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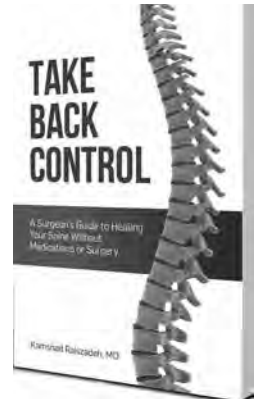
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All written submissions to Persian Heritage with the expectation of publication in the magazine must include the writer's name, address and telephone number. When an article is submitted we assume the author has complete ownership of the article and the right to grant permission for publication.

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

With the arrival of the Christian New Year and departure of a year filled with horror, war, destruction, oppression, poverty, and despair, I extend my heartfelt greetings to our loyal readers of *Persian Heritage*, to dear friends and companions and to advocates of peace and harmony. I hope the New Year serves as a healing balm for the deep and painful wounds of the people throughout the world.

A friend asked me to speak and write about friendship, kindness, joy, and merriment in "A Word with the Readers." Accepting this suggestion proved so difficult and impossible that I responded with tear-filled eyes and a trembling, hesitant voice: "How can one entertain oneself and their readers with humor, jest, and pleasant conversation in the face of such adversity, injustice, crime, massacre, and ruthlessness, falsehood, and deception?" My friend withdrew, leaving me with a cold farewell, without a word, to my harsh and sharp response.

Unfortunately, every time the final days of the pages of "Mirass-e-Iran" approach, the publication is delayed due to my part hoping and anticipating positive changes in Iran's circumstances. Then the pressure builds up to print the magazine. This compels me to pick up the pen and once again write these lines under the influence of conditions filled with pain, hardship, bitterness, and despair, regret, and concern. Theft, embezzlement, corruption by shameless officials, and the ruling elite's lavish lifestyle is destroying Iran. Iran with its human and natural resources could be a leading country in the world, yet these shameless leaders, instead, have emptied the national treasury. Under the pretext of sanctions, they continually oppress and impoverish the people. They solve their financial problems by raising the prices of the dollar and foreign currencies daily, without holding the thieves accountable.

For anyone reading the daily news of Iran, hearing about the embezzlement of 3.4 billion dollars, by the owners of the Debsh Tea Company importing low-quality and worthless African teas instead of Ceylon and Indian tea, and creating a fuss in an effort to divert the people's minds from their demands and needs. The government neglects to prosecute and punish the thieves and gradually let the issue fade into oblivion.

African teas instead of Indian tea reminds me of my university days. With two friends from the same city, one like me a student and the other an army officer, we were heading home in the darkness of the night when a man on a bicycle stopped in front of us. He pulled a package of tea from the bag behind his bicycle and by opening the package, said to our

officer friend, "Lieutenant, I've taken this tea from my work instead of my wage. It's very high quality. By buying this tea you will make my wife and children happy."

After the Lieutenant smelled the tea and liked it. We each bought several packages of tea from the cyclist, emptied his full bag, and arrived home, thinking we helped the cyclist and his family. At a friend's house, the Lieutenant's friend was waiting, and as soon as he saw the teas, he started mocking us. By boiling and making the tea from it sipping a bit of that tea, he showed us that what we had bought was tea dust. I still wonder to this day how one can easily take advantage of the simplicity and good intentions of individuals and easily deceive them. This is exactly like the behavior of the incompetent, unscrupulous, stealing, and cunning rulers who, as quickly as possible, are emptying the national treasury and filling their personal accounts in the banks of the Persian Gulf, Canada, and other Western countries.

The problem of the people of Iran is not just unemployment, poverty, and destitution. There are families with meager pensions of a deceased father or spouse, supporting two or three dependent families, namely the spouse, children, and descendants who, due to unemployment or illness, must survive with a meager retirement income of a deceased person. Do they not have a sense or feeling and obligation to extend a hand to those who suffer?

Sometimes, I question in my mind whether the government and rulers are being incompetent or intentionally engage everyone by creating these problems. When the head of the family leaves home in the morning, all his concerns are about how to bring bread to the table for his spouse and children. If they don't receive their wages or find a job, how should he return home at night?

One and a half years ago when the "Women, Life, Freedom" movement began, many Iranians, including Mahsas, young people, and teenagers, stood up for a simple and human demand: the freedom to choose clothing, express opinions, and practice their religion and beliefs. In this movement, generations over 30 were not seen in the crowds of protesters. It was the third generations post revolution who had taken up the banners demanding freedom. We saw that every day many young people continue to be executed on various pretexts such as theft, corruption, etc. Iran has set a shameful record in the world with the increasing number of these executions, surpassing China, the United States, the Emirates and Saudi Arabia, which were once leaders in shameless executions.

Today, the Chinese Foreign Minister, at a banquet while holding a glass of wine, stated that there is no solution other than having friendly relations and coexistence with the United States. In other words, Communist China, an ideological, political, and economic rival to the United States, still not the world's number one in terms of economic-industrial and military power, is explaining and recommending to have a co-existent relationship with rivals such as United States, in contrast to what we have witnessed in Iran over the past forty years.

The incompetent rulers have done whatever possible to strengthen their position and maintain their dominance and power. Blowing the horn against their number one enemy, the United States, and then calling for the destruction of Israel, for over forty years, has yielded nothing but the destruction of the country's industrial and economic foundations, its natural resources, and production. The increasing pressure on people's lives and the use of threatening language have not yielded any achievements for their people. Instead, massive amounts of capital have been spent in the past 40 years in foreign Arab countries such as Syria, Yemen, Lebanon, Palestine, and Iraq, building schools, medical centers, providing electricity and energy to Iraq, water to Kuwait, etc., leading to financial pressure, poverty, and shortages for the people of Iran.

In the given statistics, over 900,000 children have dropped out of school and the poverty rate has grown over 40%.

In recent events in the Middle East Arab countries have remained silent. Erdogan, the cunning and clever politician of Turkey, has not taken any action but offers one or two slogans and artificial empathy. However, the leaders of the Islamic government, from the first day started shouting slogans and readiness for war, creating noises that serve as an excuse for the U.S. and Israel to think about an attack similar to Iraq or Afghanistan. Every day, with threats and condemning Iran for proxy involvement in the war, they prepare public opinion in the United States for the possibility of such an attack. Just as during the attack on Iraq, they entered the war with such deceit and plan. Despite all the claims they had, they handed Saddam's head to the gallows leaving his country divided.

