship, ownership, settlement, trade, travel, and above all, tolerance. We see transcontinental highways. We see what we know as pony postal service. And we see monetary coins and standard weights that facilitate commerce.

This brought unprecedented peace and prosperity over a vast area that had been wasted by wars. It brought the nations close to one another so much so that they began exchanging their knowledge and culture. From "a" Armenians to "t" Thracians, in all 26 nations pooled their skills to promote from "a" of architecture to "z" of zoology. And it was during these days, the Achaemenian era of 220 years during which we see knowledge advanced with rapid steps. Science boomed and bloomed forth. We have the

Greek philosophers appear and almost disappear with the downfall of the empire at the hand of Alexander of Macedonia.

The Macedonian occupation did not crush or change the situation. It divided the federation into a number of camps. Yet the urge of unity put an end of the division within a century. But the Zoroastrian unity of globalization was not restored. The world split into the Roman Empire in the west and the Parthian in the east. Parthians as Zoroastrians showed tolerance towards all other nations and religions.

The Zoroastrian Ethics and Culture should be acknowledged as the jumpstart of the civilization we all enjoy in the East and the West. Let me end by reciting a sentence from our daily prayers:

"And may we be among those who make this life fresh! You, fords of wisdom, who bring happiness through righteousness, come, let us be single-minded in the realm of inner intellect."

Let the Zoroastrian Ethics and Culture continue to contribute to the harmony among nations and religions! ■

Philosophy:

GREAT IRANIAN PHILOSOPHERS IN THE GOLDEN AGE OF ISLAM

Karim Mansouri

Philosophy is a very broad and complex subject. The paucity of my knowledge in this regard and the constraints of space notwithstanding, I am presenting a brief introduction to philosophy — its origin and evolution from its inception till the middle ages in Western Europe also called the Dark Ages; while simultaneously in the East, the Golden Age of Islamic Civilization was in full bloom. The role of philosophy and the contributions of great Moslem philosophers (Arab and non-Arab) of that era in its realization will be reviewed, and the life and major works of a select few Iranian philosophers of that period will also be highlighted.

Simply stated, philosophy is the rational investigations about existence, knowledge, and ethics. It is inquiry into the nature of things based upon logical rather than empirical reasoning. A critical analysis of fundamental beliefs as they come to be conceptualized and formulated. The German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, observed, "The business of philosophy is not to give rules, but to analyze the private judgments to common reason."

Philosophy began when human beings started trying to understand the world not through religion or by accepting the status quo, but rather through the use of reason. The insistence of reason is one of the hallmarks of philosophy. Bertrand Russell, the British philosopher, said, "Philosophy is worth studying above all because through greatness of the universe which philosophy contemplates, the mind is also rendered great, and becomes capable of that union with the universe which constitutes its highest good."

In the age of antiquity, philosophy covered practically all branches of theoretical knowledge that did not come under philosophy. The word of philosophy is derived from the Greek *philo*, meaning

love and *sophy*, meaning knowledge.

The origin of philosophy has been described as in Miletus, one of the Ionian city-states on the coast of Asia Minor in the 6th Century B.C., however, the question may be raised that philosophy may have originated much earlier from Babylon and Egypt as Greek philosophy was closely akin to mathematics from Egypt and astronomy from Babylon.

Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes of Miletus were the first known philosophers. They were called Milesian philosophers. Thales of Miletus was famous as the one who predicted correctly the eclipse of the sun on May 28, 585 B.C. The eclipse came during the battle between the Lydians and the Medes. The combatants were so impressed that there was an eclipse of the sun that they laid down their arms and made peace.

Anaximander, who was a pupil of Thales, was the first who drew a recognized map of the known part of the Earth. He speculated about the origin and the fate of the universe, the composition of the sun, moon and stars, and the development of life.

Most of the early philosophers in the 5th and 6th Centuries B.C. came from that part of the world that is now known as Turkey, Greece, and Italy. They were called pre-Socratic. Western civilization as we know it today, was created when these early philosophers were curious enough to ignore the usual references to gods and looked instead for natural causes for them. It was much later on that psychology, sociology, and economics came about largely from these early thinkers.

By the middle of the 5th Century B.C. there were a group of distinguished citizens of Athens who were called Sophists. They were mainly people who taught to earn money. They toured the country, and for a fairly modest fee would give young

Greeks of well-to-do families a kind of instruction which had never been provided before, teaching them to express themselves and defend their theses and opinions. They made known the doctrine of philosophers, discoverers, and scientists, and they opened men's minds to the finer issues of philosophy, ethics, logic, and aesthetics. It was this movement which evoked the thinking of Socrates, promoted the study of language and grammar, and spread abroad an interest in the position of ancient texts. Two of the greatest Sophists which deserve mention were Protagoras of Abdera and Prodicus of Iulis.

Pythagoras, the most famous of all the pre-Socratic philosophers was born about 570 B.C. He was a many-sided genius. One of his greatest gifts was mathematics. He was the one who introduced the Pythagorean Theorem and the idea of "square" and "cube" of a number. He's also thought to have invented the word "philosophy" and the first who applied the word "cosmos" to the universe and the first great thinker who brought mathematics to bear on philosophy.

