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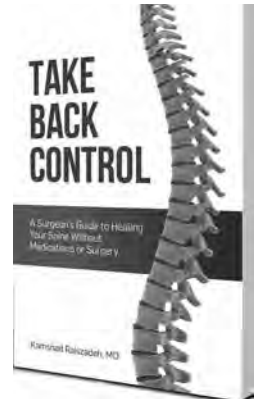
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PUBLISHED BY

PERSIAN HERITAGE, INC.

A corporation organized for cultural and literary purposes

Cover Price: \$8.00

Subscriptions: \$32.00/year (domestic);
& 52.00/year (International)

Typesetting & Layout
TALIEH PUBLICATIONS

Persian Heritage

Vol. 27, No. 105

Summer 2022

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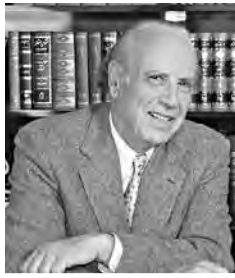
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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

One of the issues that troubles my colleagues at Persian Heritage is the timeliness of the editorial, its submission for print and the shipment of the magazine. It has always been that I choose to wait until the last moment to write the editorial hoping that there will be good news from Iran, and I can include it. Unfortunately, their patience has run out and I can no longer delay this process and hold off the publishing of the magazine. With that said not only do I not have any good news from the country, but I am concerned about the daily stories I hear, which make me worry about the Iranian citizens even more.

The international community (leaders) bring on more sanctions to crumble the regime in Iran. They constantly use the rhetoric of war and conflict to destroy a regime that is dangerous to the rest of the world. The propaganda machine in the media is hard at work and has instilled fear in the international community to believe that if there is an attack it is justified and the pieces of Iranian soil, without question will be eliminated. With the destruction of this great evil more smiles will be seen on the public at large. One of the mediums that promotes such rhetoric is a new action movie, *Top Gun*, in which Tom Cruise, the new John Wayne of America plays, the protagonist. This movie sold over a \$124 million dollars over the opening weekend. The story of the film takes you to the forces of evil that need to be destroyed in an imaginary country (the viewer may assume it is Iran.) Of course, the hero of the film gets all the praise for the destruction of such evil. This movie reminded me of the movie "Not Without My Daughter" which was in the theaters during the Iraq and Kuwait War, (referred to as the Gulf War.) The story is about a mother who escapes from so called "evil" Iran, with her young daughter, when in reality she kidnapped her daughter. At the time of the film, I wrote that America is fighting two sides of the conflict one with Saddam and the other with the forces of evil in Iran. With these two approaches the destruction of a country and its people were to be justified in so many ways.

Another film was Ben Affleck's movie about the hostage crisis in Iran and the attempt to free the hostages in Iran, during an attack by special forces. He received an Academy Award for his performance, presented from the White House by the then First Lady. This film once again reminded the public that they cannot and should not have a good perception of Iran.

It is unfortunate that the great world powers are constantly using rhetoric of war and destruction to prepare the public for an imminent attack on the innocent people of Iran; one that will destroy the country. At the same time there is another destructive power within the country whose goal is the destruction of the people; one that is leaving the poor and

innocent Iranian people hungry.

The disaster of the falling of the building in Abadan, Iran resulted in the death of 42 people. This is an example of how the forces within are on the path of destruction. Still, many workers remain under the rubble. The stench of their decomposing dead bodies has kept many search teams away from the building. The interior minister of the country has ordered that the search be stopped. The public is angered by the conspiracy of government officials with the contractors and builders who were responsible for the structure. The main individual who had a personal stake in the building is a relative of Pasdar General Shamkhani, the Secretary of the Supreme Security Council of Iran. There are many more affiliates of the government, who also had a personal stake in the building.

The media has documented that the Governor of Khuzestan and his wife have fled the province. Originally, he claimed that the problem with the construction started five to eight years ago. It was at the time when the original building inspector (Engineer) reported that the plans and construction were not safe. He did not approve it. Subsequently, however, after bribes and influence were used, the plans were approved and construction began, ignoring the engineers documented early warnings.

Three to four mayors and other public figures filled their pockets with these bribes and some of them are in jail. Floors were added to the building that were not submitted as part of the original plan of construction. People were invited to purchase and rent office space while prior to inspection. People rented with great hopes to build their businesses now are either dead or have lost everything. Believe me the old "road bandits" in Iran had more morals than the newcomers, who have no integrity or value for life.

Don't they have any shame? When they look across the Persian Gulf don't, they see the kind of buildings that are being built in neighboring countries for their people. Don't they travel and see how vested these governments are for the wellbeing of the public? Have they no shame? Are they just looking to party and have a good time and have no value for their country and countrymen? Have they no shame when they fill their pockets with the blood money of their people and make substantial amounts of cash deposits into foreign banks to secure their future and the future of their grandchildren? This all on the blood money of their people!!!

The lifestyles of some of the children and grandchildren of these government officials is unbelievable. There are many who fled Iran with billions of dollars and are now in Canada and elsewhere. One of them is Khavari (former head of the Iranian National Bank) who fled with almost 3 billion dollars.

One of his sons, Ardy Khavari's photo was on the cover of a prominent Canadian magazine and called a tycoon.

These are just a few examples of the type of corruption that has taken place through the years and drained Iran of its assets. These bandits are all connected, like a cartel. We can refer to two major disasters that have happened in the city of Abadan, one the burning of the Rex Cinema, where hundreds of people were burnt to death. This was blamed on the previous regime, while it was done by the revolutionary group. And presently there is the disaster of the falling of the Metropol building. Both resulted in public anger! Demonstrations were held! The authorities have tried to calm the masses but have not been successful.

The people are still streaming to the streets demonstrating against this corrupt government and asking for investigations. Simultaneously, with these demonstrations we see demonstrations in other parts of the country because of the government's lack of funding for retirees. Due to the outrageous inflation retirees can no longer make ends meet and are demonstrating against the authorities. The officials are increasingly nervous about the outrage of the public but blame outside influences, thus not taking responsibility.

There is no doubt that the heavy sanctions placed by the United States on Iran has impacted the inflation causing a lack of access to the most basics needs of the average Iranian. It has resulted in poverty and hunger for a large part of the population. The more people suffer the weaker their voices become to protest the outrageous acts by the authorities. For example, when a couple leaves for work in the morning they are worried about making ends meet.

This leaves them no energy or time for demonstrating or overthrowing a government that has suppressed them for so long. Keeping people hungry is an element of control. Even if the government puts a stop to all the corruption and the sanctions remain in place, billions of dollars a year could be poured into the economy to help the people with their livelihood and help put food on their table.

It is a disgrace that this government has not provided their people a means to buy bread to feed their families, the most basic food. This brings back memories of WW I when the British prevented the import of grain into Iran. As a result, over 10 million Iranians died from famine and starvation. Now this present government and its officials have turned on its people and again is starving them. The people are fed up and have no fear. They are protesting on the streets and the prisons are filled with protestors. It will get to a point where authorities can no longer put the blame on others; they will have to take responsibility.

Another danger is the continued threats to attack Iran, by the international community. Again, these threats will result in the breakup of Iran as a county and the loss of millions of lives. The Iranian government has no friends left in the Western continent. By making more enemies the attacks become more imminent. I hope that this idea of dividing Iran does not happen. I hope that an attack on Iran does not to happen. I hope that people will stop believing that an attack on Iran will mean freeing Iran and its' people from this regime! I have news for you have a look at Iran's neighboring

countries, like Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan etc! Freedom? What will this supposed freedom look like for Iran? The biggest enemy of this government is themselves. They have allowed people like President Raiisi to become the center of power in the country and it has outraged the people. This government must learn to separate religion from state. They must hand over the reign of power to the freedom lovers and to those who love Iran and want it to prosper. Should they do this they will teach Islam in a manner it deserves. Young people will have a new perception of their religion rather than being forced to observe as currently dictated.

There is so much more to say about all the suffering of Iran and its people over the past 26 years. Each and every time I write my editorial I wish to write about a prospering Iran. Each and every time I write my editorial, I hope to write about wonderful news coming from that country. Each and every time I write my editorial, I pray for my wishes to come true and not wishes unfulfilled that I take to my grave. Each and every time I write my editorial, I wish that these wishes come true and my words of happiness for Iran are a reality that I can share with my friends and dear readers. Wishing better days are ahead for Iran, the Iranian people, and the world.

Shahrokh Ghahvini

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FOUR TALENTED SISTERS

I was touched reading the poem written by a 17 year old girl who lives in Mashhad.

She is the oldest of four sisters. All of them are so kind with a sense of art (writing, painting and drawing, playwright, ...)

Life is not fair. We all know that. Melika loves to be in theatre as a player or writer. Her other sister likes to be in sports and to study as a coach! Another sister loves to paint and draw. None of these are available to them, for many reasons: they are girls, financial hardship, no future in Iran, and so on and so forth

I promised Melika to send her poem to *Persian Heritage*, and to take her a copy of the magazine with her published poem with me on my next visit. And I have to thank you for being there and for continuing what you love as a human being.

Thank you
Sara Parvinian

**National Exhibition of Handicrafts**

The 13th National Exhibition of Handicrafts and the 3rd Specialized Exhibition of Zillow, Mat, and Traditional Textiles have been held at the permanent location of the International Exhibition of Yazd, in central Iran. Iranian handicrafts are a symbol of Iranian art, culture, and civilization that have received special attention in recent years; industries that, in addition to enjoying artistic value, have increased the employment and attracted many interested people.

Yazd Exhibition of Handicrafts is an opportunity that even if you are not an artist, you will enter with pleasure and you will get acquainted with some handicrafts such as Zillow, knitting, basket weaving, embroidery and carpentry and weaving (valuable handicrafts of Yazd). Besides, you can witness part of the glory of Iranian culture and civilization.

By attending the Yazd Exhibition of Handicrafts, tourists and artists can experience traditional food, traditional bread, and livestock products, along with nomads under the "Black Tent".

According to the announcement of this year's to be "Year of Production, knowledge-based and Employment", Yazd Exhibition of Handicrafts hosts knowledge-based companies, universities, vocational schools, and creative houses in the framework of their scientific approach to experimental-practical issues of handicrafts. Handicraft artists from 30 provinces of Iran are participating in the 13th Yazd Handicrafts Exhibition and this specialized exhibition will host enthusiasts, artists, and tourists for 6 days (from 16 to 21 May 2022). (*Iran Press/ Iran News* 5/21/2022)



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Two Forest Parks to Be Created to Help Fight SDSs



Tehran Times, April 24, 2022: Two forest parks are to be built on the border of Iran and Iraq to counter sand and dust storms (SDSs), Masoud Mansour, head of the Forests, Rangelands, and Watershed Management Organization, has said. According to forecasts, 15,000 hectares of forestry will be planted in Iran, and 15,000 hectares of forestry inside Iraq.

“The construction of two 1,900-hectare parks in Iraq is planned, and we hope that it will enter the implementation phase this year, although the beginning of this project highly depends on the agreements and consultations between the two countries.

Iran is surrounded by 8 large SDS hotspots stretching to 270 million hectares mainly in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. Plant species that are adapted to desert conditions will be planted in these areas,” he explained, ISNA reported on Sunday.

Iran is surrounded by 8 large SDS hotspots stretching to 270 million hectares in neighboring and Persian Gulf countries, Ali Mohammad Tahmasebi, head of the national working group for mitigating SDSs, has said.

The SDSs phenomenon has been plaguing the country for several years and has caused problems in many provinces. According to experts, natural and human factors are involved in the occurrence and severity of this phenomenon which is mainly caused by excessive consumption of water and drying up reservoirs.

The internal dust sources are estimated at 34.6 million hectares, generating an average amount of 4.22 million tons of dust per year, about 1.460 million hectares are dried wetlands. Some 4.23 million tons of dust are raised per year, which means the loss of soil fertility will hit the agricultural sector.

Moreover, 300 million hectares in the neighboring countries are giving rise to SDSs, which transport dust into Iran. The total dust density is estimated at about 150 million tons.

In fact, the dust is raised from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan in the northeast as well as Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan in the south, southwest, and west.

In the past four years, about €370 million has been spent by the National Development Fund to combat SDSs, which had good results, but it seems that the annual credit is declining as conditions improve, Tahmasebi said.

Over 600,000 Overnight Stays in Iranian Capital During Norooz



Tehran Times April 6, 2022: Norooz travelers made over 600,000 overnight stays in Tehran province during the Persian new year holidays, the provincial tourism chief has said. Due to the coronavirus outbreak last Norooz, Tehran’s occupancy rate of accommodation centers was the lowest in its annual average, however, during this Norooz, occupancy rates topped 85 percent. The tourists and travelers stayed at authorized accommodation centers such as hotels, motels, tourist complexes, guest houses, and apartment hotels during the mentioned time.

Earlier this week, a tourism official announced that Iranians made over 50 million overnight stays during the Norooz holidays. “Based on data obtained from all provinces, a total of 50,663,296 overnight stays have been recorded across the country during Norooz holidays,” he noted.

The majority of the overnight stays were recorded in authorized accommodation centers, in the provinces of Mazandaran, Khorasan Razavi, Gilan, Hormozgan, Fars, Isfahan, Bushehr, Yazd, Khuzestan, and Tehran.

Before the holidays started was officially announced: “Norooz ceremonies and trips, if practiced under health protocols, could be beneficial for the revival of the tourism industry and handicrafts, which have been severely affected by the coronavirus pandemic in many provinces.”

Available data suggest the country’s tourism industry has suffered \$233m losses due to COVID restrictions over the past two years. “Iranian tourism facilities have incurred a loss of 69 trillion rials (\$233 million) due to the outbreak of the coronavirus over the past two years,” an official with the tourism ministry said in January. Iranians traditionally make hundreds of thousands of domestic trips during the New Year holidays, when most businesses and workplaces are closed, as are schools.

The first time Tehran is mentioned in historical accounts is in an 11th-century chronicle in which it is described as a small village north of Rey. Rey, in which signs of settlement date from 6000 BC, is often considered to be Tehran’s predecessor. It became the capital city of the Seljuk Empire in the 11th century but later declined with factional strife between different neighborhoods and the Mongol invasion of 1220.

Tehran has many to offer its visitors including Golestan Palace, Grand Bazaar, Treasury of National Jewels, National Museum of Iran, Glass & Ceramic Museum, Masoudieh Palace, Sarkis Cathedral, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, and Carpet Museum of Iran, to name a few.

GORGAN BAY REVIVAL SHOULD GATHER PACE



Tehran Times, April 26, 2022: First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber has urged related officials for speeding up the revitalization of Gorgan Bay, Miankaleh, and Gomishan wetlands in the northern Golestan province.

In the fifth meeting of the National Headquarters for Coordination and Management of Wetlands, which was held on Monday, Mokhber called on the energy minister, department of environment chief, and governor of Golestan province to take the necessary decisions as soon as possible to implement the plan and revive this natural resource.

The country's wetlands are in danger of drying up, and we must be accountable to the people if we do not take the necessary measures to preserve, and rehabilitate the wetlands, he stressed.

