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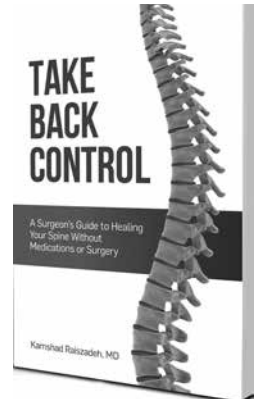
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- Is a Chance to Cut *Always* a Chance to Cure? A Better, Cheaper, More Natural Alternative
- How to Talk to Patients about Drug-Free Alternatives to Their Back Pain
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- Government institutions
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- Pain management practices
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- Consumers with back problems
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WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT TAKE BACK CONTROL:

Dr. Raiszadeh exhorts the patient to take control of his health through lifestyle changes...And in regard to the healthcare system, he shows how the transition of spine care from "surgery first" to "surgery when needed" can save money for society and improve well-being for patients."

—James Robinson, PhD, Professor of Health Economics, School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley

"We are in the midst of a devastating opioid addiction crisis, an epidemic fueled by our collective societal delusion that our lifestyle choices don't matter, that there's a quick surgical or pharmaceutical fix for everything, and that our minds have nothing to do with our physical bodies or overall health...With a deep humility, Dr. Raiszadeh uses personal stories drawn from his career and life to show us that we can heal when we focus on the root causes of our suffering."

—Zubin Damania, MD, Founder, Turntable Health, ZDoggMD

"Knowing what I know now, I wish I had taken Dr. Raiszadeh's advice and exhausted all options with rehab rather than going through with back surgery. There's too much that can go wrong when you expose your spinal canal to surgery. Rehab may take time, but in the long run it's a much better choice."

—Steve Kerr, Coach, Golden State Warriors of the National Basketball Association

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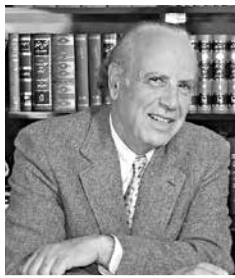
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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

With the arrival of Autumn, we begin a turning point with nature; the gradual changes of the leaves colors and their falling. The extraordinary beauty of nature is fascinating. As we get closer to the end of the fall season, we face the coldness and the lifelessness of nature; the natural changes in our habitat that winter brings.

These changes remind me of the natural habits of humans, how change in a short moment can impact their lives and how adaptable they are to this change. The same way that natural disasters like hurricanes, floods, fires play a role in destroying nature, humans can destroy one another through upheavals and self-destruction overnight. These human acts that end in disastrous outcomes have become very common around the world. The pandemic has destroyed lives for the last two years and there is no end in sight. In fact, it has become stronger, more vicious and kills without mercy as it mutates into a more dangerous virus every day. It destroys and kills on its path and does not know age, color, young or old.

The more recent events in Afghanistan, although shocking to many of us, was planned and formulated by those in charge. It has left people homeless, fleeing for their lives and taking refuge in countries in the region and around the world. After 20 years of exploitation, destruction and war by those that did the planning, this “no man’s land” and its people, once again are left on their own to figure out the future.

While I was reflecting and writing this editorial, I hoped to deliver good and joyful news to our readers, but once again I am faced with covering news that has been part of every household conversation in recent weeks.

During a conversation with one of my old school mates (in Iran) and discussing the vaccination process and how he was waiting for his second dosage of the vaccine, the news came that there had been two deliveries of vaccines. They had been confiscated by groups of thieves to be sold on the black market and are nowhere to be seen, this leaving many vaccination stations without vaccines.

As tears fell from my eyes, I felt my throat swell in an effort to hold back more tears and stop my voice and body from shaking. Trying to reassure my friend on the phone I told him he has waited 3 months what is another 2 weeks?

With a sad voice he responded that the leaders of his country have chosen to vaccinate themselves, their families and friends with the vaccines and have banned the rest of us

to receive it. He said when it is our turn to get the vaccine, which includes teachers, workers and people on the front lines, they find the excuse of robberies and thieves... once again they play with our lives.

With an angry tone in his voice he said, with all the armed men, the police and private guards how can a group of thieves rob all these vaccines from the airport grounds?

Isn't anyone asking them why they are not using all their alleged “might and power” to find those who supposedly robbed us blind?

Do you only use your mighty power and your weapons on innocent people who contest your policies on the corner of the streets?

Is all their might used to imprison and torture those who are only asking what is rightfully theirs?

Instead of catching the petty thieves and cutting off their limbs for punishment why aren't they catching the gangsters?

In a country where the conversation of Islam is compiled with love and mercy, peace and harmony, friendship and kindness why are your actions brutal and without mercy and value human life?

My friend was engaged in such deep anger and frustration I was afraid that due to his fragile health he would harm himself while on the telephone line. As I was trying to console him and calm him by stating the vaccine issue will be resolved shortly, he started getting even more angry and shouted, “Do you think our problem in this country is limited to the vaccine situation? Our problems here are much greater than that!”

At that point I came up with an excuse to say goodbye. After hanging up with him, my tears started to pour down my face. I thought to myself that even after 60 years of living away from Iran I still am saddened and heartbroken from all the suffering that takes place in my birth home.

I now am rooted and have invested all my personal and professional life in a new country I call home today. My children and grandchildren were born and raised in this country I call home today. I have not even an ounce of hope to ever visit my birthplace at least one more time. Why is it okay, that without the technology of Facetime and Facebook, that a friend who I have not seen in the last 70 years would be unable to recognize me, or me him because of the situation? How is it that this thread and this bond of friendship has not been broken and my love and longing for my birth

home continues after all these years?

These emotions and feelings of love and connection amaze me to my soul. How can one stay silent with all the unjustness that takes place and felt by those living there? How can one accept that the highest-ranking individuals in the medical field have taken upon themselves to write an open letter to the head leader (mullah) stating that since the Pfizer, Moderna, and the Astra Zeneca vaccines are made in America and England they are not to be trusted; they are "haram" in the name of religion, their use in Iran should be banned. Ironically the researchers who patented the Pfizer vaccine were a man and a woman who were Turkish and are Moslem. And, two of the first countries to use these vaccines were Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

How is it that these Moslem nations don't have a problem using vaccines made in America and England, "the master in religion and honor" have banned American made vaccines? Why is it that these leaders don't have a problem using ammunition, war planes and guns made in America, but when it comes to using lifesaving vaccines, they have a problem? One of the greatest American made products is the cell phone, it is used by the heads of leaders and their family members, why are those not banned?

What is shocking and mind boggling is that a so-called Dr. Namaki, who was a previous head of the Health Ministry, being called a doctor, instead of being labeled by the world courts as a murderer and responsible for the deaths of

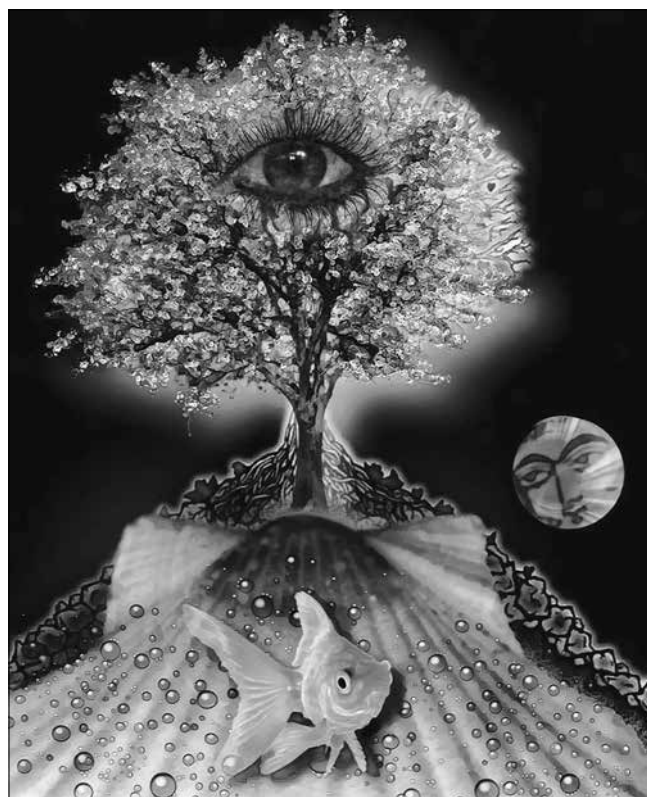
thousands of people from Corona since August 26th, 2021. No one asks what happened to the Iranian vaccines or the Russian one? Where are they?

Empty promises by the leaders that they will arrive are all that is given to the innocent people so desperately waiting to be vaccinated. Apparently questions and answers are irrelevant to the authorities.

As usual I hope that one day, I will be able to write more hopeful and pleasant news. But today, with all the recent inflation in Iran and the burdens of not even being able to purchase eggs, chicken or milk to feed themselves my hope decreases. Seventy percent of the people live under the poverty line. How can I and others remain silent? How can we talk about the pleasantries of life (flowers and songs of birds)?

In hope of better days, better talks and conversations I continue to wish all of you health, harmony, happiness and joy. I also wish for you a beautiful Mehregan celebration, one of the greatest and most celebrated holidays in our history.

Shahrokh Ghasseini



FOR IRAN'S KHUZESTAN

*I drink water from the clouds
and swallow stars
and dreams like a human-shaped cup
I fill myself with clear water
and transparent comets and broken sleep
I will drink in remembrance of the blue-clouds
and ancient-blue-earth
I will break my arms
and immediately they become wings
so I can catch the dew from the lotus-moon
the shadows playing with stones
and leaves are now quite
the birds on the fence are black*

*And
I am standing under the gray clouds
waiting for rain*

Poem and the Painting on the cover
and on the left side of this page are from:

PAYAM FARRAHI

WITH GRATITUDE

Dear Editor:

I'm writing to thank you again for forwarding and publishing the Irna article about my grandfather's work.

As always, I appreciate your kindness and thoughtfulness.

Wishing you continued health and success.

With gratitude, *Manijeh Shayegan*

THANK YOU

Dear Editor:

We just received the summer issue of *Persian Heritage*, and I wanted to express my family's heartfelt thanks to you for publishing my father's obituary. It meant a great deal to us, and we are forever grateful.

Sincerely, *Ben Nourian*

APPRECIATION

Dear Editor:

With much appreciation and gratitude for a most informative and pleasant reading.

May God bless, *Maryam Ansari*

SO SAID

Dear Editor:

Thank you for sharing the interview of Mr. Siamak Far-

ahBakhshian again with your readers. His passing is a loss.

HN, California

PIECES OF IRAN

Dear Editor:

This was an absolutely delightful piece to read. It is very emotional to that Iran, though bashed in the pages of most of the media, is perceived as a wonderful place with warm memories.

I am certain that everyone collects pieces of their heritage. But for me Nawal Ocasiano's pieces of her Iran made me feel at home. For in my house there that my memories will never be dulled.

Thank you again.

KBS, NJ

Arghavan Khosravi

Arghavan Khosravi (b. 1984, Shahr-e-kord, Iran) earned an MFA in painting from the Rhode Island School of Design after completing the studio art program at Brandeis University. Khosravi previously earned a BFA in Graphic Design from Tehran Azad University and an MFA in Illustration from the University of Tehran. Khosravi has participated in numerous group exhibitions, at venues such as the Museum of Contemporary Art, Yinchuan, China; Newport Art Museum, Newport, RI; and Provincetown Art Association and Museum, MA; among others.

Khosravi's residencies include the Fine Arts Work Center, Provincetown, MA; the Studios at MassMoCA, North Adams, MA; Monson Arts, Monson, ME; and Residency Unlimited, Brooklyn, NY.

Khosravi is a 2019 recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation's Painters & Sculptors Grant and a 2017-8 recipient of the Walter Feldman Fellowship. The artist's work belongs to the collections of the Newport Art Museum and the Rhode Island School of Design Museum. Khosravi lives in New Jersey and works in New York as a member artist of the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts.

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Iranian Handicrafts: Mekhraj Kari of Mashhad



Mashhad, the capital of Khorasan Razavi province, has many gemstone mines. That is why a prospering handicraft of this province is jewelry made of gemstones, also called “Mekhraj Kari”.

Some of the most important gems are aquamarine, agates, quartz, jasper, turquoise, garnet, and zeolite, among which turquoise and agate are the most popular. Turquoise specialists believe that no two pieces are the same, just like fingerprints, and they cannot be compared to each other.

The most important stone-cutting workshops of Iran are located in Mashhad where tones of agate and turquoise stones are cut each year. Traditional as well as modern methods are used by Mashhad workshops. When it comes to making jewelry from gemstones, all the steps including designing, manufacturing, and others require both experience and skill, however, the most difficult part is attaching the stone to the metal, which is called “Mekhraj Kari”, “Morasa’e Kari” or incrustation.

Among all the steps in making jewelry that includes gemstones, Mekhraj Kari is the most delicate and important. Various methods are used to attach the stones in Mekhraj Kari. Some of them are “Reili”, “Ghalamzani”, “Kaseh’e” and “Changi” for small gems, and “Nabshi”, “Changi” and “Divareh’e” for large gems. No glue is used in this craft, to preserve the beauty and natural streaks of the gems. In order to attach gemstones, the base is designed so that it will not damage the gems.