Socrates was the first great Greek philosopher who was born in Athens around 470 B.C. He was the father of moral philosophy. He established the method of trying to get at truth by persistent questioning; What is friendship? What is courage? What is religious piety?, etc. He never wrote anything down for posterity. All of our knowledge about him comes from other people, especially his pupil Plato, who wrote an immortal series of dialogues with Socrates as the main speaker. Socrates was a highly controversial figure and at the end he was arrested on charges of corrupting the young and not believing in the gods of Greece. He was tried and condemned to death by poison at the age of 71.

Plato was 31 years old when Socrates was executed. He is best known for the doctrine of theory of Forms and Ideas. He published two dozen dialogues; the most famous being *The Republic* and *Symposium*. These dialogues are amongst the world's great literature and contain some of the most profound philosophy ever written. The writings of Plato were to dominate philosophy in Europe for 6 - 7 hundred years.

Aristotle was a pupil of Plato and he himself became a tutor of Alexander the Great. After staying at Plato's school for several years, he established his own school in Athens called Lyceum. Aristotle is regarded by many as one of the 3 or 4 greatest giants of the subject. Throughout his life he devoted himself into research

across an incredibly wide range. He mapped out for the first time many of the basic fields of inquiry and his own work provided the names that are used to this day such as logic, rhetoric, and ethics. Aristotle, like Socrates, was indicted for impiety by the Athenians toward the end of his life, but was not executed. He left Athens and died a week later at the age of 62. His death came about 7 years after the conquest of Persia by his pupil, Alexander the Great.

Aristotle's pupil, Alexander the Great changed history. With lightning speed he conquered the whole known world. Everywhere he went he founded new cities to be colonized with Greeks; they married mostly local women. Alexander built a city in Egypt named Alexandria which became the center of Hellenistic civilization, which lasted some 300 years from the downfalls of the Greek city states in the 4th Century B.C. to the rise of the Roman Empire in the first Century B.C. It was also a world into which Christianity was born.

Immediately after the death of Alexander the Great, his empire broke up into warring factions while cultural unity remained intact, but there was incessant strife and conflict at the political level. Four new schools of philosophy flourished during this period; The Cynics, the Sceptics, The Epicureans, and the Stoics.

The Cynics reject all social conventions. Diogenes, a proponent of this school, flouted all social conventions; thus the people nicknamed him "Cynic" which derived from the Greek word, "Kynikos" which means "like a dog". Scepticism has had a permanently important part in the history of philosophy till this day. Sextus Empiricus, a philosopher belonging to this school said, "By scepticism we arrive first at suspension of judgment and second at freedom from disturbance."

The Epicurean school of philosophy was established by Epicurus. His philosophy was materialistic, pleasure-seeking, and non-religious. Its aim above all was to liberate people from fear, not only the fear of death, but the fear of life. It taught people to seek happiness and fulfillment in their private lives.

The Stoic philosophy was the governing philosophy of the Roman Empire, which continued for five hundred years. The Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius belonged to this school of thought. It was a class of a school of Greek philosophy founded by Zeno in around 308 B.C. holding that human beings should be free from passion and calmly accept all occurrences as the unavoidable result of Divine will.

The Stoic philosophy had a great influence upon Christian ethics. The word "Stoic" and "stoicism" are in use in English today and implies withstanding adversity without complaint. Stoicism did not only consist of a moral philosophy, but made advances in logic and in theory of knowledge. As time went on, other classes of philosophy such as the Platonists and Neoplatonism were established in the Roman Empire.

From the fifth Century A.D. to the fifteenth Century in the dawn of the Renaissance in Europe, the torch of civilization in Western Europe was carried mainly by the Christian Church. Before Christians were willing to embrace the existing philosophical doctrines they needed to be reassured that they were compatible with the teachings of Christ.

One of the most known Christian philosophers was St. Augustine, born in 350 A.D. He is considered the last great philosopher of Latin antiquity. One of his doctrines, predestination, in the long term had very tragic consequences. His view was that we cannot be saved through the exercise of our own will independently of God, but that God's intervention and grace are necessary for our salvation. It is said that St. Augustine was arguably the most outstanding figure in philosophy between Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas in a period of some 1,600 years.

The collapse of the Roman Empire by pagan hordes, Germanic tribes, and Vikings brought the classical civilization, the accumulated treasures of Greek, Hellenic, and Roman culture to an end, and heralded the period that we call "the Dark Ages".

Between 600 and 1,000 A.D., while Europe remained stagnated, there was a most highly developed civilization to the East. It was the Golden Age of Islam. Shortly after Prophet Mohammad's death in 632 A.D., Islam had spread through much of the Middle East and North Africa, and by 751 A.D. the Islamic Empire ranged from Spain to North Africa, the entire Middle East and beyond the Greater Iranian plateau to the North Central Asian Stepp and to the Indian sub continent up to the border of China.

For several hundred years, Islam made great advances in philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, and medicine while in the Arts it produced great architecture, calligraphy, ceramics, and textiles. The Greek medical, scientific, mathematical and philosophical learning had spread to the Islamic world from around the middle of the 8th Century. Until the end of the 12th Century, Islamic civilization had great lead

in all the fields of knowledge.