He further highlighted that all related organizations should take steps in this regard, with respect to President Ebrahim Raisi's order.

In this meeting, reports about the current situation, the main challenges ahead, and priority projects for the rehabilitation of Gomishan International Wetland were represented, in addition to a report on the comprehensive plan for the rehabilitation, protection, and management of this international wetland.

Covering an area of about 400 square kilometers, the Gulf of Gorgan also known as Gorgan Bay, is located near the cities of Behshahr, Gorgan, and Sari and is separated from the main water body by the Miankaleh peninsula and extends until the Ashuradeh peninsula.

Geological evidence has shown that the Gulf of Gorgan had not yet formed about 2,600 years ago when the water level of the Caspian Sea was 22 meters high, and during the Little Ice Age, at the altitude of 24 meters, the Miankaleh Peninsula began to form and the Gorgan Bay was created.

The long and narrow peninsula is 48 kilometers long, and between 1.3 and 3.2 kilometers wide, which sets apart the Gorgan Bay from the Caspian Sea. Four villages namely Ashuradeh, Qezel-e Shomali, Qezel-Mehdi, and Qavasatl are situated on the peninsula.

Miankaleh was designated a Ramsar site in 1975. Major habitats include wetlands, inter-tidal mud with sandy shores, shallow marine waters, forests, peatlands, and agricultural areas.

The ecology of Gorgan Bay is affected by the Caspian Sea, adjacent rivers, and the Miankaleh Peninsula, which play an

important role in the growth and reproduction of aquatic, bony, and cartilaginous fish and the attraction of migratory birds.

Therefore, it can be said that Miankaleh Peninsula and Gorgan Bay are environmentally and geographically inseparable.

The bay has a unique, but fragile, biodiversity and not only has valuable cartilaginous fish, white fish, and mullet but also provides a significant share of caviar needed by the country.

But this valuable water basin has been struggling with drought, as the Caspian Sea has dropped by about 25 cm over the past 5 years, which has caused more than 35 percent of Gorgan Bay to dry up.

Overgrazing, illegal hunting, fishing, deforestation, and the unplanned spread of villages are some of the challenges posing threat to the region's environment.

Passing of SHAHLA NAZERIAN, voice of Ingrid Bergman in "CASABLANCA"



Tehran Times, April 25, 2022: Iranian dubber Shahla Nazerian who lent her voice to many characters in the world's acclaimed movies has passed away due to heart failure on Monday. She was 75. She was the widow of Hossein Erfani, the renowned voice actor who died in 2018. Their daughter, Mahsa, who is also a voice actor, confirmed her mother's death in reports published in Persian news outlets.

Nazerian began her career in dubbing in 1962 by voicing child and minor characters. Due to her great talent for dubbing, Nazerian was able to convince her managers to exploit her for voicing leading characters.

She did one of her greatest performances by voicing Ingrid Bergman in director Michael Curtiz's 1942 romantic drama "Casablanca", in which Erfani lent his voice to Humphrey Bogart. Her voice was also behind dozens of characters portrayed by Sophia Loren, Diane Keaton, Faye Dunaway, Lauren Bacall, Catherine Spaak, Elizabeth Taylor, Julie Christie, Catherine Deneuve and several other actresses.

She also played roles in several Iranian TV series, including "The Story of a City", and radio dramas in "Friday Morning with You", a popular program which was aired on Fridays during the 1980s and 1990s.

SIRJAN KILIMS RENOWNED FOR Superior Quality and Vivid Colors



TehranTimes, April 26, 2022: Kilims have long been used as floor coverings mostly being made by rustic or nomadic folks of the Iranian plateau.

It is believed that Sirjan is a cradle for Kilim carpets. In fact, superior quality, innovative patterns and vivid colors have resulted in its registration as a global hub for kilims by the World Council of Handicrafts.

Kilim is a pileless floor covering handwoven in most places where pile rugs are made. The term is applied both generally and specifically, with the former use referring to virtually any rug-like fabric that does not have a pile.

According to Visit Iran, Shiriki-Pich or Suzani Kilims of Sirjan is of high importance considered as an intermediate between carpets and Kilims. It is believed that they were invented when the Afshar and Bughachi clans entered Kerman and later during the Afsharid dynasty. However, there are many theories about the naming of these Kilims.

One is that Shiriki Pich is a cover for horses which refers to its first usage. On the other hand, “Pich-Bafi” is a kind of Kilim, and “Shiriki” can refer to the type of the Shiriki knot that is double knots, or it can indicate that the product was weaved by two persons.

Like many other Kilims, they are woven with wool yarns. The loom is similar to the looms of carpets, and the technique is similar to the technique of carpet weaving. There are two primary knots for Sirjan Kilims, one is “Matn” and the other is “Abduzi”.

In these weaves, unlike other Kilims, the weft plays no role in making the patterns but it is the wraps that create them. This Kilim is rarely woven based on a premade pattern.

Sources say almost all Sirjan Kilims are unique and no two similar pieces can be found. The backgrounds are mostly cream, milky white, red, blue, and dark blue. It is possible to describe these incredible hand weaves by the word “Hessi Baf” or sensational weave, because the mood and emotions of the weavers, who are nomad women, affect even their choice of color during the production.

The motifs come in various colors. Kinds of green, yellow, pink, and blue are used to make geometric and semi-cursive motifs and motifs of fish, giraffe, and birds like the stork, sparrow, peacock, etc.

It is rare to find a Sirjan Kilim plain and without any motif. Herbal and animal pigments such as Cochineal and Vermilion worm are mixed with oxides of metals to dye the yarns. “Gol-o-Godani”, “She Koleh”, “Kuh Panj”, “Bandi Lozi”, “Kheshti” or “Ghalebi” and paisley are some of the most common motifs of Shiriki-Pich Kilims. Today, in addition to making bags, chair covers, and wall hanging, they are considered an important non-oil export of Iran due to their international popularity.

The kilims are often woven on narrow looms, and two mirror-image pieces are sewn together along the long edge to produce the completed kilim. The vertical color junctions involve a discontinuity of the wefts, the colored yarns that produce the design. At these boundaries, there are small slits in the fabric. Extremely fine kilims of silk were woven for the Safavid court (1502–1735), possibly in Kashan.

Persian carpets are sought after internationally for their delicate designs and their good quality. Among Persian carpets, particularly those of the classic period, the medallion may represent an open lotus blossom with 16 petals as seen from above, a complex star form, or a quatrefoil with pointed lobes.

A medallion carpet is any floor covering on which the decoration is dominated by a single symmetrical centerpiece, such as a star-shaped, circular, quatrefoil, or octagonal figure. The name, however, is sometimes also given to a carpet on which the decoration consists of several forms of this kind or even of rows of medallion figures.

Handmade Persian carpets are sought after internationally for their delicate designs and their good quality. They are almost expensive but they are worth every penny!

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GERMANY, A Model for Transfer to Clean Energy

By: Yusef Jalali, PhD, PE



One of the unintended consequences of the Russian war in Ukraine, is the emergence of a political consensus among the European Union (EU) countries, including its largest economy, that of Germany, to forge speedily ahead with transfer to renewable energy and reduction of fossil fuel usage.

Recently, the International Energy Agency (IEA) reported that the sum of the renewable energy budgets by governments across the world, had increased by 50% within the past 5 months, to a tune of more than \$710 billion dollars. More than half of this budget that is allocated by the advanced industrial countries, will be spent in the current year, putting these countries in-line with the net zero carbon emission trajectory by 2050.

Inside Climate News reports that the center-left government of Chancellor Olav Scholz of Germany announced in the Bundestag (federal parliament) that the only responses to energy dependency and high prices, are renewable energies and energy efficiency. Scholz added: "Our goal of achieving climate neutrality in Germany by 2045 is more important than ever."

Climate neutrality, or net zero carbon (Greenhouse Gas) emission, relates to a condition when the carbon emissions from all economic activity in a country is equal to, or less than the amount of carbon absorbed by natural processes, such as photosynthesis by plants.

Clean Energy Wire reports that, while Russia produces about 11% of the world production of fossil fuels, it exports about 15% of the world's fossil fuel exports, comprising 26% of the natural gas, 11% of the crude oil, and 18% of the coal.

On the other hand, IEA reports that for the current year, as a result of commitments by IEA member countries to gradually release a total of 120 million barrels of crude oil from their respective emergency petroleum reserves, the Russian crude oil market has thus far plummeted by about 700,000 barrels per day, and IEA projects this decline to further plummet to 3 million barrels per day in the second half of this year.

Notwithstanding the IEA projections, obviously the cash flow to the Russian war-coffer from the sales of fossil fuels have increased dramatically, as a result of the drastic fuel price hikes, not to mention

the opening of the additional non-petroleum market for the Russian fossil fuel, that is particularly eyed by clients such as China and India, looking for special deals.

Not to be biased, as a matter of fact, all of the petroleum producing countries, and all of the petroleum companies worldwide, are joyously reaping the unheard-of multi-billion-dollar profits, in the midst of this chaotic market, created by the Russian invasion and destruction of Ukraine.

Such are the so called "external costs", that weigh heavily on the backs of the downtrodden people across the world, which do not enter the economic calculations for the development of fossil fuels.

Obviously, the ravages of this war are not limited to the drastic fuel price hike, or its ripple effect on the basic needs of the people. It just seems foul and abhorrent, given the human suffering in the Ukraine war, while the fossil fuel producers, basically blackmailing the world-over, laugh all the way to the bank.

The European countries are severely dependent on the Russian fossil fuels. In aggregate, the 27 countries comprising the EU, import about a third of its fossil fuel needs from Russia. Even Germany, which in the first decade of 2000 initiated a policy of incentives for innovative development of renewable energies, nonetheless, it imported some 35% of its crude oil needs, and 55% of its demand for natural gas from Russia last year.

COALITION WITH THE GREENS:

The Green Party, or simply the

Greens, was initially forged following the German reunification in 1990 by a merger with the East-German Green Party, which was then followed by another merger with Alliance 90 in 1993. Currently, the Greens is the fastest growing political party in Germany, with the youngest membership, being anti-war with strong environmental sentiment, demanding radical and immediate solutions.

The Greens leaders, Annalena Baerbock now Germany's first ever female Foreign Minister, and Robert Habeck, the Vice Chancellor, and Minister of Economy & Climate Protection came to office amidst the COVID crisis at home, and Ukraine war abroad. The Climate Protection postfix to the Economic Ministry was deliberate,

to direct and facilitate renewable energy legislations.

Already, the Greens demonstrated a lot of resiliency by consenting to a 100 billion Euro defense budget increase, a most drastic defense policy change since WWII for Germany, and approving of military arms and equipment aid to Ukraine.

The vacated Greens leader's positions seem to befall on the Co-chairman, Omid Nouripour, 46 years old, pragmatist realpolitik of the last generation of the Greens, Iranian-born foreign policy expert, and Bundestag member for 15 years elected from Frankfurt, the banking capital of Germany. Also, Co-chairwoman Ricarda Lang, 28 years old, new generation feminist and women-policy spokeswoman, squarely on the left-wing, representing the new young voters.

However, in light of the current plan to speedily eliminate fossil fuel imports from Russia, achieving the goal of carbon neutrality by 2045, which had been established by Angela Merkel government, seems to portend huge challenges ahead. While Olav Scholz refused to issue an operation permit for Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, completed over six months ago, which was planned to be the main gas supply line to Germany. Nonetheless, the rest of the existing gas and crude pipelines have been operational so far.

On the other hand, Scholz has resisted an immediate cut off of the Russian gas, indicating such action will plunge Germany and the rest of Europe into deep economic recession. Meanwhile, the German Foreign Minister announced that by

the end of the current year, all imports of Russian coal, crude oil, and petroleum by-products will be ceased.

The current climate program of Germany is largely based on the near complete elimination of fossil fuels usage in powerplants by 2035. In a country that used fossil fuels for production of 43% of its electricity (15% gas plus 28% coal) last year, and is on course to shut down three remaining nuclear power plants by the end of the current year that supplies 12% of Germany's electricity, achieving such a high bar will not be a slam dunk.

Following the nuclear disaster at the Fukushima powerplant in Japan in 2011, the German government at the time eventually decided to gradually eliminate all nuclear powerplants. Notwithstanding, continued operation of the existing powerplants will require substantial rehab and mitigation, which entails significant costs and construction time.

In fact, the Ukraine war intensified Germany's apprehension regarding the safety of nuclear energy. Following a month-long occupation of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster site, the Russian armed forces were heavily contaminated by radioactive materials inadvertently, as a result of constructing bunkers at the highly contaminated site.

The Russian forces also demolished parts of the safety and cooling systems of the three remaining reactors before departure, which could result in another nuclear meltdown, threatening Ukraine and the neighboring countries with radioactive contamination, had it not been for the timely intervention by the plant maintenance personnel.

TEMPORARY COAL USAGE INCREASE

Two years ago, the Merkel government legislated a program to gradually ban all coal-fired powerplants by 2038. The plan included stipends for a wide range of affected people and companies, including the residents and the workers.

Afterwards, the Greens campaigned to speed up the dismantling of all the coal-fired powerplants by 2030, which now constitutes a mandate for the German government.

However, in order to avoid blackouts, a temporary expansion of the coal-fired powerplants will be needed. Potentially, some of the coal-burning factories and powerplants that are currently non-operational as emergency reserves, will

need to become operational for a few more years.

Sascha Muller-Kraenner, director of a leading environmental advocacy group, Deutsche Umwelthilfe says, contingent on the government remaining steadfast to shut down the coal-burning powerplants on schedule by 2030, the temporary increase in coal usage should be acceptable.

A DOUBLE CHALLENGE

Data from the Clean Energy Wire indicate, within the time span of 2000 to 2020, the contribution of renewable energy to generate electricity in Germany increased by about 625%, that by the nuclear and coal energies reduced each by about 50%, while the contribution of the natural gas increased by about 190%.

Overall, the greater challenge for Germany is developing a replacement for the Russian gas to heat homes and businesses, and for industrial use. While renewable energy accounts for about 44% of electricity generation, its share in the overall energy demand is only about 16%, which includes transportation, heating buildings, and industrial uses.

Clean energy advocates suggest expanding renewable energy powerplants, coupled with incentives for electric automobiles, could render the power generation and the transportation sectors independent from fossil fuels within several years.

Canary Media reports, due to the technological improvements and mass production, the cost of solar energy systems has decreased by 89% in the last decade.

Bloomberg reports that currently, the

least expensive large scale energy plants are the solar and the wind energy systems, with unit costs of between \$30-50 per megawatt hour, while the nuclear power cost is estimated at \$80 per megawatt hour.

In addition, contrary to the fossil fuels, or nuclear powerplants, the wind and the solar powerplants do not require specific locations and massive natural resources, and could be installed at most locations.

Nonetheless, reducing the usage of fossil fuels for heating buildings and for industrial uses is a major challenge. Researchers and policy advocates often suggest the use of geothermal or heat pumps for heating buildings, and green hydrogen gas for the industrial uses.