Gems can be broken, scratched, or cracked by a bit of pressure. Mekhraj is applied to pieces of jewelry such as earrings, necklaces, rings, brooches and etc.

Mashhad was recognized as the global city of precious and semi-precious stones by the World Council of Handicrafts in 2018.

Iran Conducts FIRST REMOTE SURGERY with Domestic Device



**Report by Mehr News Agency 06/29/21;
photos by Amin Jalali, Islamic Republic News Agency**

First remote surgery in Iran was performed using 100% homegrown system in Imam Khomeini (RA) and Sina Hospitals of Tehran on Wednesday in the presence of Vice-President for Science and Technology Sorena Sattari.

The process of this remote robotic surgery was conducted in Iran Advanced Clinical Skills Training Center based in Imam Khomeini (RA) and Sina hospitals of Tehran in presence of Vice President Dr. Sorena Sattari and Dr. Saeed Sarkar Head of Advanced Medical Technologies & Equipment Institute.

The surgery was performed on a dog (vasectomy operation) by Dr. Talebpour at Sina Hospital of Tehran.

As located seven km away from each other, the remote surgical operation was conducted in these two hospitals using a 5G network.

This robot has a surgical console that the surgeon can control and guide the surgery remotely by standing behind it and using two robotic arms.

Also, a monitor has been placed next to the console that shows the image of surgery for surgeon clearly. The surgeon uses this system to control the surgery with a pedal and two robotic arms.

MILLIONAIRES GROWING IN IRAN

Despite what you hear, read or believe you see, according to Forbes magazine over 250,00 millionaires now live in Iran. Since 2020 high net income people have grown by 21.6%, with a global average only 3.6%. Additionally, 72 % of the high-income population have invested in crypto currencies. The stability of this investment is yet to be seen. But when you are talking about being a high-level millionaire you have money to gamble.

This seems to be shockingly unbelievable since 60% of the population is considered to be in poverty. Of course, there is a dispute as to the reasons for this level of poverty, some say it is the sanctions placed on Iran, while others say it is because of corruption and arm’s length relationships. The low turnout for the recent election can reflect both standpoints.



ARCHITECTS DESIGNING HOMES FOR THE HOMELESS

Two sisters, Gisue and Mojgan Hariri, came to the United States to study architecture. They wanted, after receiving their education, to return to Iran to assist in the advancement of modernization in Iran. The revolution, however, changed their plans. Besides the revolution and the taking of the hostages in 1979, the sisters were having a difficult time deciding where they should call home. Iran was not as they knew it and they felt that because of the hostage taking and revolution that they could not call the U.S. home. Since home to them was of the utmost important (they believe it is a basic human right) they decided to come up with plans that would replace the undistinguished tents, provide to the “unhoused” with something more dignified and ecological responsible. Currently it is estimated that 100 million people in the world do not have homes for a variety of reasons.

Their, Hariri and Hariri, firm conceptualized the “Digital House”, which was exhibited at the MOMA in 1999. Their conceptualized vision of affordable housing, a living unit, is one that caters to the transient living of a refugee. These homes can be folded and moved to another location. Of course, the need for space, individual space, accelerated with Covid-19.

Their project has been selected for a “Breakout Grant” program. It is hoped that because of the significant need for provided shelter to the homeless, that they will be able to cut through the normal bureaucratic tape and get their vision out there.

“THE STATUE”

BY IRANIAN DIRECTOR MOHSEN SALEHIFARD TOPS AT VAFI & RAFI ANIMATION FESTIVAL

Source: Tehran Times 06/01/21

Iranian short movie “The Statue” has won first prize at the 12th VAFI& RAFI International Children and Youth Animation Film Festival in Croatia. The festival took place in the cities of Rijeka and Varazdin from May 27 to 29 and June 3 to 6. “The Statue” by Iranian director Mohsen Salehifard

Directed by Mohsen Salehifard, “The Statue” tells the story of a sculptor who engages with the clay of his sculpture and shapes it. The animation, which won the award in the RAFI 15-18 category, was produced by the Najafabad branch of the Iranian Young Cinema Society.

IRAN COMES 27TH AT TOKYO 2020, TWO PLACES BEHIND RIO 2016

TEHRAN – Iran finished in the 27th place at the 2020 Olympic Games, while the country had come 25th in the previous edition in Rio. The Iranian athletes claimed seven medals – three golds, two silvers, two bronzes – one silver more and two bronze medals less than Rio.

Shooter Javad Foroughi won Iran's first medal in the Games in the men's 10-meter air pistol. Greco-Roman wrestler Mohammadreza Geraii claimed the second gold in the 67kg final bout.

Sajad Ganjzadeh also took a gold medal in the men's karate kumite competition in the +75kg category.

Weightlifter Ali Davoudi won a silver medal at the +109kg weight class. And freestyle wrestler Hassan Yazdani took Iran's second silver in the 86kg weight class.

Greco-Roman wrestler Mohammadhadi Saravi won a bronze medal at the 97kg category, while Amirhossein Zare snatched a bronze in the men's freestyle 125kg.

Iran had sent 66 athletes to Tokyo in 16 sports, three athletes more than country sent to Rio 2016.



TREATMENT OF Alzheimer Disease



On June 2, 2021 the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the first new medication for Alzheimer's disease in nearly two decades.

The drug Aduhelm (aducanumab), will be used for treating early Alzheimer's disease.

"This is the first time we have any new approved treatment for Alzheimer's disease over the past two decades," said Dr. Babak Tousi, who led Cleveland Clinic's study site for the multicenter clinical trials.

Aduhelm is a protein compound that functions as an antibody targeted against plaques that are found in brains affected by Alzheimer's disease. These plaques are made of beta-amyloid protein which is thought to disrupt cell-to-cell communication while triggering inflammation leading to the destruction of brain cells. Aduhelm is believed to reduce the level of beta-amyloid and thereby slow cognitive decline in patients with early Alzheimer's dementia.

Dr. Babak Tousi is a neurogeriatrician in Cleveland, OH. He is Head of Clinical Trials Program, Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health-Cleveland, and Associate Professor of Medicine.

Dr. Tousi received his medical degree from Tehran University of Medical Sciences School of Medicine, and completed his residency at Rutgers. He has been in medical practice for over 23 years. He is experienced in movement disorders, dementia, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and Lewy body dementia.



ISNA PHOTO
Amir Madadipour

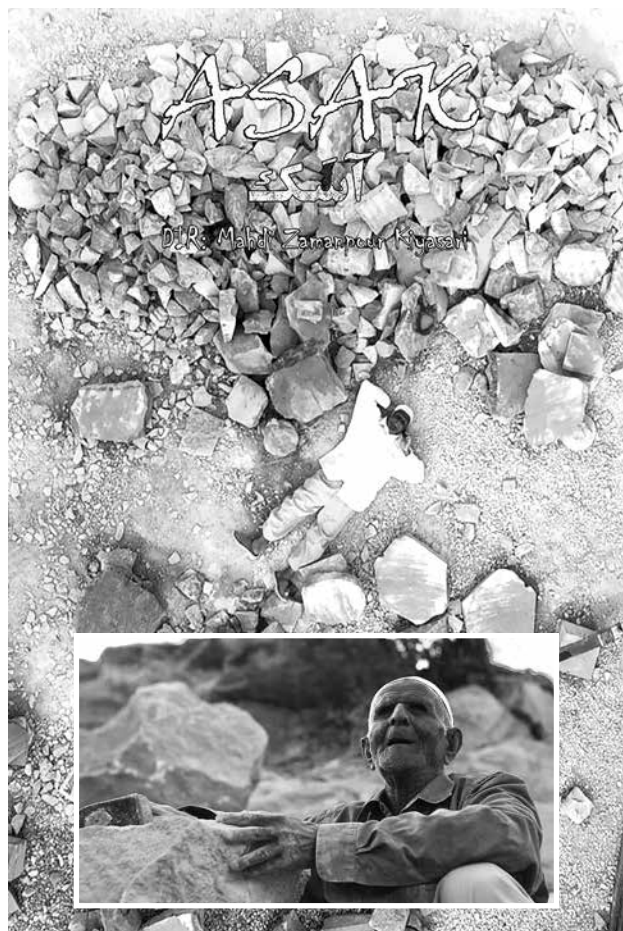
MAKING RAG DOLLS (VILLAGE REVIVES OLD TRADITION)

Tehran (ISNA) May 20, 2021

PHOTOGRAPHER: AMIR MADADIPOUR

Sarbisheh is one of the counties of South Khorasan Province. Women living in Sarbisheh have revived the old tradition of making rag dolls.

There is a village in this county called Tajmir, which has changed from an unknown village into the center of doll-making in less than three years. Doll-making has completely changed people's lives in this village, and they no longer seek to migrate to cities.



“ASAK” Named Best Short Doc at Vienna Ethnocineca Festival

SOURCE: TEHRAN TIMES

Iranian filmmaker Mehdi Zamanpur Kiasari's "Asak" won the award for best short documentary at the 15th edition of the Vienna Ethnocineca International Documentary Film Festival. "Asak", which means a small hand-mill in the local dialect of southern Iran, is about the life of an 80-year-old blind man who lives in that area.

"Asak" by Iranian filmmaker Mehdi Zamanpur Kiasari

The man earns money by making handicrafts and utensils from stone. The documentary's most remarkable feature is the spiritual divine talent of the old man in interpreting dreams as well as his fascinating ability to climb mountains to collect stones and identifying the right types of stones by simply touching and tasting them.

"Asak" had previously received several other awards from numerous festivals, including the International Golden Saffron Documentary Film Festival in Turkey, Arica Nativa Rural Film Festival in Chile, Parnu International Documentary Film Festival in Estonia, Big Sky Documentary Film Festival in the U.S., Golden Tree International Documentary Festival in Germany, and the Belgrade Documentary and Short Film Festival in Serbia.

The Ethnocineca festival, which ran online this year due to the pandemic, announced the winners last Thursday.

The award for best feature documentary was given to "The Rain Never Stops" by Alina Gorlova from Ukraine.

The Excellence in Visual Anthropology Award went to "The Body Won't Close" by Mattijs van de Port from the Netherlands.

"Once Upon a Time in Venezuela" won the award for best Austrian documentary. Directed by Anabel Rodriguez Rios, the film is a co-production from Austria, Venezuela, the UK and Brazil.

The Ethnocineca Student Shorts Award went to "Marea" directed by Vania Quevedo. It is a co-production between Mexico and Cuba.

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Attracting Foreign Students to Iran More Than Projected

TEHRAN TIMES

Currently, foreign nationals constitute 1.64 percent of the country's student population, which is about 0.14 percent higher than the goal set by the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021).

According to the plan, some 1.5 percent of the population of university students in the country should be non-Iranian, however, the figure stood at 1.64 percent in the past Iranian calendar year (March 2020-March 2021), Afshin Akhoundzadeh, an official at the Organization of Student Affairs, said, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Also, according to the 20-Year National Vision Document (ending 2025), foreign students should account for 1.8 percent of the whole student population, which is likely to even reach 2 percent, Akhoundzadeh explained.

"Some 57,675 foreign nationals from 133 countries are studying in Iranian universities, 30,600 of whom are studying in universities affiliated with the Ministry of Science, while 25,000 others are receiving education in Azad University, and about 2,000 in medical universities."

Fifty-seven percent of the international students are studying for a master's degree, 27 percent for a bachelor's degree and 15 percent are educating to receive a Ph.D., while the remaining one percent study at other levels.

Law, Persian literature and computer engineering are the top three fields of study for foreign students in Iran, while civil engineering, business management, political science, English language and literature, Quran and hadith sciences, international relations, and electrical engineering, and other majors with the highest number of non-Iranian students.

In 2013, 35 centers were allowed to admit foreign stu-



dents, which has increased to 77 in 2021.

Iranian universities shine at world rankings

Times Higher Education has published its annual ranking of the world's top universities for 2021, listing 47 Iranian universities, which shows an increase of 7 universities compared to the last year.

Six Iranian universities have been placed among the world's top universities announced by the prestigious Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2021.

With 47 Iranian universities ranked among 1,527 top universities of 93 countries in the world in 2021 rankings, Iran achieved a great improvement in the academic field.

Some 21 Islamic countries were also listed in the ranking. However, Iran holds the highest share with 47 universities.

With a scientific growth rate of 10.4 percent in 2019, Iran ranked second among the top 25 countries in the world, next to China with a growth rate of 12.9 percent, according to the Web of Science website.

According to statistics released by the International Web of Science Database, Iran's citation rank has always been on the rise over the last eight years, from 24 in 2012 to 16 in 2019.

Iran ranks first in terms of the number of universities in the region and among Islamic countries, according to Shanghai Ranking's Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) 2020.

Two Iranian universities have been ranked among the top 100 universities in Asia, according to Webometrics Ranking of World Universities for July 2020.

Moreover, 7 Iranian universities have been listed among the best 1000 worldwide; including, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Sharif University of Technology, Tarbiat Modares University, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Isfahan University of Technology, Iran University of Science and Technology.

In June 2020, THE Asia University Rankings 2020 ranked five Iranian universities among the top 100 universities worldwide. The Center for Science and Technology Studies Leiden Ranking has placed 36 Iranian universities in the list of over 1,000 major universities worldwide in 2020 compared with 26 universities in 2019.

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Ranking of Iranians

Iranian - American Rank in US community; the Best immigrants the USA has ever inherited. Iranians (Persians) are amongst the most educated, most contributing, most tax paying and most law abiding immigrants that the US of America has ever witnessed.