A few days ago, on the anniversary of Qasem Soleimani's death, in Kerman, over hundreds of our compatriots were killed and nearly 200 were injured in a shocking terrorist incident. First of all, I express my condolences to the people of Iran, especially the families who lost their loved ones, and wish the injured a speedy recovery. After this incident, the United States and Israel claimed in the first minutes that they had no hand in this incident. The Islamic Republic of Iran pointed its accusing finger at Israel. Almost two days later, ISIS took responsibility for these attacks in an announcement by publishing two unrecognizable photos. However, a part of the people, due to their difficult conditions and the government's neglect of their hardships, as well as corruption in various ranks of the government and the large-scale thefts that

occur every day from the public wealth of this country, have lost trust in the government to the point that they are willing to accept that this horrific incident was also the work of the Islamic Republic. Just as in the terrorist operation Shah Cheraagh in Shiraz during the peak of the Women, Life, Freedom movement, which led to the deaths of more than ten people, some people said that the act was their own doing.

The relationship between the people and their government has deteriorated so much that even individuals like Mr. Khomeini's grandson admits it. Although Hassan Khomeini claimed with the repetition of empty and clichéd phrases: "... these bloods strengthen the roots of security in our country; because it creates national cohesion... Yesterday's incident in Kerman... will not cause insecurity but will increase security..." he later confessed with conservative language that the insecurity in the country stems from people's dissatisfaction with life. When people are not in harmony with the government, such events can happen again. He said: "The biggest factor in ensuring security in the country is the harmony of society with the government... You think the first ring around a person, an institution, or a building is the guards of the border number one?! No, protection of the border and beyond begins. But do not think that only that border guard provides security; the villager who has agriculture at the border provides security; the tradesman who has a shop in the border city, if he is in harmony with you, provides security. Anyone who lives in the lower or upper streets of the city, if he is sympathetic to the government, is like a security officer and, like a nail in the solid structure of the country".

In fact, the story of the Islamic Republic is the story of a lying shepherd with his crying wolf. Deception, lies, filling their pockets with billions of embezzled dollars, moral corruption against the people, interference in peoples private and personal affairs, and the issuance of harsh punishment for trivial crimes have shaken the people's trust. So much has the trust been shaken that even when the leaders speak the truth they are not believed. Now, the leader of the Islamic Republic claims that it is the language of God, and what God tells him is what he says to his audience! But the leader himself knows well that this method of oligarchy has greatly weakened people's belief in God and God's religion and no longer believes in such claims.

Once again, my heartfelt wish is for peace and security in the world for everyone and that prosperity and happiness for the oppressed people of Iran will prevail. Hoping for those days.

Shahrokh Alavi

LETTERS TO EDITOR

ALWAYS THANKFUL

Thank you, I appreciate your continued hard rewarding cultural work.

Mohamad Pourfar

THE GREAT ONE

Dear Editor:

I only wish we had world had leaders like Cyrus the Great; one who showed respect to all cultures; one who believed and pushed for education; one who honored our differences rather than fear them; and one who sought true unification.

A.B.

HISTORICAL ARTICLES

Dear Editor:

I do not know if anyone has ever written to you regarding the articles submitted by Kaveh Farrokh. They are so very unique and educational. They would take an enormous amount of time to find.

Please never stop printing them. While it is nice to learn about modern Iranian achievements the ancient contributions are equally important.

H.N.

DELIGHTFUL

Dear Editor:

The article *What is Persian Culture Known For* was simply delightful. Not many people know or understand the difference between Persian and Arab culture. There is a significant difference and this helps to clear things up.

K.S.

OFFER FOR SUBMISSIONS

Persian Heritage would like to give the opportunity to writers to be published. We are therefore offering to our writers to submit articles. The articles shall be reviewed for content appropriate for the magazine. While we will try to timely publish the articles, a specific time and issue shall not be promised. Permission must be granted to *Persian Heritage* that you own the article and have permission to allow this publication to publish same.

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**BEYOND A METROPOLIS:
TEHRAN'S SNOWY ESCAPES
FOR POWDER CHASERS**



Tehran Times, December 11, 2023, Iran is a country of remarkable contrasts. While it is renowned for having serene deserts that dazzle under the scorching sun, when winter reaches, a different facet of the ancient country emerges.

Nestled amidst this diverse landscape, there are exceptional ski opportunities. For instance, the Alborz mountain range, within easy reach of the Iranian capital, Tehran, hosts some of the world's most captivating ski resorts: Dizin, Tochal, Shemshak, and Darbandsar. Contrary to its scorching summers, Tehran's northern outskirts boast a winter wonderland that offers an escape from the urban hustle into a serene and snowy playground.

Dizin: A two-hour drive north of Tehran unveils Dizin, a sprawling haven for ski aficionados. With three gondolas and 12 chairlifts adorning its landscape, Dizin stands as Iran's largest ski resort. Its altitude of 3,600 meters offers adventurers an impressive vertical drop of over a kilometer.

The terrain caters perfectly to intermediate skiers and boarders, offering a gateway to advanced levels. Additionally, Dizin beckons with opportunities for get-togethers, making it a prime choice for those stepping into off-piste adventures.

Shemshak and Darbandsar: En route to Dizin, the journey reveals the charming neighboring resorts of Shemshak and Darbandsar. Despite their smaller size compared to Dizin, these resorts boast awe-inspiring on-piste terrains and towering mountains that tantalize backcountry enthusiasts.

Shemshak, with its double-chair lifts and enticing intermediate runs, is a haven for both on-piste and off-piste skiing experiences. Darbandsar, though smaller, offers a unique skiing thrill as it slopes on the side of the mountain, providing a distinctive skiing encounter. Tochal: In proximity to Tehran's northern outskirts, the Tochal ski resort stands as the smallest among the quartet. However, its charm lies in accessibility, reached via a scenic four-mile cable car journey.

Surpassing heights of 3963 meters, Tochal proudly claims its spot as the fifth-highest resort globally, ensuring an extended ski season from December to April, sometimes stretching into June.

Despite Iran's reputation for warm weather, these resorts boast a winter season that extends from November to May, thanks to their lofty altitudes. The terrain caters to skiers of all levels, from beginners to seasoned veterans, providing ample opportunities for thrilling descents and backcountry exploration.

So, whether you're an avid powder chaser or a novice eager to experience a new adventure, ski resorts near the Iranian capital promise an unforgettable winter escapade—a surprise for the country's rich tapestry of landscapes.

**Iran's Women's Football Defender
Mohammadi Dies in Car Crash**

Tehran Times, December 24, 2023 – Iran's women's football team defender Melika Mohammadi died in a car crash at night of December 23rd. She was 23.

Mohammadi represented Iran at senior level during the 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup qualification.

Her teammates Zahra Khajavi and Behnaz Taherkhani were also taken to the hospital in the rollover crash.

The accident happened in Bam, Kerman Province, when the Bam Khatoon players were returning from the training.

Tehran Times extends its deepest sympathy to Mohammadi's family, loved ones, and friends over her demise.