While much of the culture of classical antiquity, especially in the field of philosophy involving the works of Aristotle which had been lost in Europe, it flourished in the Islamic world. Islamic scholars were not only familiar with the writings of Hypocrites, Galen, Euclid, Ptolemy, and Archimedes, they also expanded and enhanced them. They also did important original research — developing among other things, a sophisticated theory of "Optics".

In the middle of the 12th Century, translations of Greek, Arabic, and Jewish works on ethics, logic, medicine, astrology, alchemy, mathematics, and natural sciences began to infiltrate into Western Europe. By the time the University of Paris received its charter in 1216 A.D., most available Socratic works such as Euclide's Element, Ptolemy's Almagest, Avicenna's Canon of Medicine and Al-Khwarizmi's Algebra had been translated into Latin and became part of its culture.

In Spain, where the Moor Dynasty ruled for over 800 years, Islamic civilization produced some of the greatest intellectual giants and scientists of the mediaeval time; among them Ibn-Rushd, known in the West as Averroes, Ibn Khaldun, Ibn-Zuhr, Ibn Baitar, Ibn Katib, and Al-Zahrawi.

Ibn-Rushd, born in 1226 A.D. in Cordoba, Spain is considered as the greatest philosopher of Islam. He was one of the most profound commentators of Aristotle's work, made valuable contributions to the theory of music. Out of 67 works attributed to him, 28 are on philosophy. His writings became prescribed studies at the University of Paris.

Al-Zahrawi, was one of the greatest physician-surgeons of Islam in the middle ages. He invented many surgical appliances which was not as yet known to the world. His influence in European medicine, especially in the field of surgery, was overwhelming. His immortal illustrated work, "Al-Tasrif" was translated into several European languages and laid the foundation of Western surgery.

Al-Baitar was undoubtedly the greatest botanist of Islam and of the middle ages. His writing prepared the ground for the developments of botanical sciences during the modern time. Ibn Al-Haitham was one of the most outstanding mathematicians, physiologists and opticians of the Islamic world in the 10th Century A.D. He made monumental discoveries in the field of optics, one which located the retina as the site of vision.

Al Hazen, a renown physicist whose several treaties on optics, translated into several European languages. His writing influenced the works of many European scientists such as Leonardo Da Vinci and John Kepler.

Abu Ishag Kindi, an encyclopedic scientist of the 9th Century A.D., made invaluable contributions to mathematics, astrology, astronomy, physics, optics, music, medicine, pharmacy, philosophy, and logic. He authored no less than 250 works. His writing deeply influenced Eastern and Western thinkers in diverse spheres of knowledge. He's considered along with Al Hazen and Ptolemy as one of the three greatest authorities in the field of optics.

The above are samples of scientists and philosophers that the Arab world has produced and as it can be seen were instrumental in the spread of knowledge during the darkest period of Western civilization.

Western historians, authors, and scholars writing about Islam often used the term Islamic Civilization interchangeably with Arab civilization. This arbitrary designation is at least misleading and at most inaccurate. Review of literature also reveals that the Islam as a universal and all encompassing religion superseded references to boundaries and ethnicity's. Ian P. McGreal in his compendium, "Great Thinkers of the Eastern World" has devoted a chapter to the world of Islam while philosophers from other nations such as India, Japan, China, and Korea have been catalogued in separate chapters. K. J. Ahmed in his book, "Hundred Great Moslems" frequently refers to Islam's civilization as Arab civilization.

It is true that the Islamic world at its apogee stretched far and wide from Spain in the West all the way to the border of China in the East. Baghdad was its political, spiritual, and cultural center and Arabic was the literary language, but without the contributions of Moslems but non Arabs such as Iranians, Turkemans, Turks, and other ethnic groups, the golden age of Islamic civilization would not have come to fruition as we know it.

From the 7th to the 16th Century A.D. a great many philosophers of Iranian origin like AlKhwarazmi, Al-Razi, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Al-Ghazzali, Shahrastani, Suhrawardi, and Mulla Sadra contributed greatly to the advancements of philosophy, science, and humanities that spread far beyond the Islamic world. Their contribution was at par if not greater than their Arab contemporaries. They were the architects of golden age of Islamic civilization. Today

some of these great thinkers such as Al-Khwarazmi, Al-Farabi, and Avicenna have been claimed by other nations as their birthplace now is beyond Iran's border.

In Iran today, with the exception of one or two, these great philosophers names have been generally eclipsed by their more popular poets and mystics. Every Iranian literally can recite poems from the like of Saadi, Hafez, Rumi, and Ferdowsi, but few know much about for example Molla Sadra, Shabestari, or Sohrawardi.

The following is a brief biography of a select few great Iranian thinkers whose names I have mentioned above:

Al-Khwarazmi, Mohammad Bin Musa Al-Khwarazmi, born in Khwarazm in 780 A.D. — a great thinker, a versatile genius who made lasting contributions to the fields of mathematics, astronomy, music, geography, and history. One of his outstanding work in math contains analytical solutions of linear and quadratic equations. He was the first exponent of the use of numerals including Zero in preference to letters. It was through him that Europe learned the use of Zero or cipher whose employment facilitated the applications of arithmetic into every day life. His book on algebra was the principle text in European universities until the 16th Century. He delved into trigonometry and also was responsible for the introduction of the Arabic numerals into the West called "algorisms". He undoubtedly is one of the greatest and most original mathematician that the world has ever produced.