Iranians in US: According to extrapolated 2,000 & 2010 U.S. Census data, the subsequent reports & other independent survey analyses carried by think-tanks, it is estimated there are up to 1.5 million Iranian-Americans living in the U.S. in 2012.

Whereby their largest concentration - about 700,000 – residing in Greater Los Angeles. An NPR report recently put the Iranian population of Beverly Hills as high as 20% of the total population.

Iranian communities in the US have a very diverse religious population. Muslims, Iranian-American Baha'is, Armenian-Assyrian Christians, Zoroastrians, Jews, Mystics, Spiritualists and Humanists...are eminently present in every community. Other large (more than 100,000 each) communities include New York; North New Jersey; Washington D.C.; Seattle WA, Boston MA, and Houston/Dallas TX.

The majority of the Iranian born had a bachelor's degree or higher. According to Census 2000, 50.9% of Iranian immigrants have attained a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 24.0% among the total population. According to the latest census data available, more than one in four Iranian-Americans holds a master's or doctoral degree, the highest rate among 67 ethnic groups ever studied.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) recently conducted a study that found Iranian immigrants among the top 20 immigrant groups with the highest rate of business ownership, contributing substantially to the U.S. economy.

Almost one in two Iranian-American households have annual income exceeding \$100K (compared to one in five for the overall U.S. population).

According to a study carried out by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Iranian scientists, engineers and businesses in the United States own or manage around one trillion dollars. They are eminently present in every sector of the society.

At present, there are nearly 10,000 physicians of Iranian heritage working in the United States who have their own practice and/or work in medical institutions. As the most law abiding ethnicity ever, the rate of allegations or even convictions for major or even minor (misdemeanor) crimes in the Iranian-American community ranks as the lowest ever for any community, immigrant or otherwise, in the history of the U.S..

It is also estimated that the total number of university professors of Iranian heritage who teach and research in higher education institutions in the United States is over 10,000.

One is hard pressed to find a single American university or college, where one or more Iranian American professors at bare minimum, is not serving.

What is most striking is the majority (more than 75%) of these 10,000 plus professors serve in the top 200 of the 4,000 universities and colleges in the nation.

How This Iranian Immigrant's Vision Could Revolutionize Cancer Treatment



HELEN SABZEVARI New Cancer Treatment

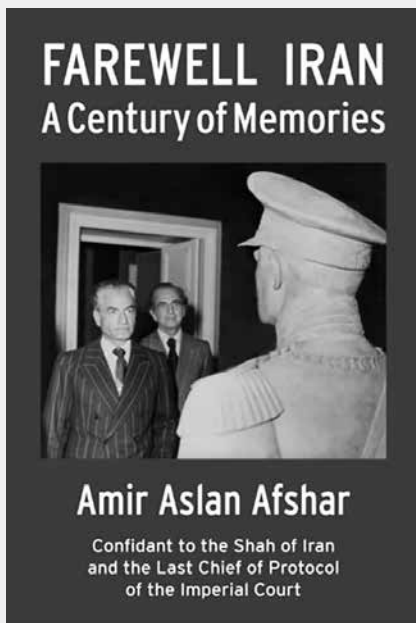
As a small child Ms. Sabzevari was interested in cancer and its treatment. Her dream is becoming a reality. Now at the age of fifty-nine she is the CEO and President of Precigen. Precigen is a biopharmaceutical company. This company has focused on and is on the cutting edge of treatments for diseases such as cancer and diabetes. She is hoping from her expertise through her lifetime experience in cancer research to introduce new immunotherapies that are easier to scale and more effective than what is currently being offered. Her company is developing the "Ultra CAT-T". This process allows the T-cells that fight the cancer within the patient to be isolated and then the genes triggering their production are introduced into plasmid DNA. This DNA is found in bacteria. The plasma DNA is then engineered to produce T-cells that are hopefully more potent against the cancer cells. The results are then reintroduced to the body with an IL-15 cytokine membrane. In using plasmid instead of a virus, "Ultra CAR-T cells avoid the risk that the body may mistake the treatment for an invading cell that needs to be fought off. Another plus for this therapy is that plasmid DNA can be scaled and manufactured cheaply. The Ultra Cat-T cells have a longer life in the body months in comparison to the CAR -T cells which are clocked at 2-3 weeks.

Ms. Sabzevari is also the founder of Compass Therapeutics, LLC. She received the award Mass High Tech's Women to Watch and the PharmaVOICE 100 Award in 2013. She served as the head of the Molecular Immunology Group at the Laboratory of Tumor Immunology and Biology at the US National Cancer Institute (LTIB-NCI).

FAREWELL IRAN

A Century of Memories

AMIR ASLAN AFSHAR
Ibex Publishers 2021



One can only hope the title of this book is just a title and does not become a reality. Since 1979, unless you are Iranian, hyphenated or not, most of us did not know the real truths that made up Iran's government from 1935 through the present. Most of us thought of Iran or knew of Iran through its ancient history, food, poets. Most of us non-Iranians even knew who or what was an Iranian. One of the reasons for this is that Iranians who immigrated to the United States learned or knew English, learned about the customs and cultures of this country, respected it; in other words, they assimilated into American and other societies. It seemed the only thing that was different about them and us was they had a beautiful accent, one that was fairly unidentifiable to most Americans.

Iran's government began making the front-page news in the 60's and 70's when the government under the Shah was beginning to take political turn. Not much was positive but to most it didn't matter as Iran was a country thousands of miles away and we thought didn't impact us. Then came the Revolution the hostage taking and the rest is history. For over four hundred days Americans tied ribbons around their trees in hopes that the hostages would be released. All we heard about was the evilness of IRAN AND IRANIANS. Those neighbors we loved now were becoming enemies because most cannot separate the acts of a government from its people. We never learned about the other

side of this crisis and what brought the Iran, once a thriving nonsecular country to its knees. A country modern in many ways was now being controlled by a theocratic government.

This is what makes this book a must read. In this book, you will learn why the Shah of Iran fell. You will learn the truths and nontruths of what took place and what was meant by the Shah's words a few days prior to his death "You will soon realize, that what we have just lived through was much more than a revolution, it was a total national suicide. Everything my father, myself, and the Iranian people have accomplished over fifty-seven years has been destroyed, and Iran is plunging into the "great terror." One day the people will understand their error, but it will be too late."

These words were spoken to the author of this book. Add to this the words spoken to Jimmy Carter by Ronald Reagan after he won the election. "Your greatest error was to have overturned the Shah. By doing so, you eliminated America's best ally. You have made a fierce enemy of a great country." These words were just but we can still hope that Iran will take a new direction for the sake of its people, the country and the world. Amir decided to write this book. For him it is a testimonial for the future and contains only facts, and no exaggerations. Great conspiracies and exaggerated truths are corrected and dealt with. Two chapters that attracted my attention was The Iranian Intellectuals in Berlin, specifically pages 44 and 45 ...

Did this mutual attraction of the two nations have a racial connotation?

That came later. The term arisch ('Aryan) appeared around the time that Hitler took power in 1933 and spread slowly until 1933 when the Nuremberg laws were passed. Nuremberg was the city where the Nazi party organized its conventions. The Nuremberg Laws were passed

on September 15, 1935, during the seventh convention of the party., entitled "The Reich Convention for Liberty." They were meant to keep the German race "pure" and distinguished between the "Aryan race" and the "Semitic race."

What was your status as a foreigner given these racial laws?

Back then, all the German youth of my age enlisted in the Hitlerjugend, a youth organization. As I already said, as a foreigner, I was not allowed to join at first, but later the position was reversed because I was "the best representative of the oldest Aryan nation." This happened after 1933. At the time, Iranians not only didn't suffer from any discrimination, but they received the warmest possible welcome, even those on the political left, even the extreme left. Messrs. Moshfegh Kazemi; Parviz Kazemi, a lawyer and senator; Ardalan; Kaviani, a socialist and author of the famous book Iran, a Country with no Framework nor Objective; Davoud Rajabi and Jafar Sharif-Emami; the great chemist Sheybani; Taher Ziai, the engineer and future minister of mines and industry; Guilanshah – they all studied in Germany. They came to acquire the technical and industrial know-how, which made them a thorn in the side of the other powers. None of this would have happened if Reza Shah, the builder of modern Iran, hadn't decided to provide them with grants to prepare the future and supply the country with railroads and a railway network. Much later, when I was appointed ambassador to Germany

and had the embassy rebuilt, I had the idea of decorating a wall with portraits of all former German and Iranian ambassadors since 1980. I wrote to the West German ambassadors to Iran -except Johann Smend, Hitler's ambassador. I called the ministry and was told they didn't have any pictures of Smend; they probably had decided to forget about that period. Sometime later, I found a picture of Ambassador Smend and hung it up along with the others.

The second is Chapter 9, again specifically pages 333 and 334.

In view of all the social and industrial advances the Shah accomplished, what did he consider to be the causes of the 1979 Revolution?

"I signed my death warrant," the Sovereign said, "on the day I signed a contract with an Italian oil company awarding seventy-five percent of the profits to Iran. They started by killing Enrico Mattei, the CEO of the oil company, by sabotaging his airplane. Then came a series of assassination attempts on my person. The major companies' hostility towards me when I took the lead at the OPEC and managed to raise the crude oil prices and proclaimed full Iran sovereignty over its oil industry starting 1979. The Algiers Agreements and the peace treaty I signed with Iraq, as well as my closer ties to the Arabs and Russians, were also frowned upon. The influence of the major oil companies on the Western media is what started the vast and unjust press campaign, with the BBC in the vanguard. So, they did to me exactly what they did to my father: they put an end to my political existence precisely at the fateful date of 1979."

I have read many biographies and memoirs, most of which I feel are a propaganda tool, but in reading this I felt a closeness to the emotions and turmoils of the author. I also felt the great love he has for his country of birth and the work he accomplished, and for his family an honest tribute to both.

I look forward to a reread.

SAPIENS: A Brief History of Humankind

Yuval Noah Harari

Publisher: Hapers Collins, 2015

(submitted by Davis Rahni)

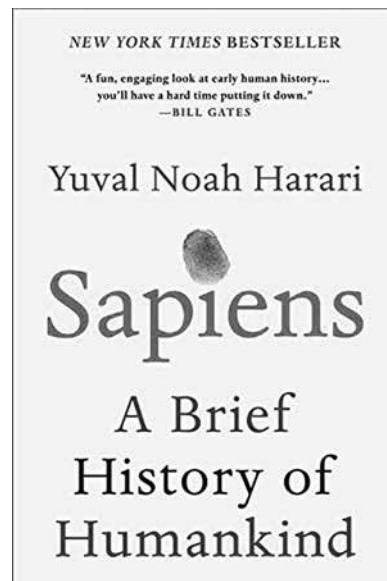
Unlike no other prior book, I have read, Sapiens has surpassed my appreciative cognizance of life, time, space, earth, flora and fauna, hominids and the various geniuses of Homo branches. The book has sold ten million copies in ten languages, and remains on myriad bestseller list including the one by New York Times.

The book begins with the Big Bang (physics followed by chemistry in a mere 400,000 years after, and then terrestrial biology 9 billion years later) and speculates on what may or may not be before 13.78 billion years ago. Fast track, the author delves into the evolution of Homo species since five million years ago, from which only of six, i.e., Homo sapiens still thrives. He then slows down to give a far more thorough narration of humans since their migratory cognizance "r-evolution" of 75,000 years ago into west Asia where today's Iran is at its center. The agricultural revolution of 12-15 thousand years ago is then followed by a number of more r-evolutions and highlighted by the medical science and technology and today's information r-evolutions.

What startled me joyously is the tact, wit, ethos and the interdisciplinary skills of the author to follow the subject in the context of human life and its purpose, and how to measure and optimize happiness. A truly impressive humanist scholar and born to a Lebanese Christian father and Jewish mother, professor Harari teaches at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Personally, I envisage this highly interdisciplinary book, from A-Z, for adoption as a textbook across the liberal arts and general education. Alternatively, it could be used as a supplement in key arts and sciences curriculums. At bare minimum, it could be assigned as a college summer reading especially for the freshman class before they arrive on campus.

Finally, both parents and their teen-aged children must read this book as I reckon it will bring them much closer to their commonality in life.

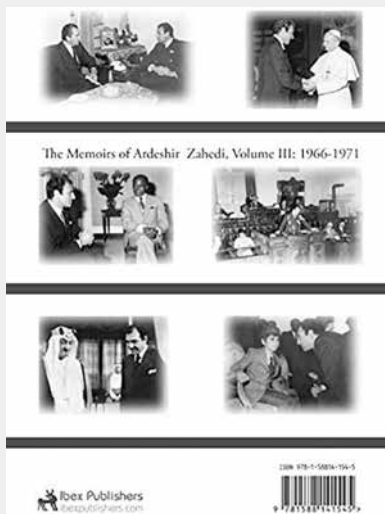


THE MEMOIRS OF Ardeshir Zahedi

Minister of Foreign Affairs

VOLUME THREE: (1966-1971)

IBEX PUBLISHERS (2021)



This volume continues to introduce us to the life path of Ardeshir Zahedi. It includes his rise to his position. It is apparent that he gained the respect and trust of the Shah, as he, by the book, had freedom to make decisions on foreign affairs, without any in depth discussions with other members of the Shah's administration. Some may see it as too much power and others may not. What I found most interesting about the book was the details of the many relationships, Iran had with a variety of countries in and out of the Middle East. One part of the book that I found to be enlightening was Mr. Ardeshir's participation in the signing of the 1968 Nuclear, Non -Proliferation Treaty. He was the designated signor. This is very suggested reading for anyone who would like to know more about what Iran once was and why it took a drastic turn in a devastating direction.