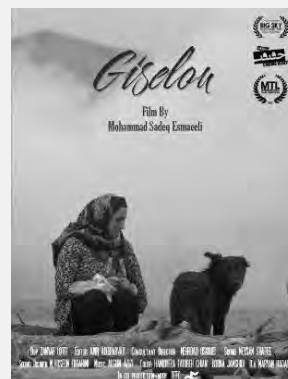
**Iranian "Giselou"
Among Finalists of TRT
International Documentary Awards**

Tehran Times, December 13, 2023, The Iranian documentary "Giselou" directed and produced by Mohammad Sadegh Esmaeili is among the finalists of the international category of the 14th TRT International Documentary Awards, set to be held from December 14 to 17 in Istanbul, Turkey.

A 2022 production, the 59-minute film shows Zahra, a young woman, whose husband abandoned her and her children five years ago. In order to acquire her children's birth certificates and finalize her divorce, she is forced to go looking for her husband in Afghanistan. The film follows Zahra on a brave and harrowing journey to gain independence and secure a future for her children, ILNA reported.

"Giselou" will compete in the international category with seven other films from Russia, Poland, South Korea, Burkina Faso, and the U.K. TRT International Documentary Awards is an annual documentary festival organized by Turkish Radio & TV Corporation. Its aim is to support the amateur and professional documentary filmmakers, enable audiences to view documentary films from various countries and form the groundwork where documentary filmmakers will meet and exchange their ideas.

Besides screening films, the 14th edition of the event presents various workshops, special events and meetings.



IN THE MEMORY OF OUR DEAR MOTHER

A LOVING FAREWEL TO ESHRAT GHORASHI-AHKAMI



Never to Be Forgotten

It is with deep sadness that we report the passing of Mrs. Eshrat Ahkami, the mother of our editor, Dr. Shahrokh Ahkami.

A life lived well, both in her profession as a teacher and her personal life. As a mother her love was complete. She will be deeply missed by her children and their spouses. She will be missed by her grandchildren for which she provided important life lessons. She will be missed by her great grandchildren who she so enjoyed. And, she will be missed by her friends of all ages.

We pray that the emptiness felt by those who remain will be quickly filled by the warm and loving memories she has left behind.



CHILDREN'S BOOK "A SWEET JAM" REPUBLISHED

Tehran Times, December 26, 2023-The 41st edition of the Iranian writer Hushang Moradi Kermani's children's book "A Sweet Jam" has recently been published.

Moein, the publisher of the book, released its first edition in 1998. Since then, "A Sweet Jam" has captivated readers across the globe, with translations in multiple languages and enthusiastic reception in various countries.

An English translation of "A Sweet Jam" by U.S. scholar Caroline Croskery was released by the CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform in the United States in 2015. Iranian director Marzieh Borumand made a screen adaptation of the novel in 2000.

It all starts with a jar of jam. Twelve-year-old Jalal simply wants to eat his morning breakfast including the jam he has purchased with his own money. There's only one problem: no matter how he tries, he cannot get the jar open – and neither can his mother, the neighbor upstairs, the children at school, the principal, his teachers, the corner grocer, the factory distributor, the police officer or any of the neighbors.

This story is a humorous lesson on how one seemingly small event impacts each successive event, how small things become blown all out of proportion, and how one should never count one's chickens before they hatch.

Most of Moradi Kermani's books, including "Believe It or Not" and "The Water Urn", have been rendered into several languages around the world.

Hushang Moradi Kermani, 80, is best known for children's and young adult fiction. His best-known books are "The Tales of Majid," "The Boot," and "The Water Urn". Most of his works have been translated into English, German, French, Spanish, Dutch, Arabic, Armenian, Turkish and several other languages. Moreover, some of his books have been made into popular local movies and television shows.

OVER 530 EARTHQUAKES OCCUR IN A MONTH

Tehran Times, December 25, 2023 - A total of 536 earthquakes have been recorded across the country over the past calendar month that ended on December 21, according to the Seismological networks of the Institute of Geophysics of the University of Tehran. It shows a decrease of 27.6 percent, 6.1 percent, and 45.5 percent compared to last month, the same month last year, and the monthly average of the last ten years, respectively.

Of the total quakes, 8 had a magnitude of more than 4 on the Richter scale, the largest of which occurred on December 14 with a magnitude of 4.5 near Lavandevil in northern Gilan province, ISNA reported.

Statistically, 485 earthquakes with magnitudes smaller than 3; 43 earthquakes with magnitudes between 3 and 4 have occurred



in the country. Among the provinces of the country, Khorasan Razavi with 55 earthquakes, South Khorasan with 48 earthquakes, and Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari with 43 earthquakes respectively, recorded the highest number of earthquakes in the country.

Meanwhile, 7 earthquakes were also recorded in Tehran province, the largest of which occurred in the city of Javad Abad with a magnitude of 2.4 on the Richter scale. A total of 7,000 earthquakes have been recorded across the country over the past calendar year, which ended on March 20. Of the total quakes, 185 were more than 4 on the Richter scale, the largest of which occurred on June 1, 2022, with a magnitude of 6.1 in the southern province of Hormozgan. Statistically, at least two earthquakes with a magnitude of more than 5 have occurred monthly in the country. The northwestern province of West Azarbaijan, the northeastern province of Khorasan Razavi, and the southeastern province of Kerman, registered the most earthquakes with 838, 813, and 740 earthquakes respectively.

The northcentral provinces of Qazvin, Zanjan, and Alborz recorded the least earthquakes with 21, 9, and 2 earthquakes respectively. The southern province of Hormozgan, the southeastern province of Kerman, and the northwestern province of West Azarbaijan registered respectively the highest number of earthquakes with a magnitude of more than 4 on the Richter scale.

The Iranian plateau is located in a very seismically active region of the world and is known not only for its major catastrophic earthquakes but also for the disasters relating to natural hazards, especially earthquakes.

About 2 percent of the earthquakes in the world occur in Iran but more than 6% of the victims of the world earthquakes during the 20th century are reported from Iranian earthquakes. This shows the high level of vulnerability in Iran, according to Mehdi Zare, a professor of engineering seismology.

Iran has entered a decade of earthquakes since the [Iranian calendar] year 1396 (March 2017- March 2018), as the Iranian plateau is shrinking by 30 millimeters per year, Mehdi Zare, professor of engineering seismology at the International Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Seismology (IIEES), has said.

The Strait of Hormuz region in the south of Iran has the highest seismic activity in the region and its formation is related to the continuation of the convergent movement between the Arabian plate and the central continental plate of Iran. Tehran is also one of the most hazardous metropolises in the world in terms of the risk of different natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, subsidence, drought, landslides, fire following an earthquake, etc. On the other hand, Tehran has a nighttime population of over 8,300,000 with a mixture of old non-resistant structures as well as modern high-rise buildings that affect the vulnerability of this city.