Inside Climate News quotes Nikos Tsafos, of the Center for Strategic and International Studies saying: "Buildings are probably the hardest sector, that requires a gradual retrofit and retooling towards heat pumps. That will take time."

Other advocates indicate that most energy needs for transportation, building heating & ventilation, and many industrial uses can be met by electricity generated by renewable energies

In the current urgent situation, the German leaders are also seeking potential new energy sources in the Middle East. Also, the feasibility of constructing liquid natural gas (LNG) terminals to import gas by ships is being evaluated. Aside from the anticipated resistance by the environmental groups, the construction of LNG terminals, and the facilities required for its conversion to the gas phase for usage, could easily take over 6 or 7 years.

Nonetheless, results from extensive polls indicate that the general public in Germany, overwhelmingly approve the performance of Scholz government so far, in spite of the unexpected challenges that confronted the newly formed coalition-government.

The climate and clean energy program of Germany could also be considered for the United States, given that the gigantic economic systems of both countries are based on heavy industry and fossil fuels.

Inside Climate News quotes Tsafos saying: "There is more social and political consensus in favor of decarbonization in Europe, and the plans and strategies are far more developed... By contrast, climate legislation remains highly politicized in the United States, and the instinct among many is to merely increase oil and gas production."

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The Fall of Last Sassanid Emperor and Last Pahlavi Monarch: AMAZING SIMILARITIES

M. Reza Vaghefi

INTRODUCTION.

Throughout history of the world and in every corner where there is a dictator or someone with full authority and ability to dispense benefits from peoples' treasury, there are people ready to do the bidding in order to be in grace of the authority whom they milk without the latter knowing. This sort of phenomena took place during the last monarch of Pahlavi dynasty and some 1500 hundred years ago during the Sassanid Empire although in different form.

BRINGING DOWN AN EMPIRE:

The question of fall of Sassanid empire has been a recurring issue since the first invasion of Arabs more than 1400 years ago. At the time the Sassanid empire was even stronger than Eastern Rome (History and Culture of Iran by M. Mohammadi, 1992, Yazdan, Tehran). At the same time, Iranian armed forces had occupied, or they were at the gate of Constantinople threatening the East Roman territories.

Additionally, Arabs in general, had an in-born fear of the Iranian army and were reluctant to organize and attack Iranian territories. So, the question that has been raised many times is: what had happened that provided the necessary motivations to attack Iran? Given the above, one would wonder about the factors that led to collapse of Sassanid empire.

Anoshirwan was the last powerful king of the Sassanid dynasty and that of Persia. Anoshirwan managed a vast empire through locally deep-rooted men of honor and goodwill who had earned respect of their people in the area they governed. The local rulers were role model of governing people based on the wishes of the people they governed and that is precisely why the empire lasted for so many years. But Anoshirwan, like all human being, could not last forever. His people-based rule lasted 48 years and was most popular at the time of his death.

What happened to Sassanid empire that collapsed although it had lasted for centuries?

Ardeshir Babakan the founder of Sassanid dynasty took over the reign of the government at a time that there were many



small kingdoms. Some of the small kingdom submitted to his reign, which was normal at the time, and some rose against him. He suppressed those that revolted and strengthened those that agreed with him, a normal way of running the vast empire. He established this tradition which had made millions of the inhabitants of the empire satisfied. These little kingdoms were emanating from a long tradition amount the families of goodwill who provided a solid foundation for the empire. The successor to Ardeshir Babakan was Anoushirvan famous for spreading justice through the Chief Clergy who had complete authority and could administer justice without delay.

Administrative style of Anoshirwan who had surrounded himself with most competent leaders, and were given authority to administer certain areas and advise him about issues of national significance. His successor, his son, Hormazd, who inherited the position of his father, lacked the most important quality in a leader namely confidence in himself and subsequently acted in ways that helped destroy the empire. There is a big similarity between Reza shah and his son Mohammad Reza Shah.

These men, under Anoshirwan, not only helped administer the vast empire, but they were also cognizant of the fact there were enemies outside the territories who were watching for opportunities to attach Iran. His successor did not have

his father's neither charisma or vision and was deeply suspicious of the men who provided Anoshirvan necessary advice. This suspicion led to destroying of the following men whose advice to the leader had helped him over many years. Men like Isadgesheb, Borzmehr, and Mahazar plus Ozarrdehesht who would be considered Chief Archbishop who was poisoned and three others who were destroyed in mysterious ways. According to Professor Mohammadi, in "History of Iranian Culture", elimination of these four most prominent men provided the ways that led to weakening of Iranian army and ipso facto paved the ways for weakening and ultimately defeat of Iranian army which faced a rag tag massive Arabs who never even dreamed of attacking Iran.

Hormazd's destroying of trusted commanders plus the most trusted Mobbed, chief clergy, in his regime had serious consequences. The Chief clergy had been put in charge of the most important court, comparable to chief of supreme court, and he was responsible to settle issues that could not have been handled by local courts in different provinces or the vast kingdom. Among the Iranian families there were 7 families that had deep roots and respects among all Iranian and Sassanian family was one most respected by other 6 families.

The Assvaran, or Sepahsalaran, who had been targeted by Hormozd belonged to those 7 families that formed the foundation of Sassanid rules. These top commanders had millions of followers who respected them and the treatment they received from Hormozd did not remain unnoticed. Little by little it eroded the control of the armed forces the foundation of Shahshahi, a term that was used for only for that period.

FALL OF PAHLAVI DYNASTY Reza Shah Pahlavi

Reza Shah was the founder of Pahlavi dynasty. A man of limited education but great vision faced similar circumstances. Many chieftains and warlords had established their influence in different parts of the country. Nobody had challenged their authority. For instance, Nayebeh Hosein who ruled in central part of Iran with his

headquarters in Kashan, would collect taxes from the gate of Qum to the gate of Isfahan, a vast area. He had a standing army and would invade different parts in between to collect taxes and jewelry and pirating young women for his armed group.

Emergence of Reza Shah put an end to these groups as well as other established tribes like Bakhtyari and Ghashghai in the central mountainous region of the country. One by one security was established, roads were built, schools and universities opened (Tehran University was opened in 1934 from assembling of separate institutions). World War II put an end to this modernization drive but ultimately his son Mohammad Reza Shah was installed the successor king which lasted from 1941 to 1978 with occasional turmoil taking place during this period.

Mohammad Reza Shah did some of the same thing that Hormozd had done after Anoshirvan centuries ago though not in the same way and speed but ultimately achieving same results.

In his recent memoir, late Mr. A.H. Ebtehaj, the most competent and inscrutable civil servant who served Iran as Director of National Bank, the most important economic entity, even today, and Administrator of Plan Organization, again the most important instrument of economic planning and implementation, has laid out the critical issues that led to Shah's downfall. One is bound to suggest that the issues that brought the monarchy to its tragic ends did not appear overnight. A combination of concentration of power, against the Constitution, and opportunistic people around the Shah had created the necessary and sufficient conditions for the Islamic revolution to succeed. Can you imagine taking money from Imam Reza Shrine, a most revered religious shrine, in Northeast of the country, for buildings Casino (gambling house) on Keesh Island, in Persian Gulf?

According to A.H. Ebtehaj (his two-volume Memoirs) corruptions which gradually engulfed all level of government was rampant. In a short period, they would accumulate enough money to buy them a house in California.

Shah's inner circle was crowded with unscrupulous people whose main objective was to pocket benefits of their position at a rapid pace. This is evidenced by Farah Pahlavi's memoir where she admittedly states that: "Optimism of some people in our circle influenced us" (Miramax

Books, 2004, page 261). The Queen who seemed to be in touch with people had no clue about the undercurrents which meticulously were trying to organize and take over the affairs of the state. In addition to such blunt statement, there were more sophisticated sycophants that had Shah's complete confidence which by itself deteriorated the relationship between the head of state and the people. That is where the renowned author like A.H. Ebtehaj, in his memoir, mentioned that the people around the King were opportunistic and did their bidding by interpreting what was happening in the society, at large, not so serious.

Former Queen Farah is full of praise for late Amir Abbas Hoveida as a man of honor and integrity which is true. But she may have a misunderstanding about the economic and social upheavals that was brought about by gaining strength and gradually undermining whatever had been done precisely because of late Hoveida's administrative style in serving the Shah. He was the Achilles Heels in Shah's leadership where Hoveida allowed the Shah to accumulate immense executive powers entirely against the Constitution of 1908 where the King was not responsible for many of the functions that members of the government had to execute. Shah was directing the country's foreign affairs, Commander of the armed forces and the energy. There were many other things that without his approval would go nowhere. Even Shah did not realize that by making himself a pillar of the armed forces and society at large they could collapse the moment he leaves the scene. This was evident when in a critical moment the High Council of Armed Forces announced that the army was neutral during the turmoil against the Shah. It would be a mistake to ignore the role that generals like Fardoost, Shah's protégé and friend, paid in the collapse of the armed forces. It is surprising to suggest that Shah was not aware of the fact that Fardoost had received extensive spying training in England at MI6, the British Military intelligence. Was he there for fun or to learn how to spy for the MI6 or the British government? Isn't that why he was not executed like so many very competent top officers of the armed forces? Wasn't this like the actions that came after Anoshirvan when his son Hormozd, weakened the powerful Iranian army and paved the way for neighboring countries to attack Iran?

In other word Shah was supposed to be a Constitutional Monarch with limited

power. He was supposed to reign not rule. But over time Hoveida let that most important article of the Constitution fades away. Of course, it did not begin with late Hoveida who was not materially corrupt but did everything to stay in power. To some degree Shah and his inner circle were doing a lot of things that laid the foundations of events to come.

Dr. Ali Amini was appointed prime minister to carry on some major reforms. Of these, Land Reform was very prominent but badly executed without serious consideration to an old established system where the landlord and the farmer knew their role in using the land. According to Dr. Mohammadi's remarkable historical and unique work, Iranian farmers were deeply attached to land they used to survive. The planers of the land reform created a system named Farmer's cooperative to fulfil these fundamental duties. This was a total failure because neither the farmers nor the society were prepared to run cooperatives. The concept was totally alien and no one had a clue as to its structure and how that cooperative could replace an established system. The farming was an individualistic act whereas the cooperative concept model required a great deal of understanding among farmers in order to make it work. Millions had died under Stalin's Soviet system which tried the same cooperatives system in 1930s? Then there was half-baked election where some reforms were put to "peoples" vote.

According to Ebtehaj, people were not part of these reforms. People of suspicious credibility were put in charge of major social changes introduced in the country. For instance, issues like the celebration of 2,500 years of Monarchy in Iran was unnecessary. The author of this paper asked someone who knew the system from inside-out whether this elaborate celebration was necessary. His comment was that for "some people this is an occasion to make lots of money. It must be a big operation for them to make money"

Or changing the calendar to which people were familiar to Imperial system to show continuity of monarchy system was something that irritated the clergy specially and this is the institution (the clergy) that has ears of majority of people. Add to this list of major mistakes, the significant dissatisfaction among people because of its low quality of players and contents which were completely incompatible with local culture. Among such big mistakes Shah publicly announcing that

Iran was approaching “the gate of an advanced civilization” and premier Hoveida saying that Iran will soon be one of the Five major powers in the world. All such superficial statements, to praise the Shah’s regime, had their negative effects and deep disbelief and when you sum up this whole affair, serious social explosion takes place, and it did. In fairness one should not blame Hoveida completely at least for the above-mentioned events. One of the people who had Shah’s complete confidence was late Assaolah Alam, the minister of the Imperial Court. A descendant of an Arab tribe (His memoirs published after his death by A.N. Alikhani), which had been sent to Birjand, in Northeast corner of Iran, to quell an uprising against Arab rulers at the time, he had no deep affiliation with or love for Iran. All his life he had been pursuing wealth in any way at any price. During the last 10 years of Shah’s rule, the most critical part of his rule, Alam was instrumental in many acts that would have been impossible according to the Constitution if it were to be abide by. But he made money on every possible occasion. According to his memoir, he was the most corrupt man in the Imperial Court.

The essence of the above argument is that Shah had dismissed the national figures that would have been helpful in advising him to do or not to do some of the things going on against the norms and cultural elements that had deep roots in society. Former Queen wonders about host of things that were done but it seemed unappreciated by people. She does not mention that the level poverty remained the same or worsened, a potent force to be exploited by instigators.

It would be appropriate to mention some of the names that their departure from political scene was due to Shah’s attitude and sometimes blunt negative statement which destroyed the will or even existence of such men. The difference between what Hormozd and Shah did was that it took sometimes for Shah to establish his dictatorial rule which included immense influence on the legislature, namely the Senate and Parliament. They would obey his command regardless of the procedures that had been painstakingly established during the Mossadegh era. It seems quite relevant to mention similarities between Hormozd, son of Anoshirvan, and Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi son of Reza Shah who had established security, law and order in Iran.

Both of the rulers made similar mis-

takes and here are the examples.

1. A.H. Ebtehaj

The first man that comes to mind is A.H. Ebtehaj. Monetary stability or order in the market is very critical in the absence of institutions that provide such stability and name of people who are well respected, and in short supply, by traders, large and small, is most critical on a daily business activity in Iran. Ebtehaj was such man an institution all by himself in such a socio-economic system. A man of immense credibility and national as well as international stature. According to Lillienthal the head of Tennessee Valley Authority who was instrumental in reviving the economy of Tennessee and bordering states, Ebtehaj would fulfill his duties with missionary zeal (Entrepreneurs of Iran by the author). Instead of using such a huge asset to stabilize the economy and prevent waste, Ebtehaj was for many years in and out of jail by Shah’s order because of a statement that he may have made regarding the Iranian economy. One wonders why? Was fear as felt by Hormozd or intrigues that may have been emanated by courtiers whose interest may have been threatened by integrity of people like Ebtehaj? In 1956 when the British and French attacked Suez Canal and failed, British announced that they would withdraw from Eastern Mediterranean where they had provided security. Shah announced that such security would be provided by the Iranian armed forces. Ebtehaj had mentioned (in a conference in the United States) that the cost of the security arrangement should be paid by the United States, whose interest is being protected, not Iran. Shah’s immediate reaction was jail. It seems to me that Shah had been so much used to “Yes Your Majesty” comments by sycophants that simple logic irritated him, and jail was the answer.

2. Dr. Manouchehr Eqbal

Dr. Eqbal served Shah in various po-



sition. He was most prominent as Chancellor of Tehran University, Prime Minister and Chairman of the National Iranian Oil Corporation. In each position he maintained the integrity for which he was well-known. When he approached the Shah and advised him about the atrocities that were committed against some people revolting about some issues, he was summarily dismissed from his high position. Seeing the drastic actions taking shape against Shah’s regime and the fact that there was nothing he could do to stabilize, the situation, he had a massive heart attack and died. Thousands of people took part in his funeral, which was a universal testimony to his outstanding services to Iran.

3. Gholam Hossein Sadighi

Gholam Hossein Sadighi, a Professor of Sociology at Tehran University, and Minister of Interior and Deputy Prime Minister to the most famous man in modern Iranian nation, Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh, was another man who could have stabilized the turmoil facing the Shah.