Comedy Drama Recounts Story of Persian Mythical Heroine **GOSHASB BANU**

Source: Tehran Times 06/10/21



A comedy drama telling the story of the wedding of heroine Goshasb Banu, the daughter of Persian mythical hero Rostam, went on stage at Tehran's Mehregan Theater. Somayyeh Abadeh is directing "Wedding of Banu Goshasb" written by veteran playwright Ardeshir Salehpur based on some ancient Persian texts. Goshasb Banu has swarms of suitors from Turan, China and India. Therefore, Rostam lays down only one condition: that he will agree to the one who can defeat her in a battle.

"WEDDING OF BANU GOSHASB"

by director Somayyeh Abadeh.

Abadeh had staged the play during the 25th Tehran Theater Festival, which was held in December 2020.

The play is being performed by a cast composed of Maedeh Ashuri, Zahed Barzegar, Anihita Bozorgmehr, Hadis Tasalli, Parinaz Langerudi, Saba Minui and several other actors.

PERFECTLY PARVIN

Olivia Abtahi



Books that allow us to express ourselves through a fictional character, I find to be ones for suggested reading.

In this book the author, whose mother is Argentine and dad Iranian, is one that I truly suggest to read.

Being accepted for ourselves is the need of every person, not just teens and certainly not just immigrants. Immigrant status is another characteristic we use to accept, discriminate against or use as an excuse for failure. Among other characteristics are weight, race, religion, sexual orientation etc.

But books like this provide us with a mirror. We may see our reflection as someone we like or we might see a reflection of someone who needs to rethink the way we treat each other. I think Ms. Abtahi brilliantly provides a mirror for us.

Beer in Iran

Smell of Wisdom

ALEXANDER TAMRAZ

This book is a collection of poems which reflect the wisdom of the writer on how he sees the world.

The following is a sampling.

Less Lesser

*The human beings
grow up
by doing more and more
but he himself
becomes little
and little by little
becomes less
less lesser
then goes
where?
after being
become an atom
even lesser
than atom*

*I want to be
more lesser
than atom
just little
lesser than
nothing.*

It might surprise you and then again maybe not, that beer was especially important in Iranian (Persian) history. In fact, the earliest chemical evidence of beer in the world dates to 3,500-3,100BC from the site of Godin Tepe (which is in the Fertile Crescent, the corner stones of western civilization).

Alcoholic beer remains illegal in Iran, but non-alcoholic beers are well established. One of the oldest beers in Iran is Shams. It was forced out of business due to the Iranian Revolution, but opened again forty years later, selling only non-alcoholic beer. Argo was one of the largest breweries and existed from 1925 though 1979.

In 2020 it was revived again producing non-alcoholic beer.

Donald Otten (from Heineken) was invited by Argo to go to Iran and help Argo build their recipes and production. It was the first time he was involved with non-alcoholic beer. They now have an IPA called Iranian pale ale.

Source Wikipedia



BACK HOME BREWERY

An article written by Martin Johnson ,A Modern Take on Iran’s Ancient Beer Heritage | Wine Enthusiast (www.winemag.com/2021/05/19/iran-beer-back-home), centers on a young woman Zara Tabatabai and her Brooklyn based brewery, Back Home Beer. (Great name no need to figure out what she is trying to say through the name, it is simply good old, back home beer) Her interest in starting this came from her grandfather, who was a prerevolutionary brewer in Shiraz, Iran.

Ms. Tabatabai is the daughter of Iranian immigrants and former television executive. Starting her brewery was more than a passing hobby it was personal and a way to honor her grandfather. She remembers listening to stories about her grandfather and his brewery history told by her grandmother. After one of the stories her grandmother stated she missed the taste of her husband’s product.

That was all she needed to ignite the spark. She began researching beer production and intently watched videos. She began brewing small scale. After mastering the traditional methods of brewing, Zara decided to add Middle East flavors, such a sumac. Zara believed that the beer served at Middle Eastern restaurants did not compliment the wonderful flavors of the food. Accordingly, she thought by adding the same spices into brewing she would create a unique product. And so, into the brew she added spices, fruits, and essence.

Zara’s brewery is only one of a dozen new breweries that have come about in this “brewing rebirth.”



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The Longest Poem Ever Written: Shahnameh

The Epic Book of Kings

MAHBOD KHANBOLOUKI

Ancient Origins venue on March 7, 2015



In 977 AD, a Persian poet named Ferdowsi began on a grandiose poetic journey that would take him 33 years to complete. He used ancient Persian tales which had been told from generation to generation for several millennia as the source for writing his poems about epic kings and heroes and about mythical creatures and adventures. This resulted in the creation of the epic which in Persian is called Shahnameh or translated The Book of Kings, the longest poem ever written in history. Ferdowsi's great aim was to revive the ancient Persian culture, mythology and language after the invasion of the Islamic Caliphate of the Arabs.

THE LIFE OF FERDOWSI

Ferdowsi was born in 935 AD in the city of Tus located in the modern day province called Khorasan in northeastern Iran. At this time, the Samanid dynasty had restored native Persian rule on Iranian territories as the second post-Islamic Persian empire after the eastern parts of the Islamic Caliphate had been liberated from the Arabs in 861 AD.

Ferdowsi came from a line of wealthy noble families which generation after generation inherited the title *dehqan*. The *dehqans* were among the social top class and were the leaders of communities and owners of land. By the time Persians were violently forced to become Muslims after the invasions, the *dehqans* converted to Islam not for following Islam itself, but mainly for using their social authority for preserving the ancient Zoroastrian culture of Persia. For centuries, the *dehqans* were the preservers of the traditional customs, culture and literature of ancient Persia and hence acted as fundamental factors for the survival of Iranian identity. *Dehqans* were often able to afford the best education which resulted in Ferdowsi gaining considerable knowledge in literature. He was closely tied to the ancient Persian culture and studied ancient scripts which inspired his poetry.

In the year 977 AD, a shift in power had been initiated in Persia with the end of the Samanid dynasty and the beginning of the Ghaznavid dynasty. Ferdowsi became a poet of the Ghaznavid royal court and due to the exquisite and superb quality of the poems that he wrote, the king entitled him Ferdowsi. This name derives from the Persian word *pardisi* or *fardisi* which means from paradise.

With the new title given to him by the king, he began writing Shahnameh which would become the greatest poetic journey of his life and one of the greatest works of poetry in the world.

Prior to writing Shahnameh, Ferdowsi collected literary material from ancient sources such as from the middle Persian Pahlavi work named *Khodaynameh*, which translates to Book of God in English. The documentation of this ancient work was ordered by the Sassanid king Anushiravan and was based on historical facts documented by Zoroastrian priests as well as legendary accounts of mythical eras written in Avesta, the holy book of the Zoroastrian religion. Some ancient sources has stated that the Persian literary tradition of recording royal events and mythical stories has existed at least from the time of the Achaemenid era in the 6th century B.C, although the stories are thousands of years older and have been transferred verbally for generations. Many of the stories are very similar to ancient Indo-Iranian/Aryan stories, indicating the close connection of Persians to their Aryan heritage.

Ferdowsi divided the timeline of Shahnameh into three major periods; the mythical era, the heroic era and the historical era.

A very brief description of each era follows: The mythical era comprises of poems about the creation of the world and of the first man named Keyumars who became the first king. Keyumars's grandson Hushang discovered fire and established the yearly fire festival *Sadeh*. Jamshid the shepherd, who became a great king in the favor of God named Ahura Mazda, ruled the lands with prosperity and struck down the evil demons named *deev*.

Jamshid also established the Persian New Year *Nowruz* meaning New Day which is celebrated on 20 March every year. The child of the devil *Ahriman*, the evil serpent man *Zahhak*, killed Jamshid and became the new king. *Ahriman* kissed *Zahhak's* shoulders and out of his shoulders, two snakes grew out. *Zahhak* tried to cut off the snakes but they always grew out again, he was cursed.

The snakes required to be fed with fresh brains of young boys every day. *Zahhak* therefore fulfilled their requests in fear of being killed by the snakes. This led to the uprising of the blacksmith *Kaveh* who refused to sacrifice his last son.

Kaveh started the uprising and made a banner out of his leather apron by putting it on top of a spearhead. With the help of the people and a prince named *Fereydun* who eventually became king, they captured *Zahhak* and chained him to mount *Damavand* in northern Iran, the highest volcano in all of Asia and the highest peak in the Middle East.

There are stories about king *Fereydun* and his three sons *Salm*, *Tur* and the youngest *Iraj*. They inherited the three corners of the world after their father died and *Iraj* inherited the empire



Rostam the hero fighting the Dragon in the Seven Quests of Rostam.
Iranian miniature illustration from Shahnameh

of Persia. This resulted in jealousy of the two older brothers towards their younger brother Iraj and stories about epic wars between the brothers are told. Iraj was killed by Tur and Iraj's grandson Manuchehr became the king of Persia to avenge his grandfather's death.

The heroic era comprises of poems about legendary love stories, epic heroes and battles. A man named Sam, who was the fellow companion of king Manuchehr, became the father of a child who he named Zal.

Zal was born albino with white hair and pale skin. Manuchehr thought the child was demonic and Zal was therefore rejected as an infant and put on top of mount Damavand to die. Luckily, the loving and wise mythical bird Simorgh who nested in the mountain, found Zal and nourished him. Simorgh had experienced three ancient world destructions from which she harbored the knowledge of all ages.

When Zal had grown up, he left the custody of Simorgh. Simorgh gave him three golden feathers from her wing which Zal could burn in a sacred fire whenever he needed help from Simorgh. Zal met his love, princess Rudabeh and she fell in love with Zal's unique features, charisma and wisdom. They eventually married and Rudabeh gave birth to a boy who they named Rostam. Rostam grew up to become the greatest hero of Persia.

Rostam went on seven adventures called the Seven Quests of Rostam, where he together with his loyal and strong horse Rakhsh fought battles with the White demon, The beautiful Sorceress, the Dragon, the Lion and various kings. Rostam found his love, princess Tahmineh and they became parents to a boy named Sohrab.

Rostam gave Sohrab a bracelet as a gift when he was an infant before leaving him and Tahmineh. Sohrab grew up without ever seeing Rostam until several years later when the armies of Rostam and Sohrab met in a battle. Father and son did not know each other until Rostam fatally wounded Sohrab in a duel.

It was then, while Sohrab was dying in his arms, that Rostam noticed the bracelet around Sohrab's neck. Rostam then tragically realized that he had killed his own son. The legendary love story is also told about Bijan, the son of a famous knight from Persia and Manijeh, the princess of an empire called Turan in modern day Central Asia, which mythologically was the greatest enemy of Persia. This love story ultimately resulted

in an epic war between the two empires.

The historical era comprises of historical accounts starting from the dynasty of the Parthian kings after Iranian territories had been freed from Greek and Macedonian rulers. A lot of the focus is put on the succeeding dynasty of the Sassanid emperors and the stories regarding this dynasty are exquisitely told. Shahnameh ends with the Islamic Arab conquest of Persia in 651 AD. Ferdowsi poetically described this event as a major disaster over what he calls the arrival of "the army of darkness".

THE LEGACY OF FERDOWSI

After 33 years at the age of 71, Ferdowsi finished the writing of Shahnameh on 8 March 1010 AD and in 1020 AD, Ferdowsi died at the age of 82. He was buried in his birth place Tus. Shahnameh contains 62 stories, 990 chapters and 60 000 rhyming couplets which makes it the longest poem in the history of literature, a work seven times longer than the Illiad of Homer. Ferdowsi wrote his work entirely in classical Persian which is still spoken today by Iranians and people related to the Iranian culture in countries once part of Greater Iran. It was a linguistic renaissance considering that the Persian language was officially banned in Persia by the Arab rulers for almost 200 years.

Today, Shahnameh is a common book in Iranian households and it is the national epic of the Persian speaking world. The epic stories of this masterpiece influenced the literature of Asia for centuries and the stories are enthusiastically told to this day. The philosophical message of Shahnameh is that since the world is transient and everyone is merely a passerby, one is wise enough to avoid cruelty, lying and other evil deeds.

Instead one should strive for justice, truth and order which brings happiness, ease and honor. Ferdowsi put lifelong dedication and sacrificed a lot to complete his work. Ferdowsi's writing style is that of a superb poet's. His epic language is rich, moving and lavish so that it truly enchants the reader. He is remembered as the greatest of the Persian poets who with the power of the pen rescued and revived the Persian language, culture and heritage.

Senator Mehdi Farrokh, as governor of Khorasan province in northeast Iran, inaugurates honoring ceremonies in celebration of Ferdowsi at his Mausoleum in Tus, Khorasan in 1956 (Source: Kavehfarrokh.com). The Mausoleum itself was built in the 1930s.