TWO IRANIAN MUSICIANS' VICTORY AT GLOBAL MUSIC AWARDS



Tehran Times, December 25, 2023-Two musicians from Iran are among the Bronze Medal winners of this year's Global Music Awards. Aydin Kazemizad and Behnam Khodarahmi are the Iranian musicians whose works have been recognized by the well-known international music competition.

Kazemizad won the Bronze Medal for "Hajastam o Vajastam," a children's music album, and Khodarahmi received the prize for "Bezan Tar Rhapsody," which is a Persian classical piece. "What makes this project special is the combination of traditional Iranian musical instruments with classical instruments," Kazemizad said about his album, consisting of 12 tracks.

"Bezan Tar Rhapsody," is a classical piece produced by a large orchestra consisting of prominent Iranian musicians.

Established in 2011, the Global Music Awards celebrates independent musicians. It is widely recognized by industry insiders as giving legitimacy to highly talented artists.

Each year, the Global Music Awards receives hundreds of entries from around the world. Although the headquarters is based in California, the U.S., the participants are judged in an international competition, not just an American competition. The competition will make it easier for the winners to lock in bookings, be discovered by A&R executives, and be signed by labels.

PERSIAN HANDICRAFTS: MASNAD BAFI OF ARDABIL

Tehran Times, December 26, 2023- Masnad, a form of practical Kilim carpet, is specifically crafted in the Namin and Anbaran regions of Ardabil. Typically measuring about 110 by 170 centimeters, Masnad, like other Kilims, is woven on a loom.

As mentioned by Visit Iran, Masnads can be either single-sided or double-sided, with the latter generally being more costly. Often utilized as prayer rugs, many Masnads feature patterns depicting altars. Additionally, there are various types of Masnads woven in these areas, characterized by diverse patterns and motifs, often laid on the floor for guests. The name "Masnad" itself signifies "a place where a person sits or leans on," reflecting its utility. Renowned Persian poets like Rumi have referenced Masnads in their works.

Typically, Masnad patterns are geometric, with infrequent use of cursive motifs. The designs consist of symmetrical vertical lines, with a notable high contrast between the background color and the pattern. Researchers suggest that Masnad patterns and motifs are inspired by "Shirakipich" (another type of Kilim from the Kerman province) but lack the central paisley motif. A prevalent motif known as the "Matn" flower, locally called "Keshmiri," is intricately woven throughout the background.

Other floral motifs include Khara, Shah Abbassi, Garmayi,

and Joft. Additionally, two types of margins, namely "Charkhi" (circular) and "Vakili," embellish the Masnad. The weaving of Masnads incorporates designs such as bushes, vases, flowers, and hunting scenes. Raw or white cotton and single-colored wool yarn are commonly used as materials for the wefts in Masnad weaving.

Situated on a high, windswept plateau, Ardabil is well known for having abundant natural beauty, hospitable people, and its silk and carpet trade tradition. It is also home to UNESCO-registered Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and the Shrine Ensemble. It is freezing in winter and mild in summer, attracting thousands every year.

A JOURNEY AND UNFORGETTABLE MEMORIES



Negar Ahkami, a renowned artist, traveled to Uzbekistan during the last week of October, 2023 upon an invitation to showcase some of her artworks, exchange experiences, and provide a number of different lectures. She visited cities such as Bukhara, Tashkent, and Samarkand. Bukhara and Samarkand captivated Negar to the extent that, when she speaks of them in her notes, it seems as if she is immersed in the enchantment of art and architectural masterpieces left from the Timurid and Samanid periods in corners of Iran. The humanity, kindness, and hospitality of the people in that land, from children and students to art students in schools and art institutes she visited, deeply inspired and moved her.

Negar was particularly impressed by the art centers in Uzbekistan, expressing a strong desire for similar centers worldwide to be available for children, teenagers, and young people. After returning from her memorable trip to Uzbekistan, Negar Ahkami expressed regret and touched upon her emotions regarding Iranian art during the Islamic era being exhibited in museums and exhibitions under the umbrella of Islamic arts. Her artworks displayed in Uzbekistan were sent to the country through the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Embassy in Uzbekistan. Previously, they had been visited by the Uzbekistan ambassador at her Arlington painting workshop and occasionally displayed at the country's embassy in Washington, D.C.

The diplomatic ties established through these interactions led to an invitation for Negar to visit Uzbekistan. In recent years, Negar Ahkami, especially within the women's movement, life, and freedom, has created highly commendable paintings that reflect the influence of Iranian issues. Negar's love and passion for Iranian art and its cultural values, along with the significance of Iran's historical and cultural heritage, have garnered attention in global artistic circles.

Evolution of the Islamic Republic: SEMI-DEMOCRACY TO ABSOLUTE AUTOCRACY

part two-final

M. REZA VAGHEFI

UNWELCOME CHANGES:

More than anything else, the Shah did not provide an environment where people could express their views about the government. The Communist Party was disbanded and remained illegal but many of its affiliates were active surreptitiously. Instead of allowing people to set up political parties that would represent their wishes in the legislative process, the Shah allowed two political parties to organize under the tutelage of most ardent friends of the Court.

In the eyes of people interested in institutions to provide competing philosophies, just like the West, it became a joke where one party leader would be “Yes our Majesty” and the other would say “Yes of course”.

It became the subject of ridicule. In an act of disparity and realizing the unworkable nature of what had been done, Shah disbanded the political parties and unified the political system and encouraged people to be part of the new political party **Rastakheez** (Resurgence).

The worst part was that he announced, “anyone who does not accept the political party may acquire Passport and leave the country”, as if the country was his private property”. It left an extremely bad impression among the people. He never thought that a political party is a phenomenon that should be initiated by people interested in some common cause, goals and objectives.

Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi had a very limited understanding of the religious sector, which was not of any help. He even travelled to Macca to please the clergy. Sometimes before the thought of revolution became a topic of discussion, I met the Dean of School of Theology at Tehran University. A renowned scholar of Persian and Arabic literature.

In a conversation about the current issues, the Dean said that sometimes ago a man representing Vatican in Rome, Italy, had met him and had asked this question:



In a hypothetical situation, if Soviet Union attacked Iran what would be the role of Clergy? Very reasonable question. The Dean said:” I told him it does not matter who attacks Iran, the Clergy will take care of its domain and benefits”. He was prescient and recent suppression of people provides ample evidence.

THE FINAL ACT:

As prerevolutionary movements were shaping the future, two prime ministers Sherif-Emami, a proven incompetent official, and one military, General Azhari, a man without guts were not much of help and made the situation worse. Shah was desperate to install a civilian prime minister to calm the situation. He invited a respected Professor Sadighi who had been Deputy Prime Minister under Dr. Mossadegh.

Sadighi asked for time to study the situations. He also said that Shah should not leave the country because the armed forces would only listen to his command. He was the pillar of the system, and his departure would lead to the collapse of the system.