Al-Farabi, Abu-Nasr Mohammad Al-Farabi, one of the great Islamic peripatetic philosophers, received the title of "second teacher" — the first being Aristotle. He was born around 870 A.D. in Farab, Turkistan. He traveled widely and was the first Islamic philosopher who made a serious attempt at bringing about the rapprochement between the teachings of Plato and Aristotle. He is mostly known for his work on logic and political philosophy. Among his major works are "The Opinion of the People of Virtuous City" (Al-Madina Al-Fadilah), "The Attainment of Happiness" and "Aphorism of the Statesman". He died in Damascus at the age of 60.

Al-Razi, Abu Bakr Mohammad Ibn Zakariya Al-Razi, better known as Rhazes in the West. He is universally recognized as the most outstanding scientist of the medieval times, born in Rayy, near Tehran in 865 AD. Edward (3. Brown recognizes Razi as the greatest and most original of all the Moslem physicians and one of the

most prolific authors. His scientific output amounted to more than 200 books, half of which are in medicine. He left behind immortal works not only in medical science but in chemistry, physics, music, philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, and ethics. His outstanding works "Al Judari Wal Hasbah", a book dealing with smallpox and measles, is one of the earliest and most authentic book on the subject. His greatest achievement, "Al Haw? was the most comprehensive encyclopedia of medicine ever written. Al-Razi left behind invaluable works not only in medicine, but in natural science, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, ethics, theology, and music.

The influence of Al-Razi on Western as well as Eastern medicine was overwhelming. From the 12th to 17th Century in Europe, Rhazes and Avicenna were held superior even to Hippocrates and Galen. Their books were requirements in most medical schools in Europe for centuries. Al-Razi died at the age of 62 in his birthplace, Rayy.

Abu Ah Sina, Abu All Hossain Abu Abdullah Ibn al Sina, known as Avicenna in the West, known as Shaikh-Ul-Rais (Prince of All Teachers) and Rais Al Atteba (Prince of all Physicians). He was born in 980 A.D. near Bukhara, Turkistan. An outstanding encyclopedist, he made lasting contributions to medical sciences, philosophy, logic, occult studies, mathematics, astronomy, music, and poetry. Avicenna's chief contribution was in the realm of medicine and philosophy. He wrote at least eight large medical treatises, which occupy the most outstanding place in the history of medieval medical science. His gigantic work "Al Quannun Fit Tib" known as Canon in Latin served as the chief text of medical science from the 12th to 17th Century in Europe. Avicenna is considered by many as the greatest philosopher of Islam. He had deep influences over Eastern and Western philosophy. Next to Farabi he is considered as the greatest musical theorist of Islam. Avicenna laid the foundation of medieval philosophy while synthesizing the Hippocratic and Galenic tradition of medicine. Avicenna was a prolific writer. Among his major works are "The Book of Healing," "The Book of Deliverance," "Treatises on Birds", "The Book of Directives and Remarks", "Logic of the Orientals", "Treatises on Love," and "Fountain of Wisdom". Avicenna died at the young age of 58 from a colic attack in Hamadan.

Al-Ghazzali, Abu Hamid Mohammad Al-Ghazzali was born into a family of scholars and mystics around 1,058 A.D. in Tus, Khorasan. One of the great phi-

losophers, mystics, and theologians who has left an indelible mark on the history of Islamic philosophy and Sufism. Having mastered both theoretical as well as practical aspects of Sufism, he applied himself to austere forms of ascetic practices. At one point in his life he was the prime lecturer at the Nizamiyyah Academy in Baghdad and as one of the supreme judges.

Al-Ghazzali attained the title of "Hujjat al-Islam" (proof of Islam). Mujaddid al din this means renewer of religion and Zain al din which means the ornament of faith. By the age of 38, having doubts about the positions of scholastic theologians and inconsistencies among the philosophers, he left Baghdad and wandered in Islamic lands for 11 years before returning to his native city. There he either taught or spent time in seclusion. His major works include "Intention of Philosophers," "The Deliverer from Error," "Incoherence of the Philosophers" and "The Elixir of Happiness." He died at the age of 55.

Suhrawardi, Shihab Al-Din Suhrawardi, known as Shaikh Al-Ishrag (the master of illumination) as well as Al-Maghtul (the martyr), born on 1153 A.D. near Subraward, Iran. A Persian Moslem philosopher who founded the school of illumination (Ishrag), he was greatly influenced by the prophet Zoroaster. He was a philosopher well versed in peripatetic philosophy and a mystic who tried to abridge the differences between philosophy and mysticism. At a young age, he set upon a long journey through the Islamic lands to meet the Sufi masters, while practicing asceticism and withdrawing for long spiritual retreats.

Suhrawardi's philosophy was a turning point in the history of Islamic philosophy as it gave rise to the school of Isfahan during the Safavid era; even today Ishrag philosophy is very popular in many parts of the Islamic world. His major works include: "Philosophy of Illumination," "The Knowledge of G-d," and "Treatise on Illumination."

Since Suhrawardi's philosophy was inconsistent with the view of the orthodox jurists, he was accused of advocating heretical ideas and upon instigation of his detractors was put to death at the age of 38 by the order of Salah-al-Din Ayyubi, the great Moslem commander who defeated the Crusaders.