Below are the words of Sohrab spoken to Rostam as he did not know he was dying in the arms of his father. From Shahnameh – The Persian Book of Kings, translated by Dick Davis:

*I brought this on myself, this is from me,
And Fate has merely handed you the key
To my brief life, not you but heaven's vault –
Which raised me and then killed me – is at fault.
Love for my father led me here to die.
My mother gave me signs to know him by,
And you could be a fish within the sea,
Or pitch black, lost in night's obscurity,
Or be a star in heaven's endless space,
Or vanish from the earth and leave no trace,
But still my father, when he knows I'm dead,
Will bring down condign vengeance on your head.
One from this noble land will take this sign
To Rostam's hands, and tell him it was mine,
And say I sought him always, far and wide,
And that at last, in seeking him, I died.*

Some time ago (before the prevalence of the corona pandemic) there was a gathering at the house of the renowned Iranian painter Nasser Ovissi. The guest of honor was Kabir Helminsk¹, and a number of his followers were also in attendance. The party was thrown in order to celebrate Rumi, the 12th century great poet of Persian expression. Nasser who is a longtime friend invited me to join the gathering and wanted me to say a few words about Rumi and his poetry too. I delightfully accepted the invitation and it was a quite unforgettable night. I talked for a few minutes at the opening of the celebration and also recited some verses of one of Rumi's most famous ghazals (lyric poems) along with the English translation of those verses. What follows is the text of my remarks made that night accompanied by the original version of the ghazal and its translation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I greet everybody and welcome all of you to this wonderful gathering.

My name is Ardeshir Lotfalian, a lover of poetry and art and longtime friend of Mr. Ovissi, our gracious host and a renowned artist.

We are gathered tonight to celebrate Jalaeddin Mohammad, one the most extraordinary genius's mankind has ever produced. In Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and the Indian sub-continent they call him Mowlavi, Mowlana, or Our Lord, but in the United states and most of the Western countries he is better known as "Rumi." The reason is that he lived his entire adult life in Konya, a part of today's Turkey that the people in the East used to call "Rome", because for many centuries it was under the domination of the Roman empire. Rumi died in 1273 in Konya when he was 67 years old. people of all faiths there organized together a splendid funeral for him so much he was adored and loved by everybody because of his respect for religious freedom and despising of all forms of bigotry. In the 17th century a magnificent mausoleum was erected over Rumi's tomb in Konya by the order of Sultan Salim, the Ottoman Caliph of the time. Today people from all over the world go to Konya on pilgrimage to the mausoleum and for paying their respect to Rumi.

In Iran and the surrounding countries Rumi has been well known and deeply venerated for centuries as a charismatic philosopher, a learned Sufi and a great poet of Persian expression But in the United

Introductory Remarks for a Gathering to Celebrate

RUMI

Ardeshir Lotfalian



States, where Rumi has lately become the most popular poet, his fame is new and goes back only a few decades in time. Nowadays in American universities there are classes for analyzing his poems and explaining his thoughts and philosophy. Cultural groups and associations organize speeches on his poems and about the message his poetry conveys. Some of the most famous singers and Hollywood stars such as Madonna have composed and sang songs inspired by Rumi's poems. In the past three decades, there has been a myriad of publications on Rumi in the United States, but one book containing a number of his selected poems written in plain American English by Colman Barks, former professor of Georgia University has constantly figured among the best sellers for more than twenty years.

Robertson Smith in the late 19th

century was a distinguished professor at Cambridge University in England. One day a student by the name of Reynolds Nicholson consulted him on the subject of his dissertation. He advised the young man to choose the collection of Rumi's ghazals or lyric poems called the Great Divan of Shams Tabrizi for that purpose. Nicholson put in execution his professor's advice, but was so much absorbed and fascinated by Rumi, that he devoted his entire life to the translation of Rumi's colossal book of Masnavi and his selected ghazals into literary English. Interestingly enough, in 1976, Robert Bly, distinguished American poet and university professor gave a copy of Nicholson's scholarly translation of Rumi's poems to his student Colman Barks and recommended him to "liberate those poems from their literary cages" by putting them in plain American English, comprehensible for an average American reader. Complying with his professor's advice, Barks spent seven years, diving in the roaring ocean of Rumi's poems. He prepared a volume of selected poems in free style and plain English prose without having initially any intention to publishing them. But he finally sent a copy of his work to Harper Collins, the famous American publisher and the work was consequently printed. The book became an amazing instant success and more than 500, 000 copies of its different editions so far have been sold. Encouraged and emboldened by this experience, Barks embarked on more works and studies on Rumi in a way that diving more and more into Rumi's poetry and philosophy became the main vocation of his life. Barks believes that some of the thoughts expressed in Rumi's poetry resonate strongly with Americans. For example, according to him, Rumi's raising the intriguing question of where we come from and toward where are heading to, wonderfully relates to many Americans of spiritual inclination. Of course, Introducing Rumi's poems and philosophy to the American people is not limited to Colman Barks. A vast series of other books and publications dealing with the same subject has become available in the American book market in recent decades.

Some people associate the great fascination of Americans with Rumi to their falling in love with the Beatles in the 1960s. In the internet, the number of hits on the word "Rumi" has surpassed the two million thresholds. His image can be seen imprinted on calendars, tee shirts and



coffee cups in different places.

Other pundits opine that after the 9/11 attacks, Rumi played the role of a bridge between more enlightened Americans and Muslims in general. Yet others refer to the German poet Hans Minek's assertion that "Rumi's poetry is the only remaining hope in the dark era in which our lives are going on." Some literary experts believe that Rumi is the greatest poet the human race has ever produced to this date. For example, Henry Masset, a French scholar of Iranian studies says: "While we can find equivalents for some of the greatest Iranian poets such as Saadi, Hafez and Ferdowsi in other cultures, Rumi is unique and no one of his stature can be found in any other language."

I hope that you have not been tired by this short introductory note. Fortunately, tonight we have a great Rumi expert with us in the person of Mr. Kabir Helminski who has written and spoken profusely about Rumi. It will be a privilege to hear what he has to say tonight. I am going to finish my talk by reciting a few verses of one of Rumi's famous lyric poems accompanied by its English translation.

Thank you

بنمای رخ که باغ و گلستانم آرزوست
بگشای لب که قند فراوانم آرزوست
Show me your face for orchard and rose

*garden are what I desire.
Open your lips for sugar in plenty is what I desire.*

گفتی به ناز بیش مرنجان مرا برو
آن گفتنت که بیش مرنجانم آرزوست
*"Vex me no more, go away;" you said capriciously.
That saying of yours, "Vex me no more;" is what I desire.*

بالله که شهر بی تو مرا حبس می شود
آوارگی به کوه و بیابانم آرزوست
By God, without you the city is a prison to me.

Wandering on mountain and in deserts is what I desire.

یک دست جام باده و یک دست زلف یار
رقصی چنین میانه میدانم آرزوست
In one hand a wine cup, in the other a curl of the beloved's hair dancing like that in the public square is what I desire.

زین خلق پرشکایت گریان شدم ملول
شیر خدا و رستم دستانم آرزوست
*My heart is weary of these weeping and whining people.
The Lion of God² and Rostam³, son of Dastan⁴, are what I desire.*

دی شیخ با چراغ همی گشت گرد شهر
کز دیو و دد ملولم و انسانم آرزوست
*Last night the master was roaming about the city with a lantern,
Shouting "I am tired of devils and beasts, and finding a man is what I desire."*

گفتند یافت می نشود جستہ ایم ما
گفت آنکه یافت می نشود آنم آرزوست
*"He is not to be found, we have sought," They responded.
"The very one who cannot be found is whom I desire," he said.*

PHILANTHROPISTS DONATE \$1.4B TO CONSTRUCT SCHOOLS



A school in Izeh, Iran with primitive conditions

Over the past year (March 2020-March 2021), some 50 percent of the country's schools have been constructed either entirely charitable or in partnership with the government and charities, Mehrollah Rakhshanimehr, director of the Organization for Development, Renovation, and Equipping Schools, has said. Over the past year, a sum of 30 trillion rials (about \$700 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been allocated to school construction and renovation by the benefactors, he explained. "Brick-by-brick" national plan has so far collected 80 billion rials (about \$2 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials), Rakhshanimehr further stated.

The plan started early last year and was highly welcome by benevolent people, aiming to encourage people to donate money for building schools in deprived areas of the country, he added.

Rakhshanimehr said in August 2020 that some 30 percent of the country's schools have been constructed by school-building benefactors; there are 450 school-building charities in Iran. Iran has many school-building benefactors amounting to 650,000 people inside and 1,000 people outside the country.

A total of 36 trillion rials (nearly \$857 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) has been allocated to renovate the schools nationwide over the past 8 years, Seyed Mohammad-Ali Afshani, former head of the Organization for Development, Renovation, and Equipping Schools, said on Saturday.

Tehran Times, 07/08/21

1. Kabir Helminski is co-director, with his wife, Camille Helminski, of the Threshold Society, a nonprofit organization dedicated to sharing the knowledge and practice of Sufism. He is the author of Living Presence and the translator of four volumes of Rumi's poetry, including Love Is a Stranger and Rumi: Daylight.(Google)

2. The Lion of God" is the epithet used for Ali the first Shi'ite Imam.

3. The principal hero and protagonist of the Shahnameh (The Book of Kings) the monumental epic in Persian verse created by Ferdowsi, the Iranian renowned poet, born in 935 and died in 1020-1026.

4. "Dastan" was the epithet of Zal, Rostam's father.

The Story of Hāfez's Eternal Resting Place

Part one

Nasser Kanani (Berlin)

Hāfez died around 791 A.H.¹ (1389/1390 A.D.). There is no consensus of opinion as to the exact date of his death; some authorities hold the view that he died as early as 1384, whilst others prolong his life till 1393. Hāfez allegedly made a last will determining the ceremony of his own funeral. The following poem ascribed to him is supposed to be his testament:

من از رز به مستی چو گردهم هلاک
به آئین مستان بریدم به خاک
به آب خرابات غسلم دهید
پس آنگاه بر دوش مستم نهید
به تابوتی از چوب تاکم کنید
به راه خرابات خاکم کنید
مویزید بر گور من جز شراب
میارید در ماتم جز رباب
مبادا عزیزان که در مرگ من
بنالد بجز مطرب و چنگ زن
تو خود حافظا سر زمستی متاب
که سلطان نخواهد خراج از خراب

*If toping be true cause of my demise,
Then bring me to my grave in toper's
guise.*

*My corse with tavern-water let them lave;
On toper's shoulder bear me to the grave.
In vine-wood casket make my last abode,
And put my grave beside the tavern road.
With ruby wine let them my dust allay,
And for sole mourning rite the rebeck play.
And, when I die—this is my testament—
Let only mime or minstrel make lament.
But thou, Hafiz, from wine turn not away;
Sultans no impost on the drunken lay.²*

The demise of the poet triggered a debate whether his body might be given the rites of burial. The orthodox clergy, who had always opposed the free spiritedness of Hāfez and branded him as a heretic, objected to his being buried in a Muslim cemetery. The objection was also supported by poet's worldly enemies and detractors. As the story goes the people of Shiraz, however, strongly refused to accept the verdict. As a result an atmosphere of serious conflict arose. To resolve the controversy, it was agreed on an augury being taken from Hāfez's poetry to decide the matter. To this end his poems were divided into couplets, and a young boy was

asked to draw one of them.³ The following verse was the result of the procedure, a tongue-in-cheek response from Hāfez to the orthodox clergy:

قدم درین مدار از جنازه حافظ
که گر چه غرق گناه است میرود به بهشت

The following three English translations of this verse were made over a period of hundred years, 1802, 1845 and 1920, respectively:

Oh! Turn not your steps from the obsequies of Hafez,

For tho' immersed in sin, he will enter into heaven.⁴

Withhold not thou thy foot from the bier of Hafiz!

Though he be sunk in sin, his soul rises to Paradise.⁵

Withhold not thy footsteps from the bier of Háfiz,

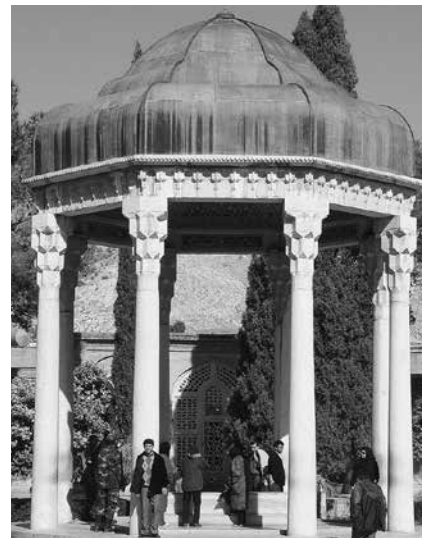
For, though he is immersed in sin, he will go to Paradise!⁶

Thus, Hāfez received an honorable religious burial and his body was buried at the foot of a cypress tree that he himself had planted. Thousands attended his funeral in the rose-gardens of Mossallā⁷, a promenade on the banks of the Roknābād River. The waters of this river running from mountains to Shiraz reached the vicinity of his final resting place. The poet's tomb was surrounded by a garden of roses, narcissi and violets. During the following centuries the shrine of Hāfez became again and again a victim of the ravages of time and often had to be restored. This story is being told in the following.