Dr. Sadighi like other distinguished men before him was endowed with a charisma that would have led people to believe him and prevent the untimely collapse of Shah’s regime. But he had been in and out of jail by his majesty’s order and when he was invited to form a government to deal with the national crisis, he asked for time to do the right job. Instead of listening to him Shah was influenced by chief of security who had no clues about the depth of social problems to which Shah was facing. He was pushing to elevate Shapour Bakhtyar, to Prime Minister. Bakhtyar had neither charisma nor a political base which was evident soon after his appointment. All members of the National Front dismissed him and a few days after he left Iran surreptitiously.

4. Abdollah Entezam

Entezam was the Chairman of National Iranian Oil Company. He was most respected by rank and file in the industry that was crucial to the country in terms of revenue and fuel. He was dismissed from his job simply because he had mentioned that credible people should be brought in to handle such complex issues that may lead up to upheaval and damage the society causing irreparable damage. Entezam had a frugal lifestyle, not interested by material luxuries that Shah’s circle was used to.

Shah had assumed that in crisis time, the clergy, the Ayatollas, that he was in touch with would help. That was even

a more significant problem. Of the two Ayatollahs mentioned, Mr. Behbahani was a major element during the Coup d'Etat of 1953. He would distribute the dollars that were given to him by agent of CIA. Everybody knew the background which means he had no credibility. The other Ayatollah was quite all the time during the most critical part of the social turmoil. He was after his own interest which did not include Shah's defense.

The author of this paper knew the Dean of School of Theology at Tehran University. During the years before the Fall of Shah, someone who introduced himself as an emissary from Pope met the Dean of the School and asked him, bluntly, if Soviet Union invaded Iran, what would be the reaction of the clergy to such an invasion? The Dean told him bluntly that clergy always looks after his own interest. Shah was naively believing that some Ayatollahs would support him if there were social turmoil. This proved the opposite.

5: Late Professor F. Reza

In the middle of 1960s, the government of Iran invited the above first-rate scholar to Iran to revive a newly high-tech university. The professor told me that he accepted the invitation with great enthusiasm and left for Iran. He first tackled the newly established University of Technology faculty. Soon after he was appointed Chancellor of Tehran University, the well-established one but with highly calcified faculty in some areas and outdated programs and delivery of the same. He retired about 100 calcified faculty and employed newly arrived Ph.Ds. in several fields.

His first act at Tehran University and the community was an earthquake. The impact was noticeable and required substantial support by the regime. Many of the faculty that were retired had other jobs in the government and had deep political influence. Intrigues and bad mouthing mounted and required political support. The government of late Hoveida was not strong enough to withstand these pressures. Hoveida himself was reluctant to express his support. The consequence of massive reactions, unjustified as they were, bore heavily of the Premier. The result was that the work that Professor Reza had begun remained unfinished. The author of this paper witnessed the low quality of some programs and fully justified the necessary change. Here was a man, comparable only to Omar Khayyam, in having a command of Persian literature and modern science and technology, a rare

combination indeed, was left alone to fend off his action necessary as they were. In the absence of stable political institution to analyze the merit of such major changes and a public that would trust the institution, one becomes a target of bad faith. The tragedy of this episode was that a top-rate Iranian scholar had to leave the job that he was made for and wanted to spend rest of his life improving it totally heart broken. The system took many years to accept and implement some of the reforms.

The queen who had helped initiate the move was nowhere to be seen. She like others seemed to be satisfied with the status quo.

However, the innovator left his cherished responsibility depressed because the regime did not allow him to fructify the objectives that he had set out.

A *modus operandi* was left to flourish, and old cliques enjoy the aura of work environment at the higher level remained a distant objective if ever to be achieved. There is plenty of evidence about his frustration in his writings of several books about his experience dealing with Iranian government.

THE LAST ECONOMIC PLAN

In early 1970s The Plan and Budget Organization, the most important economic planning unit in the country, submitted a masterpiece: An elaborate and comprehensively plan for the economic performance of the country for next five years. The Plan was drawn over months by some very top Iranian economist where they had deeply analyzed the available and future resources and implementation in sectors of the economy that would enhance productivity with an eye on inflation. The Plan provided a Blueprint that would lay the foundation of an economy free of inflationary pressures. They took the Plan to Takhte Jamsheed and presented to Shah. They knew well that without his approval all that precious time utilized in a meticulously drawn up Plan will go nowhere.

What happened next shock the top planners. Shah had expressed dissatisfaction with the restrictions that the plan would impose on the level and extent of investment. This short description does not do a fair job, but it describes the Shah's mental framework of Knowing Everything. Only one member of the economic team, Mr. Majlumian, dared to say that without approval and implementation of the Plan as presented there is good chance

that inflationary pressure may disrupt the social framework. The Plan was not taken seriously, and the outcome did exactly appear as had been predicted.

Late Premier, instead of appealing to Shah to allow the Plan to work, changed the leader of the Plan Organization K. Farmanfarmaian a competent practicing economist, and a former Governor the Central Bank. Soon after the undisciplined expenditure unleashed on the country providing a fertile ground for unprecedented inflation providing the best conditions for the Islamic Revolution.

CONCLUSION

Moral of the story is that leaders who surround themselves with people suspicious quality may let their people ultimately pay a heavy price. This has proven and the examples, one some centuries ago and one as old as 50 years. When Shah puts most credible civil servant like Ebtahaj in jail and listens to morally corrupt people like Alam turmoil is provided precious nutrients that can do most damage. If you like to find someone who is totally corrupt, ethically, commercially, sexually and monetarily, Alam would be that individuals. His memoirs (6 volumes) attest to all such thing. And he had had Shah's ear all these critical years. when Shah announced Glasnost and Perestroika it was too little too late.

The similarities between the two regimes abound. The top commanders Hormozd had dismissed had deep respect among millions of Iranian and armed forces. Their dismissal was a major blow to the stability and structure of the Sassanian empire.

By the same token, the summary dismissal of jailing of most competent men, like Ebtehaj, or others like Entezam, among oil industry workers, Sadiqi among National Front members, Dr. Eqbal. Among thousands who attended his funeral in addition to dismissing the most compressive economic plan drawn at the that time, had devastating effect on many well-educated people and intellectuals who were disenchanted and left the country.

So, when the turmoil started millions of potential supports stayed home disillusioned by Shah's unthoughtful acts or had already left the country. Just like Frankenstein, Shah's circle of sycophants, Alam being the cheer leader, brought him ruin and disaster. History just repeated itself 1500 years later.

THE HISTORY OF AFGHANISTAN IN THE PRE-ISLAMIC ERA

Part I

Pre-Historic to End of Achaemenid Empire

Kaveh Farrokh (Ph.D.) (Langara College)

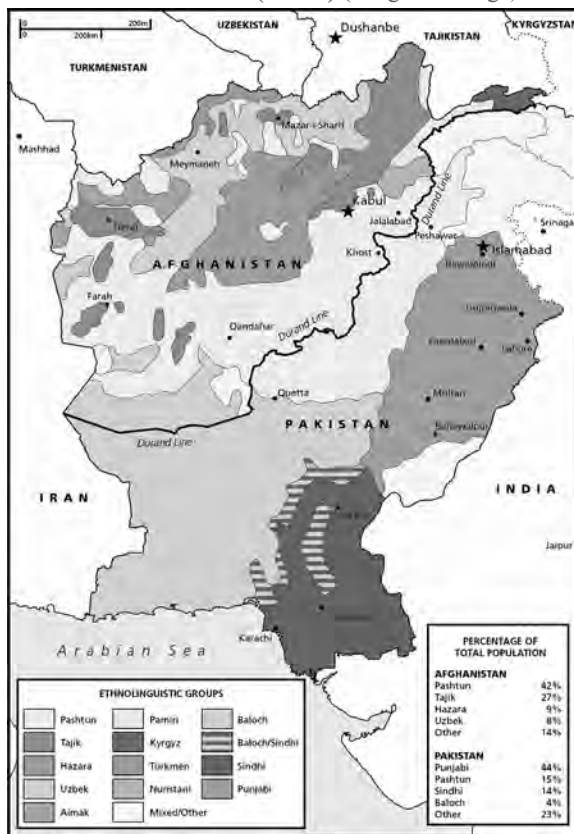
The first definitive appearance of an independent Afghan political body (specifically with the name of *Afghanistan*) occurred as late as 1747, with the actual term “*Abgan*” first appearing in the third century CE with the derivative term “*Afghan*” (Afgān) having most likely been used in reference to the East-Iranian speaking *Pashtun* (Paštūn) tribes of modern-day Afghanistan since antiquity. In practice Afghanistan has witnessed a complex political and cultural history and multifaceted ethnogenesis since very ancient times and has played a critical role in world civilization. The antiquity of ancient Afghanistan can be tracked as far back as pre-historic times.

Evidence of human habitation in Afghanistan has been traced to the upper paleolithic era, as far back approximately as 50,000 years ago, with human activity to the west in modern-day Iran traced further back at approximately 63,000 years ago as evidenced in Luristan province’s Kaldar Cave which featured finds of both *Homo Sapiens* and *Neanderthal* hominids.

There are several pre-historic archaeological sites in Afghanistan such as Deh Murasi Ghundai, Mundigak, Aq Kupruk, Darra Dadil, Darra Chakmakh, Kara Kamar, Hazar Sum, Darra-e Kur, Hezar Gusfand, and closer to modern-day Iran, Nad-e Ali as well as areas in Afghanistan’s sections of Seistan (which otherwise are located mostly in southeast Iran’s Seistan and Baluchistan province).

Domestication of animals and even agricultural activity in pre-historic Afghanistan can be traced as far back as 11,000 years ago when humans engaged in tending herds and raising crops, having abandoned hunting and gathering.

Urban centers in Afghanistan have been traced to 6000 years ago (notably ancient Lot city in modern-day province of Herat) with metallurgy appearing in Afghanistan by 3000 BCE. It is also notable that the Indus valley civilization (3300-1300 BCE) also reached into modern-day northeast and north Afghanistan. Afghanistan was then to be dominated by the arrival (from Central Asia) of proto-Iranian peoples on horseback by c. 1100s CE who



also entered onto the Iranian plateau (the most famous of whom were to become the Medes and Persians of ancient times).

The Iranian peoples arriving in ancient Afghanistan and the Near/Middle East were part of the larger and evolving Iranian-speaking peoples that were to encompass a wide territorial zone ranging from Eastern European/Ukraine regions all the way to Northwest China.

It is also notable that Iranian peoples arriving in the ancient Near East were to arrive from what is now northeast Iran and

western Afghanistan regions. Much of the regions of ancient Afghanistan and its adjacent territories in Central Asia were to be settled by Iranian peoples such as the Soghdians, Bactrians, Massagetae, Sakas, Dahae, etc.

The first Iranian empire of the Medes was to dominate Afghanistan in the time span of approximately 700-550 BCE. One region that appears to have fallen outside Mede control was the Gandhara kingdom, founded sometime in 1500 BCE, some four centuries prior to the Iranian arrivals.

The Gandhara kingdom was centered in eastern Afghanistan in a region encompassing Kabul, the Swat River gorge and basin of Peshawar, in close proximity to modern-day northeast Pakistan and northwest India. Another kingdom of note in Afghanistan most likely outside of Median authority was the later iron Age Indian kingdom of the Kamboja (most likely established sometime in 700 BCE).

This was located in India’s northwestern frontier which at its height may have encompassed modern-day Kabul in eastern Afghanistan as well as parts of southeast Iran and even parts of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in Central Asia.

The succeeding (Medo-Persian) Achaemenid empire was to not only annex the former Mede Empire’s Afghanistan territories but was to also absorb Gandhara and Kamboja. Gandhara appears to have submitted to Achaemenid rule by sometime in 535 BCE, although some outlying regions of the Kamboja appear to have retained some type of autonomy, possibly in regions outside of Achaemenid control, with the kingdom lasting until

sometime in 300 BCE following the Alexandrian conquests. It was Achaemenid king Darius I the Great (r. 522-486 CE) who completed the conquest of Afghanistan. This appears to have been one of the derivatives of Darius’ campaign to conquer the Saka Tigrakhauda of Central Asia whom Cyrus the Great (r. 559-530 BCE) founder of the Achaemenid Empire, had lost his life in combat against them. By c.500 BCE, the major Iranian satrapies in modern-day Afghanistan under Achaemenid rule were Aria, Bactria and Arachosia.

The modern-day city of Herat situated to the west of Afghanistan near Iran's modern-day Khorasan province, is traceable to very ancient times, however it is not possible to determine its exact chronological origins. The adjoining regions of Herat are identified in the ancient Zoroastrian Avestan texts as *Harōiva* and then *Haraiva* in the Old Persian language of the Achaemenids.

An etymological explanation for the origins of the name "Herat" is that the name of the district of *Haraiva* and its primary city originated from the *Hari-Rud* River (located approximately 5 kilometers south of the modern city of Herat), with the name of this river derived from Old Iranian *Harayu* (lit. bearing speed). The importance of the Herat region to the Achaemenid Empire is signified for example by the early 19th century discovery of an ancient Achaemenid cuneiform cylinder in the city's environs.

The *Haraiva* region was identified as "Aria" by the Achaemenids (Bisotun inscriptions at time of Darius I) and the Classical sources. To the west of Aria was the satrapy of *Parthava* (Parthia) and to the northeast was *Bāxtriš* (Bactria) with its capital city in northeast Afghanistan known as *Bāxtra* (Bactra; also known at the time as *Zariaspā* [Iranian: golden horse]; to be known as Balkh later in history). To the south of ancient Afghanistan was *Dranka* (or *Zranka*) in modern day Seistan in southeast Iran. Across the Oxus River (to the north of *Bāxtriš*) in Central Asia was the Achaemenid satrapy of *Suguda* (Soghdiana or Soghdia) in the vicinity of contemporary Samarkand and Bukhara in modern-day Uzbekistan.

As per Herodotus, the Achaemenids included Aria in the same taxation category system as Parthia (*Parthava*), Soghdia (*Suguda*) and Chorasmia (*Uvārazmiya*) which was bordered to its north by the Aral Sea in Central Asia. Another key Achaemenid satrapy to the east of Aria was *Harauvatiš* (Arachosia) situated in the region of modern-day south Afghanistan's Arghandab River. It is possible that the territorial administration of *Harauvatiš* may have reached as far as the Indus River further to the east in ancient India. The capital of *Harauvatiš* was located in what became known as the city of Kandahar in modern-day Afghanistan.

The earliest known settlement at ancient Kandahar is dated to approximately 700 BCE, with the ancient citadel identified as having been built by the Achaeme-

nids sometime in the 6th century BCE. While the actual name of Kandahar in Achaemenid times cannot be fully ascertained with absolute certainty, it is possible that the city was known as *Kapišakaniš* (as possibly suggested in Darius' Bisotun inscriptions). What can be verified is that Old Kandahar (or *Kapišakaniš*) served as a vital military center for the Achaemenids.