But Shah was convinced by the head of Security to appoint Shahpur Bakhtiar, an honest man but without a political base. Not realizing that the head of security was not being honest, he chose Bakhtiar. His cabinet did not last long, he fled the country and was assassinated in Paris two

years later.

It should be emphasized that the two Shahs, Reza Shah and his son, had accomplished a lot for the country. They changed the characters of major cities. Electricity was available, education from K through 12 plus college was made available at no cost, more than 20 colleges and universities were established.

It was determination and a sense of missionary zeal that led Reza Shah to accomplish so much and without a Rial to borrow from foreign governments, but these contributions were not publicized. Reza Shah provided security and protected the sovereignty of the country.

At the same time ethical issues related to the Court and Shah (not Reza Shah) plus his sisters and brothers became tools used by the clergy, the public and communists (disguised of course) and had negative effect on general population. People around Shah, his Minister of Imperial Court, Assadullah Allam became very toxic and unethical (Allam Memoires, Six Volumes) which damaged Shah’s reputation.

They epitomized unethical behavior as a form acceptable to them but totally alien to the common culture. Womanizing by a promiscuousness Shah and his Court Minister was totally unacceptable to people and their respective spouses. The Shah was kept uninformed about such crucial matters in a traditional society. His Prime Minister Howeida was a master of sycophancy, yet Shah kept him in the job for 13 years simply because he would do anything his majesty would tell him. He created shows to prove Shah’s popularity that had no depth. It was just a perfect show, and the Shah believed him.

The Annual Art Festival in Shiraz, an event that was initiated by Queen Farah and could have had positive results, was turned upside down in disbelief and low ethical standards. Queen Farah was completely blindsided because the way people in charge of the show downplaying or sim-

ply stupidly performed in a way that the outcome became a powerful tool to turn people against the Royal family. Not even your most aggressive enemies could have damaged the regime with Queen Farah being at the top next to the King.

Additionally, the Coronation of the Shah in the early 1970s was very ill conceived. He had already been coronated at Golestan Palace, there was no reason to cost the nations millions of Dollars to assemble international dignitaries, sort of, at Persepolis to do it again. For instance, Food came from Maxim of Paris? All such superfluous activities led some young students, militias, to take up arms. They formed underground armed people and gradually expanded their appeal to young people. These people were the most effective partners in the rebellion against the Shah's regime.

BLEAK ECONOMIC OUTLOOK:

The final unthoughtful act was discarding the 5th Year Economic Plan drafted by some of the most competent, meticulous and qualified Iranian economists over a couple of years. In designing the Economic Plan, they had in mind the relationship between resources and investment with an eye on inflation, which was already running high.

This plan was the most thoroughly calculated one, intricate in detail and with the level of discipline required to achieve the set of goals without flaming the already tense conditions and trying to impact the whole society. It was anchored on specific flow of revenues and areas of the society it would impact. It was the most sophisticated plan drawn for the economy in years.

The tragedy was that Shah disagreed with the details of expenditure and restriction/discipline it was going to impose on the application and implementation of the Plan. No one dared to raise any voice. Only one economist by the name of **Majlumian** asked to say a word. He said discarding the plan would be extremely inflationary and that may threaten the regime. He was prescient.

The dismissal of the Economic Plan opened a whole new path toward sycophants and their friends to plunder the oil revenue, which was flowing in, in billions of dollars. The outcome proved Mr. Majlumian concerns and the inflation that ensued was far more destructive to the social fabric than one's own political

ferocious enemy could have not instigated.

The last point that I would like to raise is a complete disregard for coordination of what should be done and how. With collapse of the 5th Economic Plan, various executive agencies of the government trying to purchase massive number of items such as trucks etc. and late Premier Howeida who acted like a chief of staff, unfortunately not exercising any coordinative role so that major economic decisions could be streamlined given inadequacy of port facilities at the Persian Gulf.

In just a short period of time after the Plan was discarded, different ministries ordered things that with available port facilities did not have the capacity to download. For months commercial ships carrying agencies ordered goods were anchoring in Persian Gulf waiting to deliver their cargo. It cost millions of dollars as the delivered cargoes were collecting dust and sometimes rusting in a densely humid environment, an illustration of incompetence and lack of an organized effort to save costs.

SPRING OF FREEDOM AND CONCLUSION

The success of Islamic Revolution initiated an early slogan called "Spring of Freedom". It meant people felt a degree of freedom from: fear, spying by SAVAK, the dreadful security service and torture by notorious police. However, this Spring was short-lived.

Depending on a rag-tag army of revolutionaries, the regime summoned the people with communist ideology to present themselves to the regime probably for amnesty. They did and many of them did not return to their families. Other militias that had a formidable impact in toppling the regime met with Ayatollah **Khomeini** in Qom and realized that they wouldn't have any role in the new government and therefore they went underground, and their leaders left the country.

There was an undercurrent of serious dissatisfaction by civilians with the new clerical regime, and a massive demonstration was on its way when Iraqi army unexpectedly attacked Iran and the next phase of the revolution began. It took eight years to stop the war which had solidified the clergy's rule and cost the country billions of dollars and thousands of precious human lives.

At this stage it became apparent that the clergy had managed to suppress dissent. Some of the major civilian leaders

of the National Front as well as some of the earlier leaders, the children of revolution, in the rank of clerical rule, were liquidated and no one remained to challenge the regime, and the Status Quo remained triumphant.

The preponderance of evidence suggests that the regime may continue but may have to modify its approach to serving public given the nature of living standards which have been diminishing ever since, especially for poor and middle class, almost wipe-out. No more free electricity, no free rent for the poor, all of which have been replaced by hardship, unemployment and continuously increasing living expenses.

In relative terms, all communities in the Persian Gulf neighborhood have been enjoying productive progress in all kinds of human activities, on the ground and in the skies with Saudi Arabia coming out of decades long Wahabism commanding massive investment (The Economist, \$700 billion) in addition to a huge Sovereign Fund, close to trillion dollars, at its command and a modernizing plan by 2030.

These communities constituted the Persian Gulf well-known pearl pirates just a few decades ago while Iran was thriving under a Semi-democratic system. The Islamic republic is still struggling with 14 century dogma of hijab for women as if every problem in the nation has been resolved and that is the only determining factor and survival of the regime depends on. The contrast with neighboring economies and social fabric is extremely depressing and most unfortunate as if all the very serious problems the nation is facing have been resolved amicably.

"Keeping one's face in the sand has never solved any human problem". India just landed on the Moon. Iranian top scientists are running NASA but at home the main concern of the government of the Islamic Republic is woman's hair. Please wake up. Stop keeping people of Iran in the "Dark Ages" that may please the regime but suffocates the nation.

A regime that does not listen to the people shouting: "Woman, Life, Freedom" is bound to ultimately pay a heavy price. Listen to the history before it is too late.