SULTAN BĀBUR

When, some sixty years after Hāfez's death, Sultan Bābur (reign: 1449-1457), a great-grandson of Timur, conquered Shiraz, he decided to beautify his shrine. In 1452, a small dome-like structure was erected in the Mossallā Gardens and an oblong block of stone, on which two songs of Hāfez were carved, marked the grave-stone. Sultan Bābur honored the spot by building a chapel in memorial of the poet.

The first European who visited the



tomb of Hāfez and wrote about it was the Italian scholar and nobleman Pietro Della Valle (1586-1652). In summer 1621 he arrived in Shiraz and on July 27 of that year he wrote a letter from the Gardens of Shiraz (Lettera XVI, Dai giardini di Sciraz, del 27 di Luglio), in which he described his visit to the tomb of Hāfez:

“On July 1, I went alongside a lengthy and beautiful route, which led to the shrine of Chogia⁸ Hafiz, the celebrated Persian poet. The entire poetry collection of this poet consists of lyric poems. His poetry is highly admired and keeps changing hands like that of our famous Petrarch. The first thing the visitor perceives in the spacious and ornate garden is a small temple covered by a cupola, under which the tomb of the poet is located, as well as a marble arch, on which scripts are engraved. The poet's name is written on the gravestone. I copied it, but I shall not reproduce it here since the language and the characters are foreign to us. The whole place has been created solely for the poet although there are other gravestones belonging to less noble people.”⁹

Elsewhere¹⁰ Della Valle quoted the following four lines, which he called “a noi troppo strano” (too strange to us), as the most prominent Epitaph containing the name of Hāfez”

چراغ اهل معنی خواجه حافظ
که شمعی بود از نور تجلی
جود در خاک مصلی ساخت منزل
بجو تاریخش خاک مصلی

Khājah Háfiz, the spiritual lamp of the learned and devout,

Was brightly illumined by divine splendour;

As he took up his abode in the earth of

Mosella;

Therefore seek the date of that event in the "Earth of Mosella."¹¹

The above poem by an anonymous Persian poet was engraved on Hāfez's tombstone. It is a chronogram that reveals the year of Hāfez's death if deciphered properly. The last line of the poem contains the two key words "Earth of Mosella" (خاک مصلى). The individual Persian letters possess certain values in the Arabic Abjad numeral system.¹² The sum of the values of خاک مصلى gives the year of Hāfez's death as 791 A.H. which corresponds to 1389/90 A.D.

Letter	خ	ا	ک	م	ص	ل	ی
Value	600	1	20	40	90	30	10

The next European who visited the shrine of Hāfez was the French gem merchant and traveler Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (1605-1689). He undertook his first trip to Persia in 1665 and upon visiting the tomb of the poet, he noted:

"About a quarter of a league [≈ 5.6 kilometers] from the City, toward the West, is to be seen a Church-yard encompassed with Walls; in the middle whereof, looking toward Mecca, stands a Monument very much frequented by the Dervis [dervish]¹³, and other devout people, who say their Prayers there, it being the Sepulcher of Hougia [Khājah] Hafiz, for whom they have a very great veneration.

The year of his decease is set down upon his Tomb; being in the year 1381: and he purchas'd that great esteem among the Persians, for having compos'd a great Book of Morality, and for that he was also one of the best Poets of his time. He has left one great Poem behind him in the praise of good Wine; which has caus'd many to aver, that Hougia Hafiz was no good Mussulman, in regard he has so highly prais'd a thing which is so strictly forbid'n by the Law of Mahomet."¹⁴

Twenty years later, in 1685, a German naturalist, physician and explorer by the name of Engelbert Kaempfer (1651-1716)



Fig. 1: Mossalla Gardens and the tomb Hafez around 1685¹⁵

visited the tomb of Hāfez. He not only wrote down his impressions, but also produced a painstakingly precise drawing of the Mossallā Gardens, which showed interesting features of the old tomb (Fig. 1).

Kaempfer cited also the Persian chronogram engraved on Hāfez's tombstone and provided its Latin transcription (Fig. 2). In addition, he explained how the specific numbers of the letters added up reveal the year of Hāfez's death.

SHAH ABBĀS

Shah Abbās I, the most famous ruler of the Safavid dynasty, ordered to restore the shrine of Hāfez during his reign that lasted from 1587 to 1629. He strongly believed he was ordered to do so by omens in Hāfez's poetry. The graveyard was called henceforth Hāfezieyh.¹⁶

NĀDER SHAH

Further restoration works on Hāfez's shrine were carried out at the behest of Nāder Shah, the founder of the Afsharid dynasty, who ruled over Persia from 1736 to 1796. On the occasion of his being at Shiraz he visited Hāfez's tomb and when he opened a copy of his Divān (the collection of Hāfez's poetry), which was kept there for inspection, he found a passage so applicable to his own case that he decided to repair and embellish the whole place.

KARIM KHĀN

The major reconstruction of Hāfez's shrine, which was falling to decay, was undertaken during the reign of Karim



Fig. 3: Hafezieyh reconstructed by Karim Khān in 1773¹⁷

Khān (1751-1779), the founder of the Zand dynasty, who preferred the title Vakil (Representative of the People) to that of Shah. After making Shiraz his capital in 1762, he ordered in 1773 the erection of a four-columned memorial in the Mossallā district with two buildings constructed at the east and west end leaving thus the north and south sides open. As a result the garden was split into two regions, with the orange grove (Nārenjestān) in the front and the cemetery (Gurestān) in the back. The actual tomb was outside of the structure, in the middle of the cemetery (Fig. 3).

On the order of Karim Khān the old tombstone was removed and replaced by a new one made of marble with the dimensions of 40 cm × 80 cm × 266 cm (Fig. 4).

On the marble tombstone, which has remained undamaged until to-day, two poems (ghazal) of Hāfez were inscribed in nasta'liq¹⁸ style by the celebrated calligrapher Hāji Āqassi Beyg Afshār Āzarbāijani¹⁹ The ghazal beginning with "مژده وصل تو" was inscribed in the center panel under an Arabic phrase, and the second ghazal beginning with "ای دل غلام" on the margin around the first one. The Persian chronogram revealing the year of Hāfez's death was inscribed on the lower corner of the gravestone.

Hāfez's shrine constructed by Karim Khān was visited and described by many European travelers who explored the territory of Persia in the following centuries. Several of them are mentioned below in chronological order. According to some of the authors the tomb of Hāfez was regularly frequented by wandering dervishes who, while reading and singing the verses of the poet, executed certain ritual actions.

In 1786 an English orientalist and army officer by the name of William Francklin (1763-1839) made a tour through Persia and resided for eight months at Shiraz. He visited the tomb of Hāfez and provided a detailed description of the construction works. Below is given an excerpt of his account:

"The tomb of the celebrated and deservedly admired Hafiz, one of the most



Fig. 2: Persian chronogram engraved on Hafez's tombstone reproduced by E. Kaempfer

famous of the Persian poets, stands about two miles distant from the city walls; here the late Vakeel Kerim Khān has erected a most elegant Ivān²⁰ or hall, with apartments adjoining: no cost has been spared to render it agreeable: it stands in the middle of a large garden; in front of the apartments is a stone reservoir, in the center of which is a fountain:—in the garden are many cypress trees of extraordinary size and beauty, as well as of great antiquity. Under the shade of these trees is the tomb of the poet Mahōmed Shems ad deen Hāfiz, of fine white marble from Tauris [Tabriz], eight feet in length and four in breadth: this was built by order of Kerim Khan, and covers the original one: on the top and sides of the tomb are select pieces from the poet's own works, most beautifully cut in the Persian Nustāleek character.

During the spring and summer seasons, the inhabitants visit here, and amuse themselves with smoking, playing at chess, and other games, reading also the works of Hafiz, who is in greater esteem with them than any other of their poets, and they venerate him almost to adoration, never speaking of him but in the highest terms of rapture and enthusiasm: a most elegant copy of his works is kept upon the tomb for the purpose, and the inspection of all who go there. The principal youth of the city assemble here, and shew every possible mark of respect for their favourite poet, making plentiful libations of the delicious wine of Shiraz to his memory.

Close by the garden runs the stream of Roknabad, celebrated in the works of Hafiz; this, however, is now dwindled into a small rivulet, which takes its source from the mountains to the N. E. The water is clear and sweet, and in that respect deserves the fame it has obtained; it is held in great estimation by the modern Persians, who attribute medicinal qualities to it.²¹

In 1807 Edward Scott Waring (1783-1821), an English officer working as a Bengal civil servant, visited the tomb of Hāfiz and described it as follows:

“The tomb of this celebrated poet is of white marble, built by the munificence of the Vakeel [Karim Khān], and is situated in a small garden called the Hafizeeh. On the tablet are two of his odes, very beautifully cut.”²²

In 1808 the British historian and diplomat Sir John Malcolm (1769-1833) paid a visit to the shrine of Hāfiz and

noted thereafter:

“... his tomb is the constant resort of the young and the gay, as well as the aged. A fine copy of his Works is kept here, and is consulted as oracular by his admirers.”²³

In 1808 the British traveler and man of letters James Morier (1780-1849) visited the tomb of Hāfiz. Below is an excerpt of his account:

“There are several mausolea in Shiraz; the most distinguished of those without the walls is that of Hafiz, the most favourite of Persian poets. This monument also, in its present state at least, is alike the work of Kerim Khan. It is placed in the court of a pleasure-house, which marks the spot frequented by the poet.

The building extends across an enclosure: so that the front of it, which looks towards the city, has a small court before it, and the back has another. In the centre is an open vestibule, supported by four marble columns, opening on each side into neat apartments. The tomb of Hafiz is placed in the back court, at the foot of one of the cypress-trees, which he planted with his own hands.

It is a parallelogram with a projecting base, and its superficies is carved in the most exquisite manner. One of the odes of the poet is engraved upon it, and the artist has succeeded so well, that the letters seem rather to have been formed with the finest pen than sculptured by a hard chisel. The whole is of the diaphanous marble of Tabriz, in colour a combination of light greens, with here and there veins of red and sometimes of blue. This is a place of great resort for the Persians, who go there to smoke kaleoons [water

pipe], drink coffee, and recite verses.”²⁴

In 1811 the British linguist and diplomat Sir Gore Ouseley (1770-1844) visited the shrine of Hāfiz and gave the following account of the status of his mausoleum:

“When I saw it [the tomb of Hāfiz] in 1811, on my way as Ambassador from King George III. to the Court of Persia, it was in excellent order. The Vakil (as he modestly called himself), Kerim Khān Zend, had directed a slab of the finest alabaster, brought from Marāghah, in Azerbaijan, to be placed over the tomb, with two odes from his Diwān, beautifully sculptured on it in bas-relief of the finest Nastaalīk characters.

He also built a neat pavilion or hall, (in which a superb copy of the poet's works is open for perusal) with apartments adjoining for the Mūllāhs and Der-vishes who attend the tomb; and he beautified the little garden, in which the poet's remains are interred, in such a manner as to render it the most delightful retreat in the vicinity of Shirāz, from which city it is about two miles distant to the N.E.

There are some other tombs in the garden, but not of any importance, except what they may derive from their propinquity to the immortal Hāfiz's ashes. In front of the apartments there is a fine fountain of pure water, and the garden is judiciously ornamented with beautiful specimens of the funereal cypress, of great size and age. The small stream of Rukni [Roknābād], so celebrated by the bard, runs close by the garden, and the temple Mosella lies about a quarter of a mile west of the tomb.”²⁵

to be continued



Fig. 4: Hafiz's alabaster tombstone from 1773 (Photograph by MEHR)

1. The migration (Arabic: Hijrah) of Prophet Mohammad from Mecca to Medina took place on 19 July 622 A.D. This event called Anno Hegirae = A.H. marks the beginning of the Islamic lunar calendar.

2. Reuben Levy: “Persian Literature: an introduction,” Oxford University Press, Humphrey Milford, London, 1923, p. 78.

3. Following this event, the practice of consulting Hāfiz's Divān as an oracle became customary among the Persian speaking people. This kind of divination for guidance is called in Persian fāl-e Hāfiz.

4. Sir John Richardson: “A Specimen of Persian Poetry,” London, 1774), p. 16.

5. Edward Singleton Holden: “Flowers from Persian Gardens: Selections from the Poems of Saadi, Hafiz, Omar Khayyām and others,” R. H. Russell, New York, 1901, p. 109.

6. Edward G. Browne: "A History of Persian Literature under Tatar Dominion (A.D. 1265-1502)," Cambridge University Press, London, 1920, p. 316.

۷. مُصَلِّي (مصلا) در آن دوران مکانی خوش آب و هوا و مصفا در شمال شهر شیراز بود که از ساحل شمالی رودخانه خرم دره تا دامنه کوه چهل مقام امتداد می یافت.

8. Khājeh (خواجه) is a Persian title and means, among other things, the scholar. Hafez was called Khājeh while he was still alive.

9. "Viaggi di Pietro della Valle, il pellegrino: La Persia," volume secondo, A spese di Biagio Deversin, Roma, MDCLIII (1653), p. 425.

10. Marion Vitalone: "Il Diario di viaggio in Persia di Pietro della Valle: un confronto con le Lettere," in "Annali di Ca' Foscari," serie occidentale/orientale, XLII, 3, 2003, pp. 205-222.

11. Sir Gore Ouseley: "Biographical Notices of Persian Poets with Critical and Explanatory Remarks," London, DCCCXLVI (1846), p. 38.