The Achaemenid depictions of the Eastern Iranians at Parsa (the Persepolis royal city palace) as well as Nagshe Rustom (the royal Achaemenid tombs) show them attired in traditional Iranian dress suitable for horseback riding (trousers, tunic, tall boots and headcloth).

In practice this was the dress of the wider range of Iranian peoples such as the *Saka Paradraya* (lit. Saka beyond the Sea; Scythians) in Eastern Europe (modern Ukraine, south Russia regions), the *Saka Tigrakhauda* (pointed cap Saka) and *Saka Haoma-varga* (Haoma-bearing Saka) of Central Asia and the Iranians of West Asia (Medes, Persians, Saggarthians, Hycanians, etc.) as well as the Armenians, Albanians and Iberians of the Caucasus. Herodotus affirms the Scythian type attire of the Arians by noting how these were similar to that of the Bactrians (*Bāxtriš*). The ceremonial Kandys cloak with empty sleeves (possibly originating amongst the Iranian peoples of Central Asia), is depicted amongst the Mede-Persian nobility at the Apadana stairway at Persepolis.

The same Kandys type cloak is also seen for example with the Darius statue of Susa (to the left of the king) in which the delegate from Aria is seen wearing the same outfit. The Kandys signified the high rank of the wearer amongst the Achaemenids, indicative that the Arians were one of the esteemed Iranian peoples of the empire. The religion of Zoroastrianism was also widespread in Aria and much of Central Asia. The Zoroastrian faith is known to have spread as far as northwest China which had been settled by Iranian peoples and the Tocharians (a closely related Indo-European people).

It is notable that Greek colonists had been present in Bactria which (as noted previously) was contiguous to Aria during the Achaemenid era. These were the result of deportations of Greeks into the region by the Achaemenids, with the first of these most likely having been Ionians.

Darius I for example deported the Greeks of Barca, Cyrenaica to Bactria followed by his son and successor Xerxes I (r. 486-465 BCE) who settled Greek

priests from near Didyma into the Central Asian region. Herodotus reports of the Arians as having been among those contingents of Xerxes' army that invaded Greece in 480 BCE. The satrapy of Aria had attained an important status by late Achaemenid times. By the time of Alexander the Great's (356-323 BCE) Greco-Macedonian invasion of the Achaemenid Empire, the eastern regions of Arachosia, Bactria and Aria were being administered by three key Iranian satraps respectively: Barsaentes (also: Barzaentes), Bessus (Old Persian: *Bayaçā*) and Satibarzanes (Old Persian: *Šyātibzra's*).

Herat, clearly a key and strategic center for the Achaemenids by this time, may well have been the capital of Satibarzanes. The other two major (and strategic) urban centers in the eastern marches of the empire by late Achaemenid times were Old Kandahar (or *Kapišakaniš*) and Bactra. It is notable that Satibarzanes had fought on the left wing of the armies of Darius III at the Battle of Gaugamela against the invasion forces of Alexander (October 1, 331 BCE). Bessus, who had also fought at the left Achaemenid flank at Gaugamela, was himself a blood relative of Darius III.

Following Alexander's victories over the Achaemenids at the Battles of the Granicus River (334 BCE), Issus (333 BCE) and Gaugamela (331 BCE) king Darius III (r.336-331 BCE) retreated with what remained of his battered army to the Mede capital city of Ecbatana (or Ecbatana; modern-day city of Hamedan).

Alexander swung southwards to occupy the Mesopotamian heartlands, notably Babylon. From there he thrust into southwest Iran capturing Susa, advancing through the Persian gates to then capture Persepolis which was subsequently set ablaze by the Greco-Macedonians. Having spent the winter in Persepolis, Darius III deployed northwards in order to force Darius III into a concluding battle.

Darius III himself had been retreating with the remnants of his forces towards the eastern marches of his empire (notably Bactria) in order to regroup and rebuild his forces. As the Achaemenid army continued its retreat, dissatisfaction with Darius III's leadership led to Bessus, Barsaentes and Nabarzanes (a chiliarch) to engage in a coup against the king and imprisoned him.

As per Arrian, when elements of Alexander's pursuing forces had reached the Achaemenid columns, Nabarzanes and Barsaentes assassinated Darius, denying Alexander the chance to seize Darius III

himself while he was still alive.

Satibarzanes and Barsaentes duly returned to their satrapies, Aria and Arachosia respectively, with Bessus now in effect king of the Achaemenid realms in the eastern marches. In the meantime, Alexander who had been marching in pursuit of Darius III through Hyrcania in northern Iran (which he occupied) soon entered Aria as he was deploying to attack the satrapy of Parthia and from there further north into Bactria in Central Asia.

Satibarzanes is then narrated to have visited Alexander at Tus (ancient Susia; near modern day Mashad, capital of Iran's Khorasan province) to offer his submission. In return for this, Alexander allowed Satibarzanes to retain his satrapy of Aria and also provided him with a small force of forty javelin-cavalry led by Anaxippus (one of Alexander's Companions).

Satibarzanes however soon rebelled, killing Anaxippus and his Greek horsemen to then encourage the Arians to also rebel against Alexander. He then prepared with his forces for the arrival of Alexander at the city of Artacoana, which was the capital of Aria; Artacoana was most likely the same as the city of Herat of today, however this cannot be determined with absolute certainty. Alexander soon arrived at Artacoana and captured the city, however Satibarzanes (along with a few of his Arian cavalry) had fled to (re)join Bessus

of Bactria. Satibarzanes then returned to Aria with 2000 cavalry supplied to him by Bessus to do battle against the Greco-Macedonian invaders. Alexander was now forced to expend significant military force to battle against Satibarzanes in Aria.

The battle was hard fought until Satibarzanes was killed in a man-to-man duel with Erigyius, one of the Greco-Macedonian commanders. Alexander then appointed a Persian named Arsaces (Iranian: *Ashk/Ashkan*), but he too was to be replaced by a Macedonian by the name of Stasanor. Despite these successes, a serious military revolt had broken out against Alexander in Soghdia and Bactria, forcing him to continue fighting in order to force the final submission of the remainder of the Achaemenid empire's eastern realms.

It was during these battles when the Greco-Macedonian forces suffered their first military defeat at the hands of Iranian horse archers acting in concert with armored lancers.

This occurred when an Iranian commander named Spitames besieged Maracanda (modern Samarkand) with its Alexandrian garrison in 329 BCE. To confront Spitames' threat in Central Asia, Alexander dispatched Pharnuces to lead a portion of his contingents into Central Asia. Pharnuces soon met Spitames in battle in the Battle of the Zarafshan River (or Polvtimetos River in Classical sources).

The most mobile element in Spitames' forces had been the horsemen of the Dahae confederation, the same confederacy that was to give rise to the later warrior ruling caste of the Parthian dynasty. The Dahae succeeded in effectively surrounding the Macedonian invasion force.

Their horse archers unleashed heavy barrages of arrows upon the Greco-Macedonian contingents most likely supported by armored lancers inflicting heavy casualties upon the Greco-Macedonian forces (it is estimated that out of Alexander's original relief forces, only 40 cavalry and 500 infantry survived to escape from Spitames' forces).

While Alexander was to finally prevail in Central Asia and Afghanistan, the Battle of the Zarafshan River was a portent for the rise of the later Iranian Parthian dynasty who spelled the final defeat of the post-Alexandrian Greek presence in Iran and were to militarily halt the expansion of the Roman Empire into Iran and further to the east towards Afghanistan, India and Central Asia.

Following his capture of Artacoana (capital of Aria), Alexander rebuilt the city which subsequently became a part of the Greco-Macedonian Seleucid Empire, one of Alexander's successor empires formed following his death in 323 BCE and the ensuing wars of the Diadochi (successor generals of Alexander).

Part II

Greco-Bactrians, Sakas and Parthians

Following Alexander's conquests and subsequent death in 323 BCE, the Seleucid dynasty founded by Seleucid I Nicator (r. 305-281 BCE) and his son and successor Antiochus I Soter (r. 281-261 BCE) built several Greek towns in Bactria (to the north/northeast of Afghanistan in Central Asia). Antiochus I's mother was an Iranian noblewoman named Apama, the daughter of Spitames, who had fiercely resisted Alexander's invasion but was subsequently killed. Interestingly the Seleucids were to claim that Apama had been a daughter of Darius III in order to claim legitimacy as double-



heirs of both the Achaemenids and the person of Alexander.

This combined Greco-Macedonian and Achaemenid heritage was then used as official propaganda by the Seleucids in order to claim themselves as the legitimate rulers of Western Asia, the Iranian Plateau, and Afghanistan-Central Asia. Greek culture, philosophy and language became very pronounced in these regions, however as noted previously this was also partly due to past deportations of Greeks into these territories by the former Achaemenids. The eastern marches had certainly flourished as these continued their development

from the Achaemenid into the early Seleucid eras.

An example of this are the recent excavations of the fortress of Uzundar in modern-day Uzbekistan within which were discovered a number of sculptures, a variety of numismatics (coinage from the early Seleucids to the later Greco-Bactrian era) as well as a plethora of ceramics works. Uzundar was in fact part of a larger system of fortresses that Alexander had established along the Central Asian marches to prevent rebellions in the region as well as Afghanistan. This was most likely a major factor in Alexander's decision to establish fortifications manned by Greco-Macedonian troops in Margiana.

An additional duty of all of these garrisons was to guard against the unrelenting threat of attacks from Iranian Central Asian Saka or Scythian warriors, notably the Parni of the Dahae confederation.

The Dahae were themselves already settled in western Afghanistan (with Herat at its center), northeast Iran and modern-day Turkmenistan in Central Asia. The fortifications of Margiana certainly proved equal to the task of keeping the nomadic Parni warriors of the Dahae at bay, having contributed to the Parni's failure to capture that region. Warrior nomads of the Parni however would soon return, notably in the person of Arsaces I (r. c.250-246 BCE or c.250-211 BCE) of the Parni who would establish the new Iranian *Arsacid* Parthian dynasty (c.247/248 BCE-224 CE).

The Seleucids very soon found their rulership to be challenged in eastern Iran as well as Afghanistan-Central Asia. Prior to Arsaces I's invasion of Parthava (Parthia), Andragoras and Diodotus I (c. 255-239 BCE), the Seleucid appointed governors of Parthia and Greco-Bactria respectively, had already defected from the Seleucids by sometime in c.245 BCE.

This was mainly because Seleucid king Seleucus II Calinicus Pogon (r.246-225 BCE) had been forced to divert Seleucid military attentions against the Hellenic Ptolemids of Egypt, far the West, in what was to be known as the Third Syrian War. While the governors had opportunistically seceded by taking advantage of Seleucid preoccupations with the Syrian wars, another primary factor in the secession was the lack of Seleucid support in the face of nomadic invasions into Central Asia-Afghanistan

and eastern Iran. The satrapies had concluded that they could not militarily rely upon the Seleucids in the face of Arsaces I's growing threat.

While exact timelines are challenging to establish, it is possible that Diodotus I had founded an independent Greco-Bactrian kingdom a few years earlier (during the latter years of Antiochus II's (r.261-246 BCE) reign), followed shortly after with the defection of Parthia's Andragoras from Seleucid authority. Soon after his breakaway from the Seleucids, Diodotus I successfully confronted the second Parni invasion of Margiana led by Arsaces I, sometime in c. 245 or 244 BCE.

Diodotus who defeated Arsaces I's invasion, was now possibly in rulership of not just Bactria per se, but also Margiana, Soghdia and Aria. By c.238 BCE Diodotus I began minting his own coins (sans Seleucid regal motifs). Meanwhile, Arsaces I who had been defeated by Diodotus I, simply veered his Parni invasion forces into Parthava (Parthia). Diodotus I and Andragoras however were not engaged in any type of mutual military alliance or support against the Parni invaders. Arsaces led the Parni in the conquest of Parthia and killed its Seleucid-designated governor.

The Seleucids were to ultimately lose their repeated bids to re-assert themselves over the Arsacids in Parthia (and then the rest of Iran). The Greco-Bactrians also maintained their independence against subsequent Seleucid attempts to re-incorporate them into their empire, notably against the military efforts of Antiochus III (r.223-187 BCE) who failed to subdue Euthydemus I of Bactria (r. c.230-195 BCE) in 208 BCE. The Greco-Bactrian kingdom was to incorporate not just Soghdia but also modern day Afghanistan, northeast Iran, Ferghana (to the northwest of China) and also Arachosia.

Euthydemus' son and successor Demetrius (c.195 or 200-167 BCE) then pushed Greco-Bactrian territories deeper into the Indian subcontinent in the years 180-175 BCE, possibly as far as modern-day Patna. Out of Demetrius' conquests also arose what is known as the Indo-Greek kingdom with territories inside modern Afghanistan, with its capital established in Alexandria in the Caucasus, which is now modern-day Bagram (in modern-day Parwan province in Afghanistan). The Indo-Greek empire was to last

until sometime in 10 CE, with Bagram to serve as the seat of the later Kushan empire. The major impact of these conquests was the expansion of Greek language and script as well as culture.

This cultural process resulted in the introduction of Greek loan words into the Iranian languages of local populations in Bactria as well as modern-day Afghanistan. The Hellenic legacy resonates to the present among the Pashto speakers of Afghanistan whose Iranian language continues to retain a number of Greek loan-words as well as Old Persian (from the Achaemenid era).

Strong cultural ties were established between the Greeks of Central Asia and Afghanistan with the Mauriyan dynasty in India which dedicated a specific department for Persian-speaking residents as well as the *Yavana* (Greeks).

The Kandahar rock inscription of Mauriyan King Ashoka was written in both Aramaic (official language or lingua franca of the former Achaemenid empire) and Greek. Many Greeks were to also convert to Buddhism, notably Indo-Greek king Menander I (r. c.165-130 BCE) who following his conversion, himself became a chief promoter of Buddhism. Ancient Afghanistan was to become a major centre for the promotion of Buddhism, notably under the later Kushans.

Ancient Afghanistan was also to become a historical intersection nexus in archaeology and the arts where a profound synthesis of Greek, Persian/Iranian and Indian elements was to take place. These developments were to radiate into Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent. One example of this symbiosis includes the early Indian Mauriyan era palace capital from Patalputra (early 3rd century BCE). Another example is the "gateways of Bharhut" (in central India) which were most likely constructed by masons from ancient Kandahar.

The Greco-Bactrian kingdom however was to steadily weaken as a result of both domestic rivalries as well as conflicts with the Seleucids. A powerful blow was to come from the new Parthian Arsacid dynasty which territorially absorbed much of what was ancient Afghanistan during the reign of Arsacid monarch Mithradates (Mehرداد) I (r. 167 or 165–132 BCE; also known as Mithradates the Great) who transformed Parthia from a modest kingdom into a major military power. Mithradates I de-

feated Greco-Bactrian king Eucradites (r.171-145 BCE) seizing Arius (Hari Rud or Herat River in Afghanistan), Tapuria (modern Mazandaran region in northern Persia) and Traxiane (region encompassing parts of northeast Iran, Central Asia and Afghanistan).