Mulla Sadra, Sadr Al-Shirazi was born into a noble Persian family in Shiraz in 1571 A.D. His life coincided with the reign of Shah Abbas I of Safavid Dynasty. He devoted his life to the study of the intellectual sciences in particular the philosophies of Avicenna, Suhrawardi, and especially Ibn-Arabi. He had an encyclo-

pedic knowledge of philosophy, and his work "Asfar al Arbaiah," (the four journeys of soul) is a compendium of the history of Islamic philosophy. He established his school of philosophy in Isfahan that produced some of the greatest masters of Islamic philosophy.

Mulla Sadra was profoundly influenced by the mystics of Islam. The teaching of Mulla Sadra was well reviewed by Islamic philosophers everywhere, and some of his books became the official text of traditional school of Islamic philosophy. Today Iran and a large part of the Islamic world is under the influence of Mulla Sadra. His major works include, "The Book of Origin and Return," "Divine Witnesses," "Commentary on Avicenna's Shafa," and "Commentary on Suhrawardi." Mulla Sadra died at the age of 70 in Basra, Iraq.

Two other great Iranian philosophers of the 10th and 11th Century A.D. that deserve mention are: Abd al-Karim Qushayri, who wrote a major work called, "The Treatise of Sufism." The second one being Abd al-Karim Shahrastani, who has been called the principal historian of the religion of the Oriental Middle Ages. His major work is "Kitab al-Milal Wa'l Nihal" meaning the book of religious and philosophical communities.

K. J. Ahmad, in the preface of his book, "Hundred Great Moslems" said, "The ignorance of our educated class toward the achievements of their ancestors in different spheres of human activity, especially in the realm of science and art impelled me to raise the curtain which hang over the glorious achievement of the sons of Islam." It was based upon the same principle, even at the expense of being esoteric, that I prepared this article. It is a way of introduction of another aspect of Iranian culture and heritage which had a profound effect upon Islamic civilization in its Golden Age.

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WHAT DOES LOVE MEAN?

A group of professional people posed this question to a group of 4 to 8 years olds, "What does love mean?" The answers they got were broader and deeper than anyone who could have imagined. See what you think.

"Love is that first feeling you feel before the bad stuff gets in the way."

"When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love."

"When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You know that your name is safe in their mouth."

"Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other."

"Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your French fries without making them give you any theirs."

"Love is when someone hurts you. And you get so mad but you don't yell at them because you know it would hurt their feelings."

Love is what makes you smile when you're tired."

Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy and she takes a sip before giving it to him, to make sure the taste is OK."

"Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen."

"When you tell someone something bad about yourself and you're scared they won't love you anymore. But then you get surprised because not only do they still love you, they love you even more."

"Love is when you tell a guy you like his shirt, then he wears it everyday."

"Love is like a little old woman and a little old man who are still friends even after they know each other so well."

"During my piano recital, I was on a stage and scared. I looked at all the people watching me and I saw my daddy waving and smiling. He was the only one doing that. I wasn't scared anymore."

"My mommy loves me more than anybody. You don't see anyone else kissing me to sleep at night."

"Love is when my mommy gives my daddy the best piece of chicken."

"Love is when my mommy sees my daddy smelly and sweaty and still says he is handsomer than Robert Redford."

"Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day."

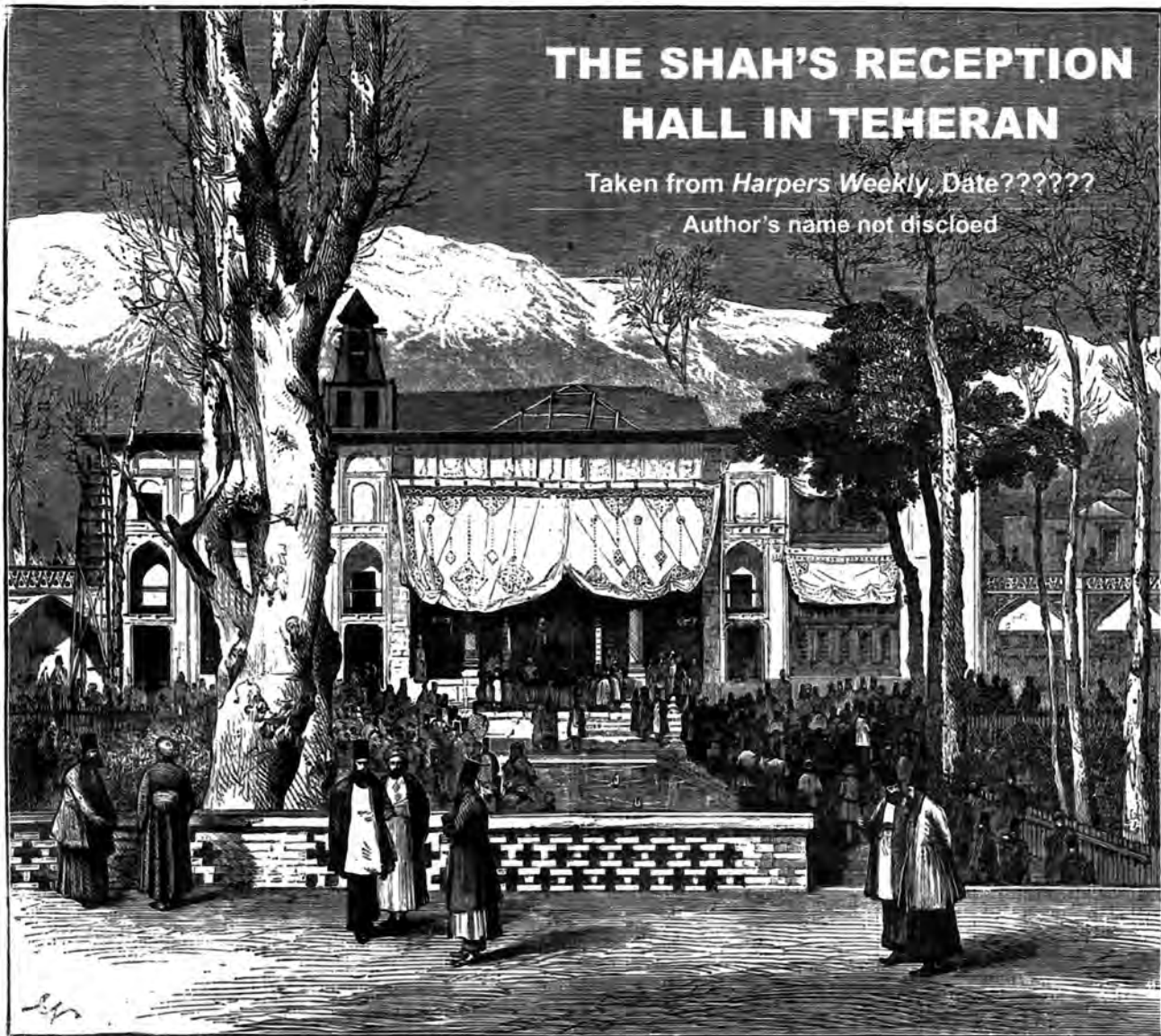
You really shouldn't say 'I love you' unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People always forget.