12. In this system a numerical value is assigned to each individual letter of the 28 letters of the Arabic alphabet.

13. A dervish is a person who is supposed to focus primarily on the universal values through religious practices. He often belongs to a Sufi order and as such performs ritual acts to attain the ecstatic trance. Dervishes are known for their poverty and austerity.

14. The six voyages of John Baptista Tavernier, Baron of Aubonne through Turkey, into Persia and the East-Indies, for the space of forty years," published by Dr. Daniel Cox, London, 1677, p. 250.

15. Engelbert Kaempfer: "Amœnitatum Exoticarum," (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Germany) p. 369.

۱۶. مقبره حافظ و پیرامون آن در آغاز "تکیه حافظ" نام داشت. نام "حافظیه" را برای نخستین بار شاعری به نام اوجدی بلینانی به کار برد که در دوران شاه عباس صفوی شهرت یافت و از او لقب "شاه پسند" را دریافت نمود. او در سال ۹۵۱ خورشیدی در قریه بلین کازرون زاده شد و گفته می شود که بسال ۱۰۱۸ خورشیدی در هندوستان درگذشت.

17. Drawing by the French architect Xavier Pascal Coste (1787-1879), see:

"Voyage en Perse de mm. Eugène Flandin, peintre, et Pascal Coste, architecte, entrepris par ordre de m. le ministre des affaires étrangères, d'après les instructions dressées par l'Institut," Publié sous les auspices de m. le ministre de l'intérieur, Volume I, Gide et J. Baudry, Paris, 1851.

18. Nasta'liq (نستعلیق) is traditionally the predominant style in Persian calligraphy. It was developed in Persia in the eighth and ninth centuries.

۱۹. حاجی آقاسی بیگ افشار آذربایجانی از مردم آذربایجان و سرکرده عده ای از سواران در اردوی نادرشاه بود. کربمخان به مناسبت آشنائی با او اینک خط نستعلیق را بسیار نیکو مینوشت، از او دعوت نمود تا به شیراز آمده و روی سنگ مرمر قبر حافظ کتیبه نویسی نماید.

20. Iwan (Persian: eyvān) is a rectangular hall usually vaulted, walled on three sides, with one end entirely open. (From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

21. William Francklin: "Observations made on a Tour from Bengal to Persia in the years 1786-7; with a short account of the remains of the celebrated Palace of Persepolis," Stuart and Cooper, Calcutta, MDCCCLXXXVIII (1788), pp. 36-39.

22. Edward Scott Waring: "A tour to Sheeraz, by the route of Kazeroon and Feerozabad; with various remarks on the manners, customs, laws, language, and literature of the Persians," T. Cadell and W. Davies, London, 1807, p. 37.

23. Sir John Malcolm: "Persia: A Poem with Notes," London, 1814, p. 23.

24. James Morier: "A journey through Persia, Armenia, and Asia Minor, to Constantinople, in the years 1808 and 1809; in which is included, some account of the proceedings of His Majesty's mission, under Sir Harford Jones to the court of the king of Persia." M. Carey, and Wells and Lili, Boston, 1816, pp. 111-112.

25. Sir Gore Ouseley, op. cit., p. 40-41.



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The Narrative of a Purposeful Life for an International Artist

(Hojat Amani)

the 2nd and last part

Omid Karimi

THE SIGNIFICANT ROLE OF A MASTER

One day, as I was looking at some pictures in Hojat's apartment in Tehran, an attractive black and white drawing caught my attention. I asked him some questions about the work, and he talked about a famous master behind the work. He also told me that his name is Mohammad Ibrahim Jafari and gave this work to me as a gift. Later that day, I asked him how a wise and competent master can assist you to be a creative and a successful artist:

"A wise and competent master can assist you to be a creative and successful artist and an incompetent master can deliberately or inattentively mislead you and stifle your creativity. The same is true for a friend, so I have always tried to have good friends, those who are more competent or cultivated than me.

At the same time, there is another significant point in this reciprocal relation between the person and his master, friend or the environment, and that is the readiness of the individual to learn, to change and to make use of the opportunities at hand. For example, in calligraphy, I was practicing a piece of calligraphy by Mir Emad, and I asked myself why it is so difficult for me.

Although I was practicing it with painstaking attention to details, it did not work. After a time, I met a master in calligraphy in Isfahan named Karimi who was known as the living encyclopedia of calligraphy. I told him the story and he looked at me and my works and said "the problem is with your reed pen and he cut a new one for me. This is only one example of how a good master can have a lasting effect on the quality of your work. An exact and timely advice by an experienced and knowledgeable master can save you a lot of time and energy.

THE DANGER OF COMPLACENCY

During a summer day in Azna, I visited Hojat in his studio. He was working as usual and I asked him whether he has experienced a feeling of complacency and how important it is to remain energetic, curious and creative:

Some people have more aspirations; they are not satisfied with the present situation. As Nietzsche says "I like people who are not complacent with themselves" they do their best to achieve more and ordinary things like having a job, a house or money cannot please them. As for me, there is no end in searching and seeking new goals. Great people are travelers in rowboat moving through water facing new challenges along the way, and they rarely use the word "finish". Sometimes the obstacles along the way give them clues to change their way and pursue a different or more important purpose, and sometimes they consciously go against the flow to try new ways of doing things.



THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE

As it was mentioned earlier, Hojat's family, at first, wavered between letting him go to the University of Art and making him choose a different path. However, finally, they allowed him to follow his own dream. During our discussion on the right to choose, Hojat stressed this with the following words:

Considering the arts and education, it is important to know that, we can't expect students to be mimics and parents and teachers should give students the right to choose and encourage them to break the mold and even go further and be an iconoclast.

There is a side benefit in this and that is, when you let people choose something, they themselves have to accept the consequences of their choice. In contrast, when you force them to do something, you have to accept the consequences, and if they do not succeed, people will always blame you.

Furthermore, you cannot give people choices as a teacher, a coach or a guide unless you know the choices, the alternative ways and you consider things and situation from different perspectives. A biased person who believes only in one thing and looks at world from one perspective cannot be a good guide.

DISCUSSION

This study sought to consider purpose from the point of view of a purpose-seeker himself. The findings of this study are important because they are based on ideas of a resourceful person who was resolute to study Visual Arts at a university. In spite of lack resources in the environment he lives and family reluctance to let him study the visual arts, he was brave enough to follow his dream.

The present research differs from some of the studies on

purpose. These studies (Kashdan & McKnight, 2009) in general, have focused on global self-report questionnaires and definitions of purpose. Whereas, in this study, the ideas and attitudes of a purposeful artist have been discussed through an interview to learn more about such a 'philosophical issue'.

Research findings confirm the significance of the issues discussed in this study. The interviewee stressed the importance of self-reflection and discovering one's true self. Reflection and thinking are important stepping stones for achieving one's purpose and this has been emphasized in other studies. The ability to think critically is an important trait of all members of society. That is, learning begins with metacognition, knowing one's own thoughts and reflection, which allows the individual to identify the factors that influence one's own thinking (Colley, Bilics, & Lerch, 2012). Similarly, Killon & Todnew (1991) believe that we undertake reflection, not so much to revisit the past but to guide future action."

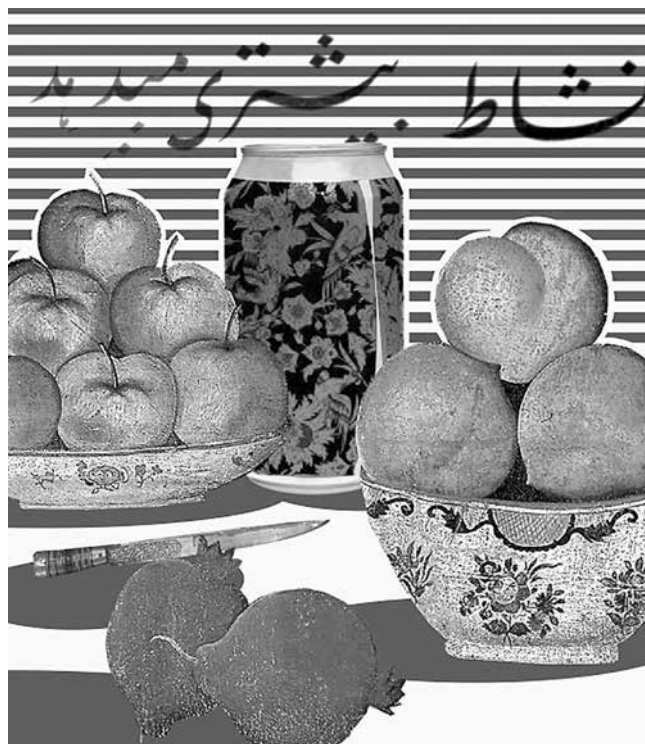
Self-transcendence was very important for the interviewee and he believes that it is inherent in the arts. The artist creates something to share with an audience, to make people aware of something or to make them reflect on an important issue. Self-transcendence is part of the sources of meaning that makes life worth living (Wong, 1998). Similarly, Erikson (1963, Cited in Wong, 2012) suggested that it is necessary for young people to identify with values that have transcendence, that is, they go beyond the family and self. Hope and optimism were significant topics in this study and research findings have confirmed their impact on achieving one's purpose. Snyder (2002) defines hope as the perceived capability to derive pathways to desired goals, and motivate oneself via agency thinking to use those pathways. In addition, he believes that high-hope people are flexible thinkers and they can find alternative routes more easily. Similarly, Wrosch and Scheier (2003) argue that, optimists in comparison with pessimists probably persist more in their pursuit of goals when confronted with challenging situations. Thus, great people make critical decisions and devote themselves to the cause they choose. In addition, Snyder (2002) believes that people with high hope often imagine multiple routes. These alternate routes become crucial when an individual encounters barriers to their goals.

That purpose is an endless journey was a central subject of this study. According to Gordon (2008), the pursuit is endless and you can't cut corners. The purpose seeker's journey is always evolving and unfolding into new chapters and directions. In a similar vein, Kashdan & McKnight (2009) state that as a life aim, purpose cannot be achieved. Instead, there are continual targets for efforts to be devoted.

Persistence was another major topic in this study which played a key role in the interviewee's success. New research is revealing more on the importance of grit and persistence. For example, the results of a research conducted by Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews and Kelly (2007) showed that perseverance is at least as important as intelligence and in order to achieve difficult goals not only talent but also the sustained and focused application of talent over time is very critical.

The significant role of a good master was another major issue discussed with Hojat. The interviewee emphasized that it is very important to learn from a competent master:

Wong (2012) noted that the development of meaning and wisdom depends on a number of factors, among them the presence of mentors, tutors, and nurturing adults, who provide personal valuations and support for dealing with ontological anxiety.



Research, for example, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) Deci & Ryan (2000) confirms the importance of giving people choices to choose from. According to SDT, in order to understand human motivation three psychological needs including competence, relatedness and autonomy are imperative. Autonomy refers to the desire to self-organize experience and behavior and to be engaged in activities which are in agreement with one's integrated sense of self. Also, autonomy concerns the experience of integration and freedom, and it is a necessary dimension of healthy human functioning (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Motivational strategies such as rewards or coercion are counterproductive and they undermine autonomy. In contrast, giving choice to individuals provides satisfaction of the need for autonomy leads to more positive outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

First of all, any depiction of people's lives is the result of our own autobiographical interpretation, the product of our vocabulary and our skill with words, the outcome of our concern to use the lives to support a particular argument or theorizing and so on (Ary, Cheser Jacobs, Sorensen & Walker, 2014). Secondly, although these findings are important with regard to purpose development, the data from one group or in one situation may have limited validity for other groups and other settings. Therefore, it is often necessary to conduct several studies in an area before attempting to formulate generalization. (Ary & et al, 2014). The same is true for this study. Further research is needed to learn more about the inner world of purposeful people before generalizing the results. Additionally, since the first language of participants was Persian, interviews were conducted in Persian and then translated into English.

The study has implications for individuals who are going to

fulfill their purposes. The study shows that selecting a purpose is one thing and persisting to achieve that is another thing. Despite obstacles and lack of resources, an individual can still have a purpose and be determined enough to fulfill it. In addition, one learns that purpose is a multifaceted subject related to critical issues such as self-reflection and persistence.

This study also has implications for educational centers. This can be achieved, first, by introducing the concept of purpose to students, especially to adolescents, because adolescence is a very constructive period that is suitable for self-reflection and then by retelling the stories of purpose seekers themselves. Through analyzing the stories of such people, students can learn about the how and why of their purposes, steps they have taken and challenges they have faced during their journey of purpose development. It is believed that purposes like values do not have necessary terminal outcomes. For some people, success means striving and not necessarily achieving. Thus, one subject that remains to be explored is whether purpose should be considered as a result-oriented or endeavor-oriented subject.

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Let us start our conversation with learning about your family, childhood and your education from elementary school to graduate school.

I was born in a mountain village near Isfahan. My family migrated to the Tehran suburbs seeking a better life before my first birthday. As I learned much later, my father suffered a devastating loss when his leased orchards and town were invaded by foreign soldiers during WWII. They took everything useful and ate anything edible in the face of the famine then. This caused a migration to the city of Qom.