Mithridates also captured the cities of Herat in Afghanistan and Merv in Central Asia. Mithradates I's son and successor Phraates (Farhad) II (r. c.132-127 BCE) was to also score a great victory by finally ejecting the Hellenic Seleucid dynasty from Iran following the battle of Ecbatana (129 BCE). This meant that the Greeks in the east were no longer able to form alliances with their kinsmen who formally ruled Iran and Mesopotamia. The Greco-Bactrians in turn were now fatally weakened, making them militarily vulnerable to another powerful group of Iranian nomadic invaders, the Saka (Scythians from Central Asia), who attacked both ancient Afghanistan and the Parthian Empire.

The Sakas had themselves been ejected earlier from their original homeland north of the Oxus River sometime in 132 BCE by another incoming tribal confederation known as the Yueh-chi.

The Yueh-Chi themselves had been pushed out of the modern-day west Mongolia region by the Xiang-Nou southwestwards into the Ili valley and river region north of Central Asia by sometime in 176 BCE. The Yueh-chi were then ejected from the Ili area in sometime 155 CE by another confederation known as the Wusun.

The arriving Yueh-Chi now forced the Sakas further south, leading them to first invade Bactria and from there they spread into Aria, Arachosia, Drangiana (the Achaemenid satrapy of *Dranka* (or *Zranka* discussed earlier), Paropamisadae (Kabul and Kandahar regions as well as territories further north), and fanned out to occupy the entire Kabul gorge.

The Sakas also ran amuck in the Parthian empire sacking Hecatompylos (Qomis in northeast Iran) and Merv (just north of modern Afghanistan in modern Turkmenistan) and even reaching as far west as Ecbatana in Media.

Phraates II died fighting the Sakas in 132 CE followed by his successor Artaba-



nus I (r. 127-124 BCE) who also died in combat against the Saka in 124 CE. While the tenure of the Saka was not destined to last for a prolonged period, they did leave their distinct Iranian cultural and artistic legacy upon ancient Afghanistan.

These processes occurred along with the ongoing Iranian fusion with the Hellenic legacy, as exemplified by the archaeological finds at Talla Tappeh in northern Afghanistan.

While it is possible that the Talla Tappeh goldwork finds may have also been influenced by the Parthians (themselves a Scythian/Saka people) these findings feature a variety of artworks in blended Iranian-Hellenic styles such as an Iranian-Hellenic style ring set with precious stones, a golden belt with representations of what appears to be the Iranian goddess Nana (or the Hellenic Dionisos) riding atop a lion and a Persian style Ram reminiscent of more ancient Achaemenid themes (yet also molded in Hellenic style).

Saka rule in Afghanistan was to be shattered by Parthian king Mithradates II (r. c.123/124-88/87 or 91 BCE) who avenged the deaths of his predecessors by defeating the Saka invaders in battle. The western regions of Bactria (which would include much of modern Afghanistan) were subsequently reconquered back into Parthian authority by Mithradates II.

Analysis of Parthian numismatics would indicate that Mithradates II had extended his sway over Bactria in northeast Afghanistan as well further north in contemporary southern Uzbekistan's Termez (ancient Alexandria on the Oxus) and the fortress of Kampyrtepa (along the Oxus River; modern Amu Darya). These strategic regions were militar-

ily vital to block the arrival of any new potential invaders erupting into Afghanistan and northeast Iran through Soghdia. The success of the Parthian campaigns however forced the ejected Sakas to relocate to Drangiana (already a Saka stronghold from their invasions earlier), obliging Mithradates II to dispatch a powerful military force led by a general from the clan of the Suren who subdued the region sometime in 124-115 BCE. The region was now be known as "Sakaistan" (*Seistan*

in the later Islamic era) which was to encompass southern Afghanistan (notably Kandahar, Helmand and Nimruz) as well as southeast Iran (modern-day Seistan-Baluchistan province).

The region was to play a critical role in the military history of the ancient world, with its deadly Saka horse archers, reportedly at 9,000 to 10,000, having proven instrumental to the great victory of Parthian general Surena against the Roman legions of Marcus Lucinius Crassus in 53 BCE. Parthian coinage continued to be struck in Sakaistan well into the first half of the 1st century CE.

In appreciation for the successes of the Suren, Sakaistan was then bestowed by Mithradates II as the estates or realms of the Suren clan. Over roughly a century later the Gondopharid dynasty, also known as the Indo-Parthian kingdom was founded by Gondophares I (r.19-46 CE) himself of the noble Parthian clans (

Gondophares I made himself independent of the Parthian dynasty of Iran with his kingdom reaching its maximum extent during the first century CE, encompassing sections of Afghanistan and modern-day Pakistan.

The main capital was the ancient city of Taxila, located in the modern-day Pakistani portion of the Punjab region. The capital however was to transfer often between Peshawar in Pakistan and Kabul in Afghanistan.

The Gondopharid kingdom may also be related to the history of Christianity through the Apostle Thomas who reportedly met Gondophares I, proselytized in the kingdom and reputedly led the construction of the palace of Taxila for the king.

to be continued

SONG OF THE NORTH



Song of the North is a large-scale, cinematic performance combining the manual art of shadow puppetry with projected animation to tell the courageous tale of Manijeh, a heroine from ancient Persia, who must use all her strengths and talents to rescue her beloved, Bijan, from a perilous predicament of her own making and help prevent a war. This epic love story employs a cast of ۰۰۰ handmade puppets and a talented ensemble of nine actors and puppeteers, all of which come together to create a spectacular experience that advances the themes of unity, collaboration, and experimentation through performance and story. *Song of the North*, adapted from the Book of Kings (*Shahnameh*), challenges the Eurocentric worldview of art and storytelling through a contemporary multimedia experience of this classic Persian tale.

The World Premiere was in February 2022 at the **Musée du quai Branly**, Paris France. This was followed by the US Premiere March 5-12, 2022, at the **Brooklyn Academy of Music**, NYC.

The show was created, designed and directed by **Hamid Rahmanian** and produced by **Melissa Hibbard**, the script written by **Hamid Rahmanian** and **Melissa Hibbard**. It's original score written and orchestrated by **Loga Ramin Turkian** featuring vocalist **Azam Ali**. The ensemble cast included **Sam Jay Gold**, **Harrison Greene**, **Jenny Hann**, **Esme Roszel**, **Sarah Walsh**, **Clay Westman**, and **Christopher Williams** and voice actors **Mark Thompson**, **Christina Calph**, **Richard Epcar**, and **Rose Nisker**. Stage manager is **Zach Perez** and company manager **Ray Dondero**.

ABOUT THE SHOW

Song of the North is an 80-minute multi-disciplinary live performance. It employs shadow puppetry, animation, movement, and an original music score.

The *Shahnameh* is an ancient collection of myths from the Iranian plateau, a historical and cultural touchstone that is a national treasure in Iran. *Song of the North* continues Rahmanian's exploration of this significant epic, and expands the theatrical methods used in *Feathers of Fire*, his first award-winning multi-media work, to introduce audiences of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities to the valuable artistic, historical, and cultural contributions of Iran.

The production combines multidisciplinary modes of representation to tell the story of Manijeh, a heroine admired for her strength and determination, who helps prevent war between rival kingdoms. One of the most striking elements of this work is the use of over 300 handmade puppets in the play which are inspired by the visual culture of Iran and it's neighboring lands that evolved around the *Shahnameh*, with influences from Persian miniature paintings and etchings. The puppets also reference the once vibrant puppetry tradition of Iran while imbuing it with modern and international elements. The intricate puppets and seven actor-dancer-puppeteers interact and perform in front of stunning over 200 animated backgrounds and behind a large, 16X30 foot screen set up at the edge of a proscenium, on which the audience watches the entire show projected, immersing them in a live animated adventure.

Through the multi-sensory telling of this ancient myth, and accompanying engagement programs, we aim to encourage audiences to feel a little less estranged from their neighbors, and illuminate the values and similar experiences we all share.

They will take this show to diverse cities, some of which may not be familiar with the art form and/or Iranian culture. They are also collaborating with local institutions, creating outreach programs that included school performances for at risk youth, ESL learners, and kids with disabilities; workshops for children and adults in areas of dance, shadow puppetry and puppet making, artist talks with university students in theater, Persian arts and arts management; and talk backs with audiences on the process of creating the work.

As an American citizen, born in Iran, Rahmanian works to bridge gaps of understanding, and highlight shared ideals and values in the face of cultural vilification, and official discrimination. The source material of *Song of the North* is the Persian epic, the *Shahmaneh*, a beautiful, powerful, and accessible point of entry. We strongly believe that striving toward equity, diversity, and inclusion are hallmarks of a thriving and robust society.

Our work advocates for voices that have been historically misrepresented through work that is accessible for patrons of all ages, cultural backgrounds, economic groups, and physical ability. We embrace artists of all backgrounds and are committed to telling stories that prompt conversation, inspire compassion, and promote empathy.

Books Released to Boost Children’s Knowledge of Iran’s Endangered Species

The Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) has released a book series to raise children’s awareness of the species at risk of extinction in Iran.

Children above nine are the target audience of the series titled “Hey! Take Care of Us”. It is composed of 11 books written and illustrated by different authors and artists coordinated by Zohreh Parirokh.

Nine books of the series include “Run, Run, Run!”, “Who Had Stuck the Letter on the Glass?”, “Who...? Where...? and...”, “The Little Big-Eared”, “Persian Fallow Deer”, “Believe, I’m a Turtle”, “Fear... Fear... Fear”, “The Last Iranian Ground-Jay of the Big Plain” and “Call Me Salamander”.

In this series, children learn about Iran’s wildlife species that are increasingly threatened with extinction. The animals take children to their world, telling them why and how they have faced the tribulation.

“Hey! Take Care of Us” also teach the children how to help the environment and the animals. The books center on Persian onager, Persian fallow deer, turtle, salamander, Pleske’s ground jay, Asiatic cheetah and a number of other animals.

Parirokh, Tahere Ibad, Minu Karimzadeh, Mohammadreza Marzuqi, Sorur Kotobi, Mostafa Rahmandooost, Susan Taqdis, Mohammadreza Shams and Farhad Hassanzadeh are the writers of the nine books of the series.

The books have been illustrated by Ali Nurpur, Majdi Saberinejad, Fereshteh Jafari-Farmand, Reza Maktabi, Babak Amel-Qarib, Parvin Heidarzadeh, Sanaz Zamani and Hadis Jazayeri, and Majid Kazemi and Ali Khodai have collaborated as graphic designers.

The IIDCYA has previously published numerous books to raise children’s knowledge of the environment and wildlife.

In January 2019, British children’s book writer Leon Gray’s series “Animal

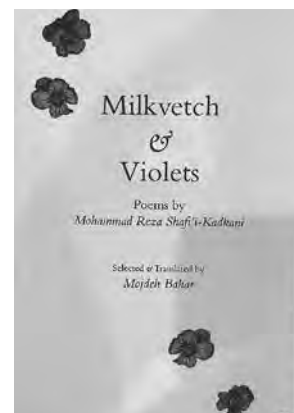


Scientists” was published in Persian by the institute. Composed of five books, “Animal Scientists” combines ecology with simple scientific principles so young readers can see how animals have adapted to cope with their environment and how they relate to other animals. The series explores animals’ use of science and engineering to overcome environmental challenges such as escaping predators, making a shelter, finding food and finding a mate.

MILKVETCH AND VIOLETS, Poems by

Mohammad Reza Shafi’i-Kadkani
(Selected and Translated by
Mojdeh Bahar)

This is a delightful little po-



etry book to brighten a day. Each poem seems to make you feel hope through nature and its seasons. What I found most rewarding about the selection is one did not have to delve into a deep meaning of the words to understand their significance. Each poem is sweet and meaningful on its face.

THE GREAT FAMINE & GENOCIDE IN IRAN: 1917-1919

By (author) **Mohammad Gholi Majd**

At least 8-10 million Iranians out of a population of 18-20 million died of starvation and disease during the famine of 1917-1919. The Iranian holocaust was the biggest calamity of World War I and one of the worst genocides of the 20th century, yet it remained concealed for nearly a century. The 2003 edition of this book relied primarily on US diplomatic records and memoirs of British officers who served in Iran in World War I, but in this edition these documents have been supplemented with US military records, British official sources, memoirs, diaries of notable Iranians, and a wide array of Iranian newspaper reports. In addition, the demographic data has been expanded to include newly discovered US State Department documents on Iran’s pre-1914 population. This book also includes a new chapter with a detailed military and political history of Iran in World War I. A work of enduring value, Majd provides a comprehensive account of Iran’s greatest calamity.



CENTURY OF CELLO MUSIC FROM PERSIA 1921-2021

(published in the Netherlands)

2021 marks the 100th year since the appearance of the first Persian (Iranian) composition written for the cello. This piece, entitled “Tchahargah”, was written in 1921 by Souren Arakelian, a professor at the Tehran Conservatory of Music. To commemorate this anniversary, the Persian Dutch Network has published an anthology which includes cello works by four generations of Persian composers between the years 1921 to 2021.

Compiled by Pejman Akbarzadeh, these compositions have mostly been collected and restored from the private archives in Tehran, Paris, and Montreal. “A delay in working on this anthology could mean losing the first Persian cello pieces”, Akbarzadeh told BBC. “Early manuscripts were in poor condition and had to be preserved for posterity.” he added.

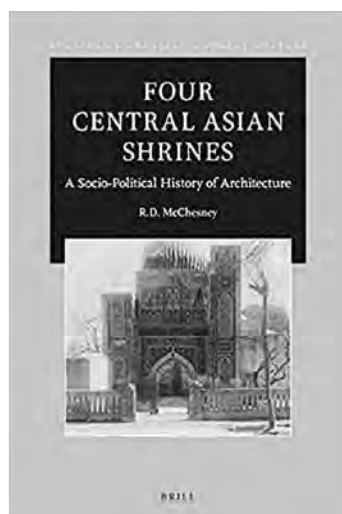
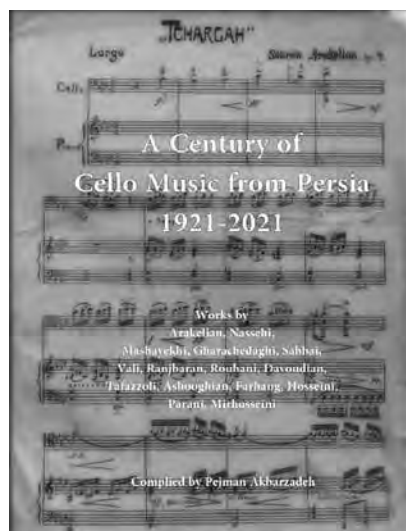
It is hoped that by publishing the anthology, public awareness will be raised on Persian cello music, a genre that has been ignored until now in the world of music. Another goal is to encourage the cellists around the world to perform these neglected but amazing pieces.