1. A.H. Ebtehaj, memories
2. Farhang Mehr, My Compatriots.
3. Bearman and Fox in General, Oxford University Press
4. David Crist, the Twilight War

IN THROUGH WOODS DIVINE

part two-final

PEDRAM GOSHTASBOUR, SPRING 2013

Jesus' context provoked the same *au contraire impetus* for his novel message and popularity. Jesus was born in the Roman province of Judaea during the reign of Emperor Augustus.

At the time, Rome had bloated into an amalgamated empire – the beginnings of its rot and fall. Augustus, Caesar's nephew and heir to throne, won a decisive victory over combined forces of Mark Anthony and Cleopatra in the battle of Actium, which amalgamated all of Rome in 31 BC. He changed his name to Emperor Augustus after declaring himself 'Supreme Commander.' This was a watershed moment – of course not for the better. But for *the best*. Rome, a republic, engorged into an empire. Ides of Glut. The End of A Middle. – The decline in civil and social values in tandem with euphoric nationalism and expansionism.

For over a century Rome fell to her most degenerate societal stage. Presence of lead in the city's water pipes – allegedly – only added to the mass insanity that chemically gripped Rome - *Everyone Had Gone Mad At The Same Time So No One Was Mad...?*

Emperors Tiberius (mass proscriptions, minors as orgy sex slaves), Caligula (deified himself; waged war on Poseidon, God of sea; slept with his three sisters) and, of course, Nero (murdered his aunt; had his mother stabbed; executed his first wife and kicked his second pregnant wife to death) to name a few, engendered an insanely degenerated, philistine zeitgeist overarching the empire. This set ideal ground for Jesus' contrarian message of non-judgment, forgiveness, and Love, which accrued mass

subscription – St Paul's viral marketing and promotion notwithstanding.

In a world where merchants and materialism had ruled, Jesus more or less rebelled by promoting the opposite. 'In a rare display of anger, Jesus overturned the tables and, with a whip made of cords, drove them out, declaring that his Father's house is not a house for merchants.'

Context, through contrast, inspires a mass following of a new, contrary ideology – in this case, a new faith, and at times a newer upgraded variant of the same faith. A relevant example is the early 1500s Europe where, in the same manner the over-the-top indulgences of the Romans' contrarily shored up Jesus's reactionary revolt, pathological Christian indulgences of Catholic papacy and church instigated Martin Luther, Huldrych Zwingli and Calvin's contrary reactions – together with Henry VIII's breakaway from Rome and Catholicism – which resulted in new Protestant and Anglican sector conglomerates. Two new religious sub-genres bifurcated out of one mother faith.

Five centuries after Jesus' crucifixion came the birth of Muhammad. At the time, the Arabian Peninsula was fragmented due to persistent tribal conflict backed by two confederations: Banu Qais and Banu Kalb, each arm's-length reinforced by Byzantium and Sassanid empires.

Despite the presence of monotheistic Christian and Jewish and Zoroastrian faiths, polytheistic idolization prevailed throughout pre-Islamic Arab culture. The Ka'bah housed hundreds of idol gods (and goddesses) who were

worshiped as protectors of individual tribes. While majority of the gods were associated with arid survival elements such as springs and wells and sanctified trees, Arabic goddesses – Allāt, Manāt, Al-Uzzā – were only associated

with a singular god figure – as his deified daughters. The annual pilgrimage by all the tribes to pay homage to over 360 idol statues of patron deities generated a steady, generous source of revenue for the Meccan economy, which was run by the prevailing Quraysh tribe.

Muhammad's uncle, a key Quraysh leader, adamantly opposed Muhammad's new message and religion.

The Quraysh became Muhammad's pathological arch nemesis due to fears that Islam, unequivocally opposed to idolatry and based on oneness with God, 'would destroy the favoured position of the Ka'bah as the center of the religious cults of various Arab tribes. *Why settle for a single God when you can generate so much more revenue from hundreds of gods and hand-crafted idols. Productization of Piety. Religions don't kill People. Businesses do?*

THE REST...

After secularization of western world which followed the Age of Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution, the late 19th and early 20th century produced two new quasi-scientific disciplines dedicated to examination of the mysteries of human soul: Theosophy, reinvigorated and navigated by Madame Blavatsky, and modern depth psychology, which was formalized by Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung.

Just as Hippocrates trans-



Margaret Mead conducts an interview on United Nations Radio in 1952

formed the field of medicine out of the realm of religion and magic secularizing it as a form of public service science two millennia earlier, Blavatsky systematized Theosophy by annexing scientific inquiry to an otherwise spiritual and quasi-religious system of beliefs and practices. Logic meets Occult. Concurrently, the nascent field of psychology 'aspired to become a science, even though it came to reveal itself more as a quasi-scientific discipline, half an art and half a science. A craft.'

What faith and science share is belief in imperceptible forces – The Rumored Unknowns.

But where science strives to prove such hypotheses as fact, religion remains focused on the occult and social service aspects – eschewing The Burden of Proof. *Newton Proved Gravity, Mary Didn't Prove God.*

The foundress of Theosophy, Helena Blavatsky was born into a noble German and Russian pedigree in 1831. As a child she was considered exceptional. She puzzled her family and friends with 'psychic powers'. Through a stable familial love and upbringing, she grew into adulthood a talented fine artist, linguist, pianist, adventurer, spending a good part of her life traveling the world.



Chimpanzees, among other animal species, are known to practice self-medication using plants and possibly insects

In 1855, she journeyed to India via Japan and then to Tibet and Kashmir and Ladakh, where she received her training in the occult. By the time she was 42, she was ‘in controlled possession of her many and most unusual spiritual and occult powers.’ In 1875, along with an American and an Irishman, both lawyers (Western lawyers), she founded the Theosophical Society to promulgate ‘the Wisdom concerning the Divine which had been the spiritual basis of other great movements of the past.’

Through syncretism of religion cum science cum spirituality, Blavatsky attempted to parse and rationalize the intangible, the ethereal, the need-a-proving, by popularizing a new science called ‘Occult Science’ – a systematic inquiry into the clandestine, hidden, secret aspects and laws of life and universe.

But Theosophy failed mass subscription. It lacked the social welfare element. On the other hand, Freud and Jung’s new therapy-oriented science of the psyche (‘Psychology’) gained momentum and solemnization due to their genuine concerns over human survival and daily psychological welfare. While Blavatsky could be defined as a prophet in the same spirit as the foundress of Tenrikyō faith, Oyasama, her

proselytization-lite ‘Perennial Religion’ never gained as much followership and subscription.

Born 33 years earlier than Blavatsky, Oyasama – birth name Nakayama Miki – was a charismatic peasant woman who, at the age of 40, became possessed by ‘Lord of Divine Wisdom’ and founded the most popular and successful branch of Shinto in Japan. Her offshoot religion flourished by ‘emphasizing charity and the healing of disease through mental acts of faith.’ Faith through social consciousness and spiritualism rather than intellectualism and pseudoscience.