(Taken from the internet, author unknown)

THE SHAH'S RECEPTION HALL IN TEHERAN

Taken from *Harpers Weekly*, Date???????

Author's name not disclosed



THE SHAH OF PERSIA AT HOME—RECEPTION HALL AT TEHERAN.—[SEE PAGE 582.]

TEHERAN, the modern capital of Persia, is situated in a dreary, treeless plain, which, except in spring, is almost destitute of verdure. It is about five miles in circuit, and is enclosed by a strong earthen wall, flanked with numerous towers, surrounded by a glacier, outside which is a large dry ditch. The population is about 70,000. The appearance of the city from a distance is picturesque, but it has few public edifices worthy of notice; the houses are built of sun-dried bricks, and the streets wretchedly paved. It has, however, many good shops and bazars.

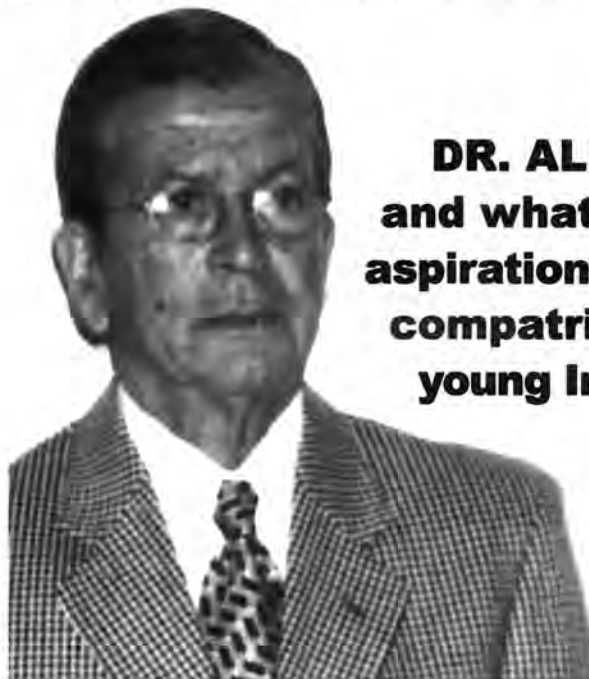
The Ark, or citadel, comprises the royal residence and harem, quarters for the guards, and other public offices. The

Grand Saloon in the palace is said to be very magnificent. The throne is a platform of pure white marble, raised a few steps from the ground, and carpeted with shawls and gold, and the whole interior of the apartment is profusely decorated with carving, gilding, arabesque painting, and looking-glass.

The Shah is now in England, where his presence excites great curiosity. It is not often that an Oriental potentate of such magnitude quits his lair to visit the haunts of civilization; and a Persian Shah is almost as strange a visitor as a Japanese Mikado would be. But the Vienna Exposition has drawn him from the Vale of Cashmere, and he comes among the West-

ern barbarians, surrounded with Eastern splendor, bejeweled with diamonds and rubies, like a caliph of the Arabian Nights, with twenty-five millions in his pocket to pay his incidental expenses. There are cold critics who say that it would have been more creditable for his Highness to have employed some of his money in relieving his starving subjects last year, when half of them died of famine, and liberal subscriptions were raised in both Europe and America for their relief. The Shah set out attended by six of his numerous wives, but domestic infelicities at Moscow constrained him to send back this portion of his retinue, and to pursue his journey as a single man.