“A Century of Cello Music from Persia: 1921-2021” includes the following pieces:

1. Tchahargah (1921) Souren Arakelian
2. Shur (1953) Hossein Nassehi
3. Sonate (1965) Alireza Mashayekhi
4. Dialogue (1973) Sheida Gharachedaghi
5. Persian Song (1984) Iradj Sahbai
6. Oriental (1992) Mehran Rouhani
7. Elegy (1998) Behzad Ranjbaran
8. Sonata for Cello and Piano (2003) M. Reza Tafazzoli
9. Sonata for cello and Piano (2012) Rebecca Ashooghian
10. Persian Folk Songs (2017) Reza Vali
11. A capella (2017) Alireza Farhang
12. Rapture (2017) Kaveh Mirhosseini
13. Avaz-e Jaan (2019) Shahab Paranj
14. Persian Suite (2021) Kazem Davoudian
15. Ctesiphon (2021) Mehdi Hosseini

The libraries and academic institutions are welcome to add this anthology to their collection.

For more information please contact: info [at] persiandutch.com



Four Central Asian Shrines

A Socio-Political History of Architecture

R.D. McChesney

(Brill 2021)

Throughout Central Asia, shrines (Muslim) have served as community centers and are an integral part of the cities landscape. In this book the author looks at their architecture through their social history; why was the shrine built, who are responsible for their maintenance and who is attracted to them for pilgrimage of tourism?

Much of the shrine's history is revealed in its interiors such as the people and/or artifacts buried within and what makes them sacred. After reading this book one will no longer perceive a shrine as simply a building. The walls will speak. An undeniable fact remains, the Muslim shrines located in central Asia were and continue to be places of beauty. The intricacy and use of mosaic tiles are always breathtaking.

EAGER FOR A SLICE OF VILLAGE LIFE? IRAN IS YOUR TASTE

Tehran Times: May 31, 2022 – There are numerous remote and off-beat villages on the Iranian plateau that attract throngs of visitors eager for a slice of village life, natural marvels, and a tradition of cleanliness. Villages in Iran are stunning examples of what ancient Persians were capable of doing. Many of them have long histories and have been around for four-digit year counts.

These superb settlements represent slices of the history, knowledge, culture, art, and lifestyle of Iran. Iranian villages are the top choices for a weekend gate-away and are much asked for among international tourists. In recent years, a soaring number of travelers are looking for something different such as spending a day in tranquil countryside, picking fresh fruits, watching rice grow, fishing by the seaside, eating traditional dishes, or even staying with locals. Moreover, the United Nations World Tourism Organization sees rural tourism as a type of activity in which the visitor's experience is related to a wide range of products generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle, culture, angling, and sightseeing.

Here is a Selection of Popular Iranian Villages: Masuleh

Masuleh rises as one massive interconnected and multi-leveled public space that blends of stairways, narrow alleys, and LEGO-shaped houses to one another. The UN body aims to turn the spotlight on the “uniqueness” of each village to make tourism a means for further development in rural areas. “We want to recognize the uniqueness of each village and showcase the best initiatives to make tourism a means for a better future in rural areas.

As we restart tourism, we work to ensure that we leave no one - and no village- behind,” according to UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili. Alike agritourism, rural tourism is seen as a win-win situation both for local communities, and post-modern travelers who are in search of unique experiences.

Home to some of the most stunning landscapes in the country, Masuleh is a one-thousand-year-old stepped village and a major touristic destination in Iran.

According to experts, its history can be traced back to a site that now lies six



kilometers northwest of modern-day Masuleh. Here, nature, architecture, and the community flourish together in northern Iran. This is a village built not by trained architects, but by the inhabitants themselves. Most extraordinary of all, however, is Masuleh's ingenious use of public space: with no marked boundaries, all rooftops double as courtyards, gardens, and public thoroughfares for the inhabitants on the level above.

Uramanat:

Some of the most astonishing villages in Iran have been shaped on the slopes of high mountains and steep grounds. Uramanat village is an example of the unique architecture of these villages, same as Masuleh in Gilan province. Located in the western mountains of Iran, with houses on top of each other forming a waterfall shape, this striking village is a prominent example of how humans truly integrate with nature and the surrounding environment. At an altitude of 1,450 meters above sea level, the village enjoys mild weather in spring and summer, and cold weather during fall and winter. Uramanat is a vast and mountainous area of Zagros, which includes the entire south of Kordestan province.

Meymand:

If you're looking for a historical cave village in Iran, halfway through a hot desert located in the heart of Iran, then Meymand is your next destination.

As one of the most spectacular villages of Iran, masses of historical sites and archaeological ruins are within any wanderer's eye-shot that visits this awe-inspiring village in Iran. According to sources, Meymand has been continuously inhabited for 2,000 to 3,000 years, making it one of Iran's four oldest surviving villages. With rocky caves made of layers of magma stocked on each other over a

long time, Meymand is a natural eye-catching dwelling settlement and a gold mine for those interested in Iran's history and rocky settlements.

Ziarat

Ziarat village is situated in the heights of Alborz mountains with some nice verdant jungles, rural roads, and a small-sized stupendous waterfall at the end of the village that attracts many nature lovers annually. The best time to visit this historical village is mid-spring and early summer, while the weather is not too hot and you can still feel a few cold breezes brushing against your face in the morning and at night. Ziarat village can be described as a calm, relaxing, conservative, and ancient environment for everybody.

Kandovan

Kandovan village is one of the most stunning and mesmerizing rocky villages in Iran with unique architectural design, scenic views, and hundreds of limestone caves, still used for shops or houses.

Just like Meymand, houses in Kandovan are tucked in within a mountain environment. It is said that this attractive village has been partially formed by volcanic remains from strong Mount Sahand eruptions some hundreds of years ago. Also, there is a rocky hotel in Kandovan that has rack-carved rooms and spaces.

Abyaneh

Claimed the title of the red village because of its red soil and its houses, Abyaneh is an ancient Iranian village located 70 kilometers south of the city Kashan in Isfahan province.

The village is small and pinched into the slopes of the mountainside. Roofs of some houses are courtyards of other ones, the same way that other villages in Iran like Meymand in Kerman or Masuleh in Mazandaran are designed, the integration of housing into the natural environment on steep slopes.

Dating from some 2000 years ago, the village embraces an exquisite historical establishment, going way back into the past when the Sassanian empire ruled over Iran. Interestingly, its residents always dress up in their traditional clothing to show their respect for the customs inherited from them by their ancestors.

Iran/Persia the Cradle of Civilization

Iran/Persia was and still is a cradle of civilization and has a great culture, civilization, rich mythology, and history. Persians/Iranians gave to the world many great scientists, poets, and philosophers such as: Khayyam, the great Persian mathematician, astronomer, philosopher, and poet; Rhazes, the father of psychology and psychotherapy, the father of pediatrics, a pioneer in ophthalmology, and also first to categorize the hospital dept as well. Many scholars consider Rhazes one of the greatest medical physicians. Rhazes also discovered numerous compounds and chemicals including alcohol and sulfuric acid.

Bubares was a Persian engineer in the service of the Achaemenid Persian Empire, 500 BC. Bubares built the Xerxes Canal. Other famous Iramians include: Khwarizmi, the father of Algebra and Algorithm; Nasir Tusi; Mani; Borzuya; Fakhrudin Razi; Jamshid Kashani; Abd Rahman Sufi; Avicenna; Ferdowsi; Hafez; Saadi; Attar; Qutb Din Shirazi.

The Persian emperors such as Cyrus the Great, Shapur I the Great, Darius the Great, etc.

They are among the best scientists, poets, philosophers, kings, and emperors of human history. Persians/Iranians gave to the world: Sulfuric acid; Alcohol; the first practical windmills; Persian gardens; an ancient type of evaporative cooler and refrigerator; ice cream; rosewater; the art of tile-work; Qanat; Polo; Algebra; Philosophy; Mathematics; Astronomy; pipey running water; Postal service, etc. Sulfuric acid today is used to make many substances from fertilizers to detergents and has impacted everything from agriculture to our domestic lives. Throughout history, Persia/Iran was always a cradle of science, contributing to medicine, mathematics, astronomy, and philosophy. Iranian/Persian culture and history goes back 7,000 years ago. From Jiroft in 6,000 BC, Susa 6,000 BC, Elam civilization 3,200 BC, Achaemenids 550 BC, Parthians 247 BC, Sassanids 224 AD, etc.

In the Persian empire, in Persepolis palace in Iran/Persia female workers had paid maternity leave. The Persians were also known for having women take part in high governmental positions such as in construction, administration, politics, etc. as evident by the record-keeping clay tablets throughout Persepolis. This is something that would not be seen until at least many centuries after. The Persian language is one of the oldest languages.

Persian literature is one of the world's oldest literature. Persian literature is described as one of the great literatures of humanity, and it is one of the four main bodies of world literature.

(Thanks to Dr. Mohammed Ala and Kaveh Farrokh for sharing this information)

MAZANDARAN TOURISM IN NEED OF CLEAR, INCLUSIVE ROADMAP

Tehran Times, May 31, 2022: The newly-appointed deputy tourism chief of Mazandaran says the northern Iranian province requires a clear and comprehensive roadmap in the realm of tourism development. "We still do not have a comprehensive plan or roadmap to define the provincial tourism management through an integrated and balanced view," IRNA quoted Mohammad-Ali Shafiei as saying on Monday.

Shafiei made the remarks during his inauguration ceremony, adding "The tourism industry, particularly in Mazandaran, is very complicated and it cannot be seen one-dimensionally. For this reason, the priority that I am pursuing, with the help of colleagues, is to develop a comprehensive tourism plan for the province."

"Although we have many tourism-related events in Mazandaran, which draws millions of travelers every year, we do not have a comprehensive strategy that integrates the events in the field of tourism."

Of course, over the past couple of years, several (provincial) authorities have made attempts to formulate such a plan, but it did not come to fruition for various reasons, including lack of credit. Elsewhere in his remarks, the official reminded one of the World Tourism Organization's mottoes "Accessible Tourism for All", saying "Achieving this goal requires a precise definition of tourism and the optimum use of all available capacities in the province."

Earlier this year, domestic vacationers made almost 14 million overnight stays across Mazandaran during the two-week Noruz holidays (started March 21).

Sandwiched between the towering Alborz mountain range and the Caspian Sea, Mazandaran has a rich yet turbulent history. An early civilization flourished at the beginning of the first millennium BC in Mazandaran (Tabarestan).

Its insecure eastern and southeastern borders were crossed by Mongol invaders in the 13th and 14th centuries. Cossacks attacked the region in 1668 but were repulsed. It was ceded to the Russian Empire by a treaty in 1723, but the Russians were never secure in their occupation. The area was restored to Iran under the Qajar dynasty.

The northern section of the region consists of lowland alongside the Caspian and upland along the northern slopes of the Alborz Mountains. Marshy backlands dominate the coastal plain, and extensive gravel fans fringe the mountains. The climate is permanently subtropical and humid, with very hot summers.



How Classical Persian Poetry Can Lift Us Through Life's Difficulties

YAS RAHEMTULLA

CONTENT WARNING: MENTION OF MENTAL ILLNESS

A friend's grandfather passed away last month. When I told her I'd be writing this blog post, she mentioned that her grandmother found Omar Khayyam's Rubaiyat on her Alexa, and how listening to it helped her to cope with her loss. Persis (the heart of the Persian empire) is modern-day Iran. This is the homeland of literature that grounded our understanding of philosophy, astrology, folklore, all bound up in poetic verse. I'm not sure what it was like in 400 BC, but taking a moment to pause and gather energy amongst our chaos feels like the hardest thing in the world sometimes.

Wilderness is Paradise now – Khayyam

The most famous Persian poets (Rumi, Hafiz, Ferdowsi) were writing just under a thousand years ago. Why are they needed more than ever? The age of these poems doesn't make them irrelevant, but instead gives them a unique quality of timelessness. These ideas have aged as eternal truths from people who have suffered, believed, struggled. The content of these poems becomes a source of comfort. The beauty of their form offers escape.

The lyricism captured in these works mirrors the art of physical Islamic sanctuaries. There is a clarity and precision similar to the geometric star tiles that line the ceilings of mosques; they create a space for reflection, so we can focus inwardly. These expertly crafted lines have become mantras of positivity and understanding, they become phrases we can repeat when we are overwhelmed.

Throughout my life, I've spent months locked indoors, feeling trapped in a body that's filled up with fear, sadness and shame. I know I'm not alone in this, depression is the most treated illness by the NHS, but the feeling of being completely alone makes the people we love feel too far away to reach out to. When depressive thoughts weigh me down, I just can't concentrate: the idea of reading a book feels impossible. But a few words, that's manageable. A few words can help, they're within reach of everyone.

Silence is the language of god, all else is poor translation – Rumi

Even though some may be wary of any connotations or mention of God, these poems reframe our relation to the concept of God. The presence of a God in Persian literature strengthens our personal experience of this poetry: the messages are guided by this presence. God is not there as an authority, instead a figure to support our learning, structuring a peace that is free from prejudice.

I wish I could show you, when you are lonely or in darkness, the Astonishing Light of your own Being! – Hafiz

Persian literature authentically explores the human condition. Reading Rumi feels like a conversation with a kind friend. He discusses real emotions; from ecstatic joy and love to grief and loss. While Hafiz will speak to you with tender honesty,



Eastern philosophy honours emotional pain and recognises its purpose. Depression and sadness are trying to tell you something and they are a reality. Persian poetry offers a platform to give those feelings our attention.

A lot of my work life and free time is spent striving towards social change, but when I wake up in the morning I feel increasingly weak as I scroll through the news: the Home Office continues its dehumanisation of refugees and asylum seekers. Charities in Glasgow have to provide for these communities, while the government continues to persecute migrants. It's more than just 'news' to me, my dad moved here as a refugee when he was 16 and has saved countless lives through his work in the medical field. Forcibly displaced people are not statistics! I despair silently. Then I listen to Rumi's words in my head. I regain my strength and keep going.

Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself – Rumi

The philosophy of these poems becomes a guide to navigate us through life's challenges. Even though I've lived in a state of solitude over the past year, I still have to make a conscious effort to reach a peaceful state. Silence and stillness are so rare that the act of taking a moment to rest is like giving capitalism a big kick. Persian literature contains pan-continental wisdom and the focus on the replenishing qualities of spending time alone, come from the Eastern side. Through meditation we can reflect and understand our own reality. These are principles that have been recognised by Buddhism and Hinduism since the BC days, but are only now starting to be taken seriously here.

It's hard to go from the manic buzz of the digital world to being left with your own thoughts and staring into the black mirror. Persian poetry provides me with an easy step from compulsive distractions towards calmness and stillness. Familiar like a mantra, these words show me that I already have the solutions to my own problems. It is so tempting to look elsewhere for happiness – relationships, work, physical objects – but Persian poets remind us that those things will never give us what we imagine they will.

RADICAL ACCEPTANCE

The lack of judgement in Persian poetry is essential: once we can accept every emotion without judgement, our healing will begin. The psychologist Carl Rogers observed that "the curious paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change". Radical acceptance of our situation, however bad it may be, can be the answer to lifting ourselves out of our current mindset. This is how we regain our sense of agency.