Whether Blavatsky was exposed to Oyasama during her journeys is unknown, albeit possible. But what is worth speculative extrapolation is whether Theosophy would have gained as much popularity as Tenrikyō if Blavatsky and her disciples had focused their marketable religious service mandates on social-communal concerns rather than scientific-spiritual inquiries.

The latent pattern deduced here is that all popular religions are a unique syncretism of philosophy, therapy, and social service industries. When it comes to proliferation and generational sustenance

of belief systems, successful cults and religions of the past have focused on individual and community service first – the universe and the unknown second. Emotions first, pragmatism second, intellectualization third. *Think Globally; Act Locally; Seek Universally..?*

Other than Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Judaism, majority other popular faiths that have survived the test of time -- making up over 2% of world population -- share at core an optimistic provision of self-help and social service for individuals and communities:

Hinduism, unknown founder(s), 3000-1750 BC, ‘As the light goes out with the exhaustion of the oil, so fortune fails with the cessation of human endeavor.’ Jainism, earliest recorded founder Pārśva, 877–777 BC, ‘The greatest mistake of a soul is non-recognition of its real self and can only be corrected by recognizing itself.’

Zoroastrianism, founder Zoroaster, 628 BC, ‘Happiness comes to those who bring happiness to others.’ Taoism, founded by Lao Tzu, 604 BC, ‘Simplicity, patience, compassion. These three are your greatest treasures.’ Confucianism, founder Confucius, 551-479 BC, ‘Fix your mind on truth, hold firm to virtue, rely on loving kindness, and find your recreation in the Arts.’

Sikhism, founded by Guru Nanak Dev, 1469-1539, ‘True wealth does not burn; it cannot be stolen by a thief.’

Despite many faith organizations requiring membership initiation, they all dish out positive self-improving messages and thrive through volunteered subscription, support, and donation. Faith, Not Force; at first at least. Positive ideals, not skeptical cynicism. There will always be a need for some new form or definition of ‘Prophet’ – even

amongst the educated and materially endowed (a la Gates, Jobs, Musk). Even if for mere spiritual inspiration or secular guidance- instead of hardcore faith - we are predisposed to stop and Look Up at someone almost daily.

Like any donation-based insurance or protection agency, religion – or its pre-institutional variant ‘spirituality’ -- is fundamentally A Good Thing. There To Help. Encouraging love of self, family, world. Faith is necessary for sustenance of a civil psychological and social system. It is an indexed instrument for unconditional relief, escape, security, sanctuarial back-up, personal discipline, intangible empowerment, familial support, non-judgemental conviviality.

No one likes to be, or die, alone. No one likes feeling alienated or abandoned. This is why the unconditional love-bombing -- part of any family or cult or religious organization - helps renovate the vilified individual’s sense of belonging and validation, making them an active member of that faith-full community. Churches, Mosques, Shelters, Temples. - Free and present for pleas of those in need - usually for free.

Through a 21 st century post-modern outlook, the critical triad of religion cum politics cum law has determined the degree of civil freedom – hence industrial innovation of a society, culture, country. What holds this triad in thriving balance tends to be the time immemorial field of Philosophy.

During antiquity, within a span of 7 centuries in Greece alone, there were over 250 free thinking philosophers, starting with the father of western philosophy, Thales, and Hypatia, one of the earliest mothers of mathematics, and Pythagoras – whose rigorous school specialized in churning out super-cerebral philosophers.

Over 20 independent schools of new thought such as Stoicism, Sophism and Megarian were founded and funded during this pre-censorious age.

Throughout the neighboring east, Imhotep, Zoroaster and Confucius had also conceived and developed new free-agent interpretations of the seen and unseen universe and human psyche.

Then, God said, Let there be the Middle Ages. This stunted Western age spanned 10 centuries, during which, Islamic inquiries into philosophy and sciences gained momentum over the Christianized West. Most notable – albeit faith franchised – freethinkers of this age are Al-Farabi, considered by the Muslim intellectuals of his day

as ‘The Second Teacher’ after Aristotle; Al-Kindi, ‘the father of Islamic philosophy’ who introduced Greek and Hellenic philosophy to the Muslim world; Al-Ghazalie, noted as the most influential Muslim since Muhammad who rejected Aristotle and Plato and posited various new-ish thoughts on skepticism and occasionalism; and, Ibn Tufayl, polymath physician who wrote the first philosophical novel.

The total number of what can be loosely defined as philosophers amounted to over 60 all of whom were enfranchised by churches or mosques. – Saints, priests, or friars by career.

Philosophy was by now categorically denatured and constrained to theology.

The final score between the ancient pre-Christian pagan world and the post-Christian medieval world is 250-plus philosophers in 7 centuries, versus 60-plus philosophers in 10 centuries: 35 thinkers per century versus 6. Ancient pagans win hands down. In the contrary century that followed, the Age of Enlightenment, within a mere century and half, over 70 rebel superstar philosophers reinvigorated new thought, reasoning and innovative inquiry: Descartes, Franklin, Hobbes, Kant, Locke, Newton, Rousseau, Spinoza, Voltaire all flew free of miasmatic Western medieval thoughts that had suspended people’s complacent beliefs.

Enlightenment - the bed-

rock of logic, modernity and, conversely, the beginnings of systematized eco plunderings - via the Industrial Revolution - effectuated by the new synthetic sciences of Organized Economics and Organized Engineering.

Three cores of human civilization: What began more or less as pro bono self-help and social welfare in the wake of amassed suffering forged into what we have come to call Mass Organized Religions. What began as religious experiments in Alchemy and Gnosticism forged into what we have come to distill as Modern Sciences. What began as civil conducts and secular penalties to control our otherwise nobly savage impulses forged into Lawfull Politics.

Indian Festival Honors Iranian Animations



Tehran Times, December 18, 2023, Two short animations from Iran have received accolades from the second edition of the Animators Guild India Fest (AGIF) that concluded last week.

“The Lovely Sky” written and directed by Amir Mehran and “Anita, Lost in the News” by Behzad Nalbandi were honored in the category of Best Animated Short Film (under 45 minutes), Mehr reported on Sunday.

While “Anita, Lost in the News” was one of the finalists of the category, “The Lovely Sky” received a Special Mention from the jury.

A production of the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA), “The Lovely Sky” is a 14-minute 2D animation, dealing with the issue of war. The short flick follows an impatient fighter pilot who bombs cities every day. He returns to his little girl every night after completing his mission. The girl loves to fly, but the father doesn’t fulfill his daughter’s dream because of the bitter memory of his wife’s death. The war is getting closer every day. One day an incident changes their lives, forever.