Interview with DR. ALI GHAZI



**Who is
DR. ALI GHAZI
and what are his
aspirations for his
compatriots and
young Iranians?**

**Shahrokh
Ahkami**

During my childhood, I had the privilege of knowing Ali Ghazi and his well-respected family. I remember his leadership in high school and his exciting and penetrating speeches. These, plus other qualities, made him one of the most outstanding students in his class. Ali left Ghoochan, but we were reunited on the steps of Tehran Medical School. I was a freshman and Ali had already received his medical degree. He was still handsome and distinguished. He informed me of his ambition to pursue his surgical training in the United States of America.

During this brief encounter at the entrance of Tehran Medical School, Dr. Ghazi enriched me with his advice concerning the complexity of the life style in the capital city of Tehran, in comparison to our small city of Ghoochan — then he departed.

Years later, Dr. Ghazi returned from America with a wealth of knowledge and experience. He was appointed president of Tehran City Hospital. I had just finished my military service in Iran. Perhaps he was unaware then and now that he has always been my idol.

Several years later I sought to continue my education in America. As soon as I arrived I contacted and visited him in New York City. Dr. Ghazi had become one of the most renowned authorities in the field of endoscopy in the United States. I was filled with pride and joy in his achievements. Over the years, I have had the distinct privilege of becoming a close friend to Dr. Ghazi, who continues to be a man of integrity, dignity and always a true gentleman.

Since the publication of *Persian Heritage*, I always wanted to introduce Dr. Ghazi to our readers and to our Ghoutchani compatriots. But interviewing Dr. Ghazi and obtaining his consent for publishing his biography was a difficult task. Eventually through the coaxing of his family he was convinced. And now I have the pleasure of sharing with you this Ghoutchani treasure, Dr. Ghazi the scientist, physician and friend.

Please describe the early years of your life in Iran and tell us about your education in Iran.

I was born on June 28, 1933 in a small city called Ghoochan, located in the north-east of Meshed (in Khorassan Province). I spent 16 years of my life in Ghoutchan. Then I moved to Meshed to continue and complete my high school education, which I finished at Ferdowsi High School in 1952. During the summer of the same year, I passed the entrance exam to the medical school of University of Tehran. I received my medical degree in 1958. Unfortunately, due to the political unrest, which coincided with the arrest of our Prime Minister Mossadegh and the return of the Shah to Iran, there were daily demonstrations at the University, which resulted in fighting between the students and the secret service agents known as the SAVAK. In short, most of the arrested students would end up in the SAVAK's jail and for a long time nobody heard any news about them.

I left Iran and moved to New York City in 1959 in order to continue my surgical training. I came to the USA under the "Kennedy Exchange Student Visa" known as the J-visa. One of the conditions attached to this visa, was that the visa holder should return to his country for at least two years to serve the population of that country. In spite of the fact that some of our highly trained professionals, decided to stay and continue their lives in this country, I felt obligated to return to Iran and fulfill my obligation. I returned to Iran in the 1964-1965 period. Shortly thereafter I was appointed the Director of the Municipal Hospital of Tehran as well as the Director of the Surgical Department of the same hospital.

What was the reason for your return to the USA and what did you do after your return?

The reasons for my return to the US were very simple, the lack of freedom both politically and professionally and more importantly the uncertainty about the political future of Iran. Anyone who chooses to immigrate to a new country whether due to political, religious, financial or any other reason, is facing a big gamble with an uncertain and an unsuccessful outcome. Having said that I will enumerate some of the difficulties:

1. Learning and becoming proficient

in English

2. Learning your new craft in a new environment for example finishing your residency program.

3. Getting your license by passing either the state or national exam in order to be able to practice.

4. Passing the exam for whatever profession that you are engaged in, such as the American Board of Surgery.

5. Finding a home, a school, an office, a hospital to be affiliated with in order to admit your patients

6. Etc., etc., etc.,

Achieving all that brings you to the fun part of the game. Now you are in the same job market as others who are equally qualified and you must compete with thousands of them for the same positions. But always remember, having a higher education, working hard and applying your knowledge and yourself to the task, will eventually bring success to your door.

After returning to NYC, I started my practice of surgery and chose to be affiliated with Beth Israel Medical Center (BIMC) in the same city. At this time Dr. Hiromi Shynia, along with Dr. William I. Wolff had started the use of a new instrument, called the colonoscope for the diagnosis and later for the removal of colonic polyps. They began publishing their first results in 1968 and I was fortunate enough to join the group in 1969. This was the beginning of a new era and physicians from all over the world would come to BIMC to learn the use of these new instruments.

I was assigned to organize all the seminars in this and other new endoscopic procedures such as endoscopic retrograde cholangio pancreatography for short ERCP. These seminars and all related publications, placed the hospital on the map and definitely added to the prestige of the hospital and the physicians involved. I felt honored and privileged to be part of these new changes in the field of medicine, especially surgery. This allowed many thousands and possibly millions of people to have their problems resolved by endoscopic procedure rather than by formal surgery, with a long hospitalization and probably longer periods of recovery.

It would be prudent to mention that

the first presentation of our results regarding the ERCP and sphincterotomy was to the New York Surgical Society by this Iranian author. It was published in SG &O, a very prestigious surgical magazine.