The whole universe is contained within a single human being – you. Everything that you see around, including the things that

you might not be fond of and even the people you despise or abhor, is present within you in varying degrees – Shams Tabrizi

The lack of judgement also extends compassion to the other people. Time spent alone can be healing, but human connection is essential to a happy life. I Know the Way You Can Get by Hafiz is one of my favourite poems because it explains how the lack of love can twist anyone’s behaviour into cruelty. Hafiz explains that you will act unrecognisably if you “have not had a drink of Love” for a long time. This poetry teaches a deep respect and compassion for the people around us.

One theme of Persian poetry that gives me hope in the face of increasing prejudice and intolerance is another poem by Hafiz. How Does it Feel to be a Heart is a popular choice for same-sex wedding ceremonies because it explains the unimportance of gender in a way that often feels lost in modern society.

For all I know is Love. I find my heart infinite, and everywhere -Hafiz

The focus on the individual allows me to strengthen myself and facilitates inner, personal change. People who lose their sense of agency get trapped. I often get stressed about populism, I can see that it’s spreading and how well far-right ideals are spun. I spiral into fear about the way the world is. Anything I do is a tiny scratch against everything that’s wrong. But this poetry is powerful, and it contains a message of hope in the face of despair. Modern day Iran is collapsing and the country’s beloved literature is giving people the strength to continue living through oppressive conditions. The words of Rumi, Ferdowsi, Hafiz and Khayyam and others remind us that things have not always been this way.

Fret not where the road will take you. Instead concentrate on the first step. That is the hardest part and that is what you are responsible for. Once you take that step let everything do what it naturally does and the rest will follow. Don’t go with the flow. Be the flow. – Shams Tabrizi

Persian poetry can help lift us through the worst periods of our lives by celebrating the details of everyday existence. Finding joy in a smile or a small movement is everything. The poets point towards ways that we can enjoy our daily reality, while arming us with poignant philosophy that is wrapped in gentle verse.

It’s important to remember that the English interpretation of these poems will always be missing something. Unless you speak one of the region’s languages, you’ll most likely be reading a white, male translation of these poems. Fitzgerald’s Victorian translation of Omar Khayyam’s Rubaiyat has been strongly criticised for its empirical approach to the poem. John Keats expressed in his poem, Lamia, “philosophy will clip an angel’s wings” – modern Western culture readily places science and logic above everything else with a rigidity that means we lose some of our humanity.

I see the words of Persian poetry as a precious gift, from humans who lived long before us – their words will continue to lift future generations through life’s difficulties, too. It is their simplicity that breaks down barriers.

All a Sane man can ever care about Is giving Love! – Hafiz

Yas Rahemtulla lives, writes and designs in Glasgow. She worked with forcibly displaced communities in Athens before moving to Scotland. Yas has a degree in Digital Media and a holistic approach to creative work, focusing her energy on promoting community-led organisations and social enterprises. She works with Glasgow Social Enterprise Network, is a trustee of the Marie Collins Foundation and is an advocate for mutual aid.

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The pistachio is one of the most important dried fruits in the world and has a high nutritional value including: heart health benefits: Because of their relatively high levels of antioxidants, good fats and plant sterols, pistachios are great for maintaining cardiovascular health and preventing heart attacks. Research shows that adding pistachios to your daily diet can prevent heart disease.

Lower Blood Sugar: Research shows that pistachios reduce blood pressure, body mass index and C-reactive protein, a marker of inflammation in the body.

Cancer Prevention: Antioxidants play an important role in reducing the risk of disease, such as cancer. Pistachios contain more antioxidants than most nuts and seeds.

Weight loss: Because of their caloric values and fiber and protein content pistachios are great for losing weight or maintaining it.

Preventing constipation: The fiber in pistachios helps digestion and prevents constipation. The fiber in the nuts is also digested by the food bacteria in your stomach and acts as a probiotic.

Absorption of Iron: Pistachios are rich in copper; the mineral that helps with the higher absorption of iron into the body from food sources. The origin of the pistachio dates back nine thousand years ago. The Persian pistachio has a flavor that is distinguishable against others. The country also boasts to have more than sixty varieties, because of the number of regions to cultivate and grow them. Each variety has a local name attached.

The Persian pistachios, based on their appearance, are either hazelnut or almond shape.

The two varieties classified as hazelnut shape are as follows:

Fandoghi, which is the

PESTEH (Green Almond)

What Are Different Types of Persian Pistachios

Sources: *Nazari Co* info@nazari-pistachio.com, Persiansarenotarabs.com and Grandorco.com



most cultivated type among other varieties in Iran. It has a high volume of production and therefore reasonably priced. It is the most exported type of Iranian pistachio.

Kalle Ghouchi is round and larger than the Fandoghi. Because of its larger, distinctive kernel, and high level of unsaturated fat it is considered a perfect choice for snacks.

The almond shaped are now cultivated mostly in Khorasan, Kerman, and Yazd. They too have two varieties. **Akbari** is the longest variety and has the darkest shell color. It is also the most expensive due to the fact it needs more time and maintenance to fully grow. **Ahmad Aghaei** is larger than Fandoghi but smaller than the Akbari. Most farmers prefer to grow the Ahmad Aghaei pistachio because of its high yield and shorter production time.

As the variety of the pistachio is important, equally important is the kernel inside. The "normal" pistachio kernel is usually obtained by breaking the closed-shell pistachio. The **Kaal** kernel is obtained from pistachios that have not yet fully developed and are picked much earlier from the tree. The "green" kernel, to obtain this luxurious food in-

gredient, goes under the skinning process. Green peeled pistachio kernels are known for their fresh green color and unique taste.

Persian pistachios are also divided into four different groups based on their size and shape. The round pistachio is smaller than most. The surface color of the kernel is purple, and the color of the skin is cream. The jumbo is one of the best varieties in Iran and is one of the most commercial and economical types. Its popularity is due to its large nuts and good taste. This kernel has a red-gray core color and its skin a bone-white color. The long pistachio is larger than the jumbo pistachio. Due to its delicious kernel and large size, it is widely used as a luxury nut. It is usually used for making pistachio slices because of the length. The color of its kernel is purple, and the color of the bone skin is very light. And finally, the super long pistachio which is almond-shaped with a unique taste and texture and produced only in Iran. It is popular for its highest economic value among other types and is popular in East Asia, Europe, and Russia. The surface color of the kernel is purple-brown, and the bone skin color is dark cream.

Most believe that the ingredients to their flavor success is their high content of fat and proper cultivation conditions in Iran. The high altitude of pistachio orchards in Iran are located between 800 and 2,000 meters above sea level.

Before the pistachio comes to market they must be processed. The Persian pistachio has a remarkable roasting capability, roasting is a well-known trick for the elimination of live bacteria or insect contamination. The pistachio has different layers of skin that can be separated through processing. Pistachio processing, includes separating the skin layers from pistachio, washing, and sorting, is done in a place called a pistachio recording terminal. Pistachio terminals are usually located in cities that produce pistachios in large quantities.

In the traditional processing most of the work is done manually. This method is very slow and costly. The semi-mechanized processing includes the mechanical cleaning, and preparing of the pistachios. Pistachios are then dried under the sunlight in the pistachio terminal.

The third type of processing is mechanized. All the steps in pistachio production are performed by the machine including drying without need for sunlight. All the stages of pistachio processing are done by machines. In addition, the pistachio sorter separates the open-shelled and closed-shell pistachios. Also, typical defects such as insect-damaged, moldy, decayed, shriveled, broken, and any other foreign materials will be removed mechanically.

It is true that the United States has surpassed Iran in terms of producing pistachio. But Persian pistachios can take advantage of this asset (better taste), and still have the best pistachio nuts in the global markets.



AN INTERVIEW WITH Ms. Eshrat Moyad Ghorashi Ahkami 100TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION (MOTHER, EDUCATOR, AND CULTURAL ACTIVIST)

By Mr. Mohammad Moinfar

Mr. Moinfar is a researcher, writer and editor in chief of the highly respected literary publication *Bagh e Khaboushan*. He dedicates this interview to our intellectual elders to recognize their contributions to society.

Dear Mrs. Ahkami tell us about your childhood and adolescent years.

I was born in 1921 in Quchan. My family was highly educated and respected in the community. My father was a physician (Majid M. Ghorashi). His family included health professionals in Quchan. He also was a successful landowner in Quchan. My father passed away in 1961 at the age of 80. My mother, literate for her time, also came from a respected family. I had two sisters and three brothers. My two elderly brothers became successful physicians and engineers and were the first two from Quchan to be accepted to attend Tehran University. My third brother became a teacher and taught history and geography.

There was a short period of time where your education was disrupted can you explain why?

After getting my 9th grade diploma there was an open enrollment for mid-wifery school in Mashad. After six months of training, when I was going to start the practical training, I did not have the heart to continue. I dropped out of that school and based on the advice of my father, I started teaching in the same school that I did my elementary learning.

At the time of your attendance in school you had the privilege to have a professor called Dr. Shariati who in some ways led the way to the Iranian revolution. If you don't mind tell us your experience as a student of Dr. Shariati and what your perception was of him as your professor?

During the course of my motherhood and returning to my teaching career, I decided to get my high school diploma,

which I received from the teachers school. After a few years of teaching my brother encouraged me to go to Ferdowsi University, Mashad. I started my studies in geography. One of my professors at the university was Dr. Shariati. I had tremendous respect for him because I could see the authenticity in his words and his dedication to his work and cause. My father donated a house for the poor mullahs who lived in the vicinity. It happened that the father of Mr. Khameni lived there. It was in this house that Mr. Khameni (the leader of the Islamic Republic) was born.

Tell us a little about your husband and how was it that you met him?

He was my dad's cousin and best friends with one of my brothers. My husband was a kind, loving and gentle man. He was hospitable, caring and a wonderful father who actively participated in raising the children.

Please introduce us to your children.

I have three sons two doctors and one engineer. I also have two daughters and 10 grandchildren who are very dear to me and are successful in their professional lives. All their spouses have been wonderful to me, and I am filled with gratitude for their love. My son Shahrokh's wife, Nahid has been an active member of her community and has brought awareness about the Persian culture. She with friends initiated the Persian Parade in the NY- NJ area. My son Behzad's wife Laleh is also a great pleasure to be with. She is always kind and loving. My son Pirous's wife Dr. Farideh is a successful professor. Dr. Farid, whom I am sure you know, is a professor and physician, and my daughter Simin's husband. He is a wonderful, kind and caring son-in-law. My daughter Mina's husband,

who was a scientist, passed away some time ago. I take great pride in all of them and am grateful for all they have done for me. I am very lucky.

What did you do during your teaching career?

Our school was the only high school for girls in Quchan. I was the school principal. At this school there were three majors literature, science, and home economics. I was in charge of the home economic section.

One of your accomplishments has been to find and develop the "Women's Foundation." Can you go into detail and include what encouraged you to continue on this path?

I and a few other women decided to open an office for the development of women in Quchan and help women and their families, through education and other means. My major intention was for women to get an education, find their in-



Mrs. Ahkami is awarded by Khorasan's Governor

dependence and become more aware of culture and opportunities that could empower them.

How many members did this organization have?

Approximately 10 members.

What occurred that you were given the Best Mother of the Year title.?

Because of my activism in the community and education, the Governor of Khorasan, in 1977, bestowed this title upon me.

One of your major activities as a teacher and mentor was to create plays and acting roles for your students. Did you ever act in any of your own theatrical events?

No, I did not, we only made sure that the students enjoyed themselves and were taken care of properly.

Did you write your own plays?

No, Mr. Ismaeli would write the plays, but the students were so talented they also played a role in developing it.

You had mentioned in the past that one of your great aunts Bibi Ghorashieh was a poet.

My aunt wrote mostly religious poetry and sometimes wrote poetry that prescribed to social issues as well.

You have lived the life of a model teacher and have experienced both the sweetness of life and its devastation. Can you share with us some of the best and worst experiences?

My most precious moments were the birth of my children. Each time I had a new child I would take time off from school and stop teaching for a while. After my first child I stayed home for 4 years to take care of him. I then returned to teaching.

What was the most devastating?

Losing the ones, I loved was the most devastating. The loss of my brother Mahmoud severely impacted me. He was kind and loving and played a huge role in my life. One of the local papers wrote in his obituary the following:

“A great scholar, an honorable individual and a great Doctor has passed. He was a great human being, he deserved

honor and respect as he was a man of integrity and honesty. He dedicated his life to humanity and was of service to his community. All his students, colleagues, friends, and family respected him for who he was, a dedicated honorable individual who until his last breath was of service to mankind. His teachers will never forget the person he was.”

You have traveled many places around the world such as India, England, Egypt the United States, and many other places, is that right?

Yes, I loved being in Egypt, Paris, India, all of it!

Tell us, based on over a century of experience and a lifetime of travels, what recommendation or advice can you give our readers and the young people of this world?

I recommend that our tolerant and humble citizens should not continue to endure the force of oppression and suppression. At all times they should stand up and defend their rights. They should choose a path of honesty, friendship, kindness, and morality, that's all.

Mrs. Ahkami, on behalf of our publication I thank you for your time and this great interview and wish you all the health and joy in the world. I hope to see you next year for another interview.



Mother's Day Speech by Mrs.Ahkami

A STORY BY

Sheikh Hassan Jouri

As I was passing through the vicinity of Jondi Shahpour I heard a tale by Khajeh Mohamad Mahtab which I will take to my grave with me.

As I walk, I see a man under the heat of the sun, signing and sewing yarn, I went up to him and said” Can you the man of God teach how to love so I can learn to love thy God”

Mahtab says- Tell me if any piece of writing has ever inspired you? I said NO

Mahtab says- Tell me has any flower that has blossomed in your garden ever taken your breath away and away from your sorrows? I said NO

Mahtab, Tell me has any voice or sound thrilled you? I said NO

Mahtab, Tell me has a beautiful face ever transformed you so much that you do not notice the path or the way into the well? I said NO

Mahtab, Tell me have you ever whispered a song under the rain drops. I said NO

Mahtab, Tell me Have you ever gazed at the sky to look for the snow drops and felt it on your skin and warming your soul? I said NO

Mahtab, Tell me has a child's laughter ever given you so much joy? I said NO

Mahtab, Tell me have you ever come across a poem, a writing, a quote that has jilted your soul so that you would if standing sit and if sitting stand up on your two feet? I said NO

Mahtab, Tell me has the clarity of water, or the tallness of the tree, or the softness of a leaf, or the struggles of an ant, triggered a tear to fall on to your face? I said NO

Mahtab Tell me have you ever laughed to another's laughter and cried to another's tears? I said NO

Mahtab, Tell me have you ever fallen in love with a book, a painting, or a teacher? I said NO

Mahtab, Tell me have you ever been mesmerized by looking at an apple or a pomegranate before taking a bite out of it? I said NO

Mahtab- Tell me have you ever caressed your face, your eyes, your ears and your brow with an expression of love and nurturing? I said NO

Mahtab, Distance yourself from you as one can teach love to a ROCK but not YOU!