My primary education was in Qom, starting from *maktab* followed by Ferdowsi primary school. During my primary education, I was the target of kindness by all school staff and was a *mobser* (class leader), and top of the class and grade during all six grades. In the final national exam, I earned the highest overall grade in the city. I attended the Hekmat High School for 7th grade. In the summer, with my father's permission, I went to Tehran, and attended Modarres High School. I supported myself by being a "milkman," working in a dairy store and tutoring. I finished at the top of my class every school year. I then happened to qualify for an elite education boarding school (Daneshsara) in Mamazan scoring highest in that year's entrance exam. The school fully funded my room and board, clothing, school supplies and incidental expenses. I happened to continue paid tutoring. One of my students was Mahin who I married seven years later.

Where did you begin your higher education and where did you complete it?

After graduating from Daneshsara, I

An Interview with **DR. HOSSEIN GHANBARI** **SCIENTIST, INVENTOR IN DRUG DISCOVERY**

By: **Shahrokh Ahkami**

Dr. Ghanbari is an exemplary person. It is my sincere pleasure to share his interesting life with our readers.

was employed by the Ministry of Agriculture and had a year's scholarship to Japan awarded by the Government of Japan. During this period, it was recommended by one of the American advisors in Iran that I try entering the American University of Beirut (AUB). AUB was one of the best universities worldwide and had allocated four scholarships annually selected from thousands of top Iranian students, selected by administering their own exams. I was again fortunate to have the highest overall score. This scholarship paid for everything including travel, living expenses, a stipend and school supplies. Prior to going to Beirut in 1966, I married one of my private students whom I had tutored seven years earlier. This marriage and scholarship to AUB changed my life and future. Again, I was at the top of each class and as a top graduating student and based on my records, I received all the awards for that year. Our oldest son was born during my freshman year. During my study at AUB, I published two scientific papers and my article for the SOS conference held in DC was judged to be the best from MENA and won a travel scholarship that paid for our flights to the US (all three of us).

What was your field of study in the US and why did you choose it?

During my 4th year at AUB, in January 1970, I was quite fortunate to get accepted to graduate school with a full research assistant fellowship which would pay all expenses and a stipend to support my family. I picked biochemistry as my field, which was rather new in that period and considered to be considerably challenging. I saw the future of science and medical science in that field. My master's research focused on beating heart cells. Based on my results, a pharmaceutical company developed a cardioactive drug which finally

ended up as an erectile dysfunction (ED) drug still marketed as Viagra. We also made "The Beating Heart Cell Culture" movie that won second prize in the International Scientific Film Festival in Prague. I got my Ph.D. in Biochemistry in 1975. By then, we had our twin children.

What was your first job after graduation?

Within days after graduation, we returned to Iran and I started as an assistant professor at Arya Mehr University of Technology (AMUT; now Sharif University). I participated in the design, planning, and establishment of Arya Mehr University of Isfahan and was honored to work there. My wife was in charge of the scholarship office of AMUT. In 1977, we returned to the US and worked with Penn State and later the University of Florida. My wife graduated from the University of Florida with an MFA and taught art there.

How many years did you work with Abbott and why did you leave?

I always had the dream of somehow helping humanity. Hence my decision in 1982 to join a multi-national mega company, Abbott. During my 10 years tenure at Abbott, I learned greatly about the medical field, both diagnostic and therapeutic. I also acquired significant experience and expertise as our team succeeded in developing and registering Lupron, which is still the hormone treatment of choice in advance prostate cancer. Similarly, we developed Survanta which is used for critical treatment of prematurely born infants who cannot breathe on their own without respirators. With only one simple treatment (lavage), the premature child can breathe normally and be saved from virtual death. Both of these drugs are more like miracles

and have saved hundreds of thousands of lives (including that of our twin grandchildren). Abbott has recognized my role to be critical in the development and registration of these two drugs. In addition to drug development, I was very active in developing diagnostic tests for mental illness and neurological disorders (MIND). In addition to these diagnostic tests that were marketed for psychiatric disorders, the Alzheimer's diagnostic test using brain tissue caught a lot of interest. We published an article in JAMA with myself as first author (in at least three languages).

This article was reflected in numerous national and local newspapers and magazines and was covered in several radio and television broadcasts. The Abbott stock price went up 11% which translated to several billion dollars. After this huge publicity, I was invited by numerous institutions and conferences for presentation. Subsequent to these, I was selected as one of the world's best Alzheimer's research scientists by the Long Island Alzheimer's Association two years in a row. For the two key patents filed by Abbott regarding these activities, Abbott compensated me with two one dollar bills. I still carry them in my wallet. For me, this was a wakeup call.

After ten years' experience at Abbott, I came to the conclusion that if I continued research independently, and was able to convince some investors to join me by funding the projects, I could be doing more good and doing better. Hence I became the first Volwiler Society member to resign from Abbott. At that time, Abbott had about 55,000 employees and a very limited number of these were honored with membership in this honor society. The members were living treasures for the company with their pictures displayed in the entrance halls of every research building. They had it made!

Everyone thought I was taking a big risk except my wife who had confidence in me and trusted me with this decision and gave me the deciding nod.

In your first discovery company, what did you do and what happened after?

The first discovery company that I founded after leaving Abbott was Molecular Geriatrics. My cofounder was a professor at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and we continued discovery in the field of Alzheimer's and other brain diseases. A prominent venture capital group in New York gave us \$25 million seed money. Be-

cause of, and due to, rapid breakthrough results in our discovery, we needed a huge sum of money to continue and register the drug. However, our primary investor group had some issues with the regulators and we were forced to continue our activities in the next company called Nymox. This company went public eventually on the NASDAQ and is still functioning.

In your new company, what did you discover and what was the outcome?

In April 1999, my son, Kasra, and I founded a new company, Panacea Pharmaceuticals. Kasra had worked with me for years. We were a very productive team providing energy and wisdom as well as new and old world approaches with essentially no disagreement! We decided to work on unmet clinical needs, starting with brain diseases and cancer.

As was expected, the investors shook their hand instead of moving their arms to sign a check. Eventually we were able to convince a few. The funding came from Japan (about \$10 million), Europe, and certainly the US. It took many years. Also, we were able to acquire some significant non-equity funding from NIH and other government and NGOs.

In 2004, our company was elected as the top incubator company of the year in the State of Maryland; a huge honor. Our diagnostic test for lung cancer was selected as a Top 10 Medical Breakthrough by *Time Magazine* in 2007. The other nine were from multibillion, multinational mega companies. Even we could not believe it at first. Also our vaccine therapy drug, first in class, with an amazing safety and efficacy profile reached Phase 1 and Phase 2 human clinical trials under FDA.

This company is now operating as Sensei Biotherapeutics and had an Initial Public Offering (IPO) of \$150 million in February 2020 on World Cancer Day. The market value of the company went up to \$600 million dollars post-IPO. Although I retired from the company in November 2019 when I turned 81 years old (I was chairman and CSO at the time), the company is still very active and has a new face with a potentially great future.

Since old habits are difficult to give up, my son, Kasra, and I started two new companies in January 2020 to try to discover treatment for auto-maladies and xeno-maladies. We are now doing the foundational work for high potential drugs for a

vast array of devastating human diseases.

In your long years of work and discovery, you have had many patents filed and issued, published hundreds of papers/chapters, as well as given numerous presentations in national and international conferences. How did you do all this in 24-hour days? How did you find the time?

Our research and discoveries happened over a long period of time and many people were involved in every step of the way. This is not the sound of one hand clapping. One thing that I need to mention is that I focus on the future and consider the past to be the past and is not that attractive for me. However, others are impressed and point them out to me. One of my assistants once asked me for copies of my published papers, book chapters, awards and patents to file for the record. She was surprised to hear that I did not have them. Then she started building the "collection." She told me later that it was a big mistake, "it seems an endless project." One interesting example was a publication that has since been referenced 1,421 times by other papers and pioneered a new field. The paper was on the probable cause of Alzheimer's disease which was published in a high impact scientific journal.

What drugs have been registered and marketed as a result of your research? What are the distinct properties of your most recent drug candidate?

I have referred to them in the previous answers and repeating them may not be that interesting for your readers. I can use this opportunity to go over my general philosophy in conducting research and discovery. When I start a certain idea as a project, I do not convince myself of the end result. I believe that even with a small chance of success, it can help the human race, and if we have to stop along the way, the process can be a head start to those that come up with smarter ideas. "Others planted the fruit we are enjoying and we plant for others to enjoy." This is not just a proverb for me. It is the work order.

I have always reminded my team that we celebrate small steps forward and any individuals' success is certainly the team's success. And about the latest cancer immunotherapy drug candidate, it is a vac-

cine therapy. Our goal is controlling out of control cells and not necessarily destroying them. Cancer cells are “self” cells. Attacking them is attacking ourselves. The question is how to handle “self” factors. Our body has evolved to not attack itself, otherwise, we would have a condition called autoimmunity which is a devastating disease.

The complicated issue was how to target a self-factor by “fooling” the immune system; first how the body differentiates self and non-self. It appears simple. But millions of events can happen from any action. The reality is to think and act like the molecules, not human personal experience. Possibilities are many and we should approach it with trial and error. It requires years of perseverance and patience. During my youth, I would try solving Khayyam’s equations for my “entertainment,” but sometimes I lost sleep followed by days of being a dazed, half-crazy boy. However, any small hint was a huge success for me. I could not solve Khayyam’s equations, but it helped me to be a humble mathematician. Yes, eventually we were able to make a vaccine that targets self-factors without adverse side-effects and test it in humans with FDA authorization. This story is awfully long.

Have you been involved in any academic work in addition to running your companies and participating in important discoveries?

After graduate school, I joined the scientific staff of several universities including Arya Mehr (Sharif) University, Pennsylvania State University and the University of Florida. Later on, I was an adjunct professor at George Washington University Medical School’s biochemistry department. I have never done research for research’s sake alone, but its eventual utility, even for my thesis research. For me, research and discovery has been that, regardless of the type of institution.

Please let us know a bit about your family; your artist spouse and your children.

My family begins with my wife, Mahin. My life has two primary chapters: pre-marriage and post-marriage. My wife is a complete and active partner in all I do. Whatever is said about me is really about us. I consider the start of my life being the

time when she trusted the future with me. She has supported me with no hesitation and no pause for 55 years now. She should be recognized as two characters: Hossein’s wife and Mahin. Aside from being my partner, she has had blazing success in her art-related profession as well as social activity and activism.

And about our children. We have three. All three were born away from the home country. We also have four adult/young adult grandchildren. Our older son, Reza, was born in Beirut when I was a freshman at AUB. He was born on our first anniversary. He graduated from Libertyville High School in Illinois, receiving all the honors presented during the honors night. Then he graduated from the University of Illinois UC with an electrical engineering degree in three years at the top of his class, again receiving all the honors and prizes including the Churchill Scholarship, a full scholarship to Cambridge University, England and a full scholarship from the Office of Naval Research to study at MIT toward a Ph.D. Reza has two daughters, 19 and 24. They have been exceptional students all along.

Our other two children are our twins, Leila (daughter) and Kasra (son). Leila has a professional degree from Georgetown University and is one of the directors at the FDA now, being one of the youngest promoted to that level. She has twins also, a boy and a girl. Both are academically in very high standing and represent their school athletically. They will be in college next year.

Kasra is two geniuses in one person. He is highly accomplished in the field of biotechnology. The *Washington Post* called him the youngest president of a biotech company valued at several hundred million dollars. He started his technical career with me and is still going strong. There is another side to him. He is very creative artistically. He is involved in different aspects of fine arts and music. He is also an avid collector of art and organizes exhibitions worldwide. He has authored several art books. My wife and I consider our children to be our biggest accomplishment in life.

Please talk about your life’s bitter and sweet memories.

I do not recall any bitter memory. Maybe I am lucky or actually set my expectations low. I do not feel entitled to anything. If anything, I have woeful memories such as not being able to share happiness and sorrows with friends and

family members or extend a helping hand when needed. Remembering that we have been away from home for 55 years, the sad memories are many.

For the sweet memories, they are mainly proud memories. One earlier one, which is unforgettable for me, is when my future wife and I went to the Ministry of Science to hear the final results of the AUB scholarship. In the designated area, a gentleman climbed a chair and read the four names with a loud voice. I had promised my future wife that my name would be first. She herself heard my name first in a heavy American accent. We walked to the sweet shop next door to celebrate. No words were exchanged between us. There was no need for it, I guess. Another sweet memory was attending the opening of my wife’s exhibition in the University of Florida gallery. In my opinion, it was a proud day for anyone loving art and loving Iran.

Finally, I proudly remember our son Reza’s valedictorian speech at the University of Illinois. Later, the university published his speech as a pamphlet. It was mesmerizing, full of hope and power for youth to build a bright future for all. “Do not bet against us,” he said.

In my professional life, the most memorable event for me was the first injection of our vaccine therapy cancer drug into a patient. I have to admit, I could not sleep at all the night before the scheduled event.

What is your message for the younger generation and how do you see the future of Iranians in and out of Iran?

My message to the younger generation is quite simple. You are humanity’s hope. All you need to do is make sure you leave the world a bit better than the one you were born into. There is no excuse. Future generations depend on you. Just remember, if I could do it, you should too. You certainly have better means and more opportunities.

The future of any country and society is in the hands of its members. I consider Iranians, in general, more gifted and intelligent, and I am certain that somehow Iranians will have a great contribution to the betterment of the world. History is full of examples. With the hope of better days for our mother country and countrymen. Thank you, indeed, for the opportunity to communicate with your readers.