Other than your achievements in the medicine field, please tell us about your involvement in other areas such as Encyclopedia Iranica (EI).

My involvement with the EI started very early, both financially and with fund raising. I have suggested that we should find a thousand contributors to give \$1,000 every year. This would amount to a million dollars a year and would be an adequate sum to cover all the expenses of

From the bottom of my heart I have some wishes for all Iranians young and old. They are as follows: Unity — I hope we all learn to be united as one nucleus.... I do not understand why we cannot learn from other ethnic groups to be united, create a force that is strong and carry the weight necessary to have both an economic and political impact on our future.

EI. The creation of the One Thousand Dollar Club was the result of this project. This was later changed to the Two Thousand Dollar Club in 2000. Its purpose was to have and depend on a larger group of donors and place this project squarely on the shoulders of a more able and dedicated group of Iranians.

The organizers of EI decided, later, to invite a group of "fund raisers" to get involved and go after large companies and larger donations versus the larger population of smaller donations. While I am no longer involved with the EI, I continue to believe that the EI is a worthy and noble project and I wish the editorial Board, the publishers and those involved with EI continued success.

As to my financial contributions to other organizations, I believe it is something private. I do hope, however, and rec-

ommend that all Iranians, living in the US, see contributions as a duty and obligation. They must continue to support the Universities in Iran. They can sponsor individual students throughout their studies, whichever personally is preferred or suitable.

What advice do you have for the new generation?

Giving advice, especially by the older generation to the younger, is not an easy task. The older generation must understand that the advice we give may be based on the world at a different time and place and may therefore not apply to the present. But, from the bottom of my heart I have some wishes for all Iranians young and old. They are as follows: Unity — I hope

we all learn to be united as one nucleus. More often than not the experience of putting a group of Iranians together usually results with the formation of many different groups, each having a different agenda and each wanting to be the president, regardless of their qualifications. An appropriate example of this is our celebration of NoRouz. Everybody celebrates at a different time and place. I do not understand why we cannot learn from other ethnic groups to be united, create a force that is strong and carry the weight necessary to have both an economic and political impact on our future. I am not opposed to sub groups, but perhaps they should be united under one federation or one organization.

Last, but not least, my sincere wish for the younger generation is that they should have a definite goal in life. This goal has to be identified early and pursued vigorously with determination. One should not ignore the goal or deviate from the road chosen to reach one's destination at any cost. I compare our journey through life to a passenger train: if and when one steps off the train, one may not be able to get back on so easily and if you do get back on your seat may now be occupied by another. Again, I repeat do not get off your train of life unless it is absolutely necessary.

In closing, I would like to thank *Mirass-e-Iran* for the opportunity provided and wish them continued success in publishing such a great magazine. ■

A PARADOX ON LIFE

By George Carlin

The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings but shorter tempers, wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints. We spend more, but have less; we buy more, but enjoy less. We have bigger houses and smaller families, more conveniences, but less time. We have more degrees but less sense, more knowledge, but less judgment, more experts, yet more problems, more medicine, but less wellness. We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get too angry, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too little, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom.

We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often. We've learned how to make a living, but not a life. We've added years to life not life to years. We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbor. We conquered outer space but not inner space. We've done larger things, but not better things. We've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul. We've conquered the atom, but not our prejudice. We write more, but learn less. We plan more, but accomplish less. We've learned to rush, but not to wait. We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies than ever, but we communicate less and less.

These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion, big men and small character, steep profits and shallow relationships. These are the days of two incomes but more divorce, fancier houses, but broken homes. These are days of quick trips, disposable diapers, throwaway morality, one night stands, overweight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer, to quiet, to kill. It is a time when there is much in the showroom window and nothing in the stockroom. A time when technology can bring this letter to you, and a time when you can choose either to share this insight, or to just hit delete.

Remember, spend some time with your loved ones, because they are not going to be around forever. Remember, say a kind word to someone who looks up to you in awe, because that little person soon will grow up and leave your side. Remember, to give a warm hug to the one next to you, because that is the only treasure you can give with your heart and it doesn't cost a cent. Remember, to say, "I love you" to your partner and your loved ones, but most of all, mean it. A kiss and an embrace will mend hurt when it comes from deep inside of you. Remember to hold hands and cherish the moment for someday that person will not be there again. Give time to love, give time to speak, and give time to share the precious thoughts in your mind.

HOW TO STAY YOUNG

1. Throw out nonessential numbers. This includes age, weight and height. Let the doctor worry about them. That is why you pay him/her.
2. Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down.
3. Keep learning. Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever. Never let the brain idle. "An idle mind is the devil's workshop." And the devil's name is Alzheimer's.
4. Enjoy the simple things.
5. Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath.
6. The tears happen. Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life, is ourselves. Be ALIVE while you are alive.
7. Surround yourself with what you love, whether it's family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, and hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge.
8. Cherish your health: If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.
9. Don't take guilt trips. Take a trip to the mailbox, to the next county, to a foreign country, but NOT to where the guilt is.
10. Tell the people you love that you love them, at every opportunity.

AND ALWAYS REMEMBER: Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.

George Carlin's wife passed away not long ago. Our sympathies go out to him and all who grieve a loved one's passing.

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