Produced in 2022, it has so far won the best animation prize at the 52nd Roshd International Educational Film Festival in Tehran, Best Music at the 18th Vancouver Island Short Film Festival in Canada, and Best Animation at Itauna International Film Festival in Brazil.

It has also been screened in the 63rd Zlin Film Festival in the Czech city of Zlin, the 19th World Festival of Animated Film Varna in Bulgaria, the 16th Bueu International Short Film Festival in Spain, the 39th International Festival of Animation Cinema, comics, and games in Italy, and the 35th Girona Film Festival in Spain.

Amir Mehran, 42, has an M.A. in animation directing from Soore Art University in Tehran. He has made several short animations so far and won awards at various international film festivals, including Warsaw, ANIMA, Grand OFF, Interfilm Berlin, Banja Luka, Cinefiesta, Imperia, Short Soup, Silk Road, and Noor among others.

“Anita, Lost in the News” is a 15-minute animation made in 2023. Created using puppets made from newspaper clippings, it is about a Kurdish-Iranian family of four who died in the sinking of a migrant boat in the English Channel in 2020.

At the time of the tragedy, there were ten more people on board than the vessel could hold. One of the victims was nine-year-old Anita, from whose perspective we follow the story.

AGIF was created with the express desire to showcase a variety of genre-defining animation content being produced throughout the world. From drama to action to horror to documentary, all genres in animation are showcased at the festival and originality is prized above all.

Rana Joon and the One and Only Now

Shideh Etaat

Taken from a review by Simon and Schuster; Amazon

This lyrical coming-of-age novel for fans of Darius the Great Is Not Okay and On the Come Up, set in Southern California in 1996, follows a teen who wants to honor her deceased friend's legacy by entering a rap contest.

Perfect Iranian girls are straight A students, always polite, and grow up to marry respectable Iranian boys. But it's the San Fernando Valley in 1996, and Rana Joon is far from perfect—she smokes weed and loves Tupac, and she has a secret: she likes girls.

As if that weren't enough, her best friend, Louie—the one who knew her secret and encouraged her to live in the moment—died almost a year ago, and she's still having trouble processing her grief. To honor him, Rana enters the rap battle he dreamed of competing in, even though she's terrified of public speaking.

But the clock is ticking. With the battle getting closer every day, she can't decide whether to use one of Louie's pieces or her own poetry, her family is coming apart, and she might even be falling in love. To get herself to the stage and fulfill her promise before her senior year ends, Rana will have to learn to speak her truth and live in the one and only now.

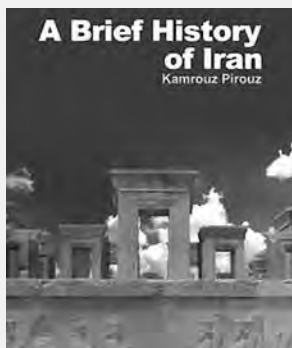
Shideh Etaat is an Iranian American writer living in Los Angeles. She received her MFA in creative writing from San Francisco State University. She is the author of *Rana Joon and the One and Only Now* and has also had her work published in *Tremors: New Fiction by Iranian American Writers*, *Day One*, *Foglifter* and *Nowruz Journal*.



A Brief History of Iran

Kamrouz Pirouz

It is interesting that a book regarding the history of Iran can be called BRIEF! The author does complete what he wants. It is a book specifically for the second-generations who have been born outside the country. The author's idea was to make them understand the value of Persian culture! Most second-generation Iranians are so far ahead of using a reference book like this that I predict that it will have a lasting value for those who want to escape to Iran. I hope the author continues to write more stories regard in short versions of food, poetry and other aspects of Persian culture.

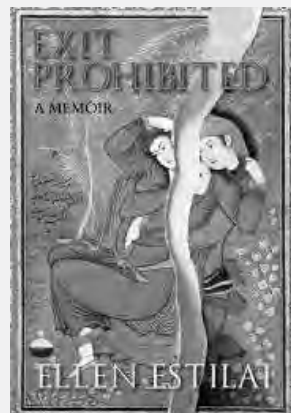


Exit Prohibited, A Memoir

Ellen Estilai

An Inlandia Institute Publication, Riverside, CA (2023)

After the 1979 Iranian Revolution, Ellen Estilai and her family attempted to leave Tehran, their home for nine years. At the airport, her Iranian husband was prevented from leaving. He confronts hostile colleagues and the Islamic Republics opaque bureaucracy. Ellen examines their their lives and tries to understand what brought them to this point. She tries to understand what was once a welcoming peaceful place to live became so violent and distrustful of the West. It is a sad truth that people who deeply love their country, and its history and culture have been forced to leave. The heart must always remain open and never let it fade away.

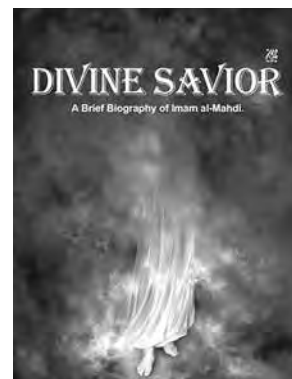


Brief Biography of Imam al-Mahdi (AS) published in English

The English translation of the book "Divine Savior," which is a brief biography of Imam al-Mahdi (AS), has been released by Jamkaran Publication. It provides a focused overview of Imam al-Mahdi (AS), the twelfth and last Imam of Shia Muslims also known as the Imam of the Age, who went into occultation after succeeding his father as leader at the young age of five, Mehr reported.

The book traces his lineage back to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and examines the Lesser Occultation when he maintained contact with followers through appointed delegates, before the beginning of the Greater Occultation in 941 CE when he disappeared completely.

Throughout the summary, the abundant positive qualities of the Imam are emphasized, from his vast knowledge to his piety, generosity, patience and moral virtue. Reasons behind his prolonged disappearance are explored, as are the many prophecies in Shia tradition about signs that will precede his eventual return to usher in a new era. While coming from a faith perspective, the content helps illuminate why the Imam holds such importance in Shiism specifically. As a primer on Imam al-Mahdi (AS), the book would well serve both Shia adherents looking to strengthen their knowledge as well as those from outside the tradition hoping to better understand his significance and the role he occupies in prophecy. Overall, it delivers an accessible and informative overview firmly grounded within the primary sources and narratives of Twelver Shia Islam.



OVISSI FOUNDATION:

New Award Grants for Artists and Programs



Farah Pahlavi”

Ostad Ovissi’s father died at a young age, therefore his Beloved Mother Batool Ovissi was the central and constant support of his artistic gifts. One of the first awards that Ostad Ovissi received was at the 1962 Tehran Art Biennial where Her Majesty Shahbanoo presented the Grand Prize award to him. Her Majesty Shahbanoo also purchased her first work of art by Ostad Ovissi. To this day, they continue to speak about these moments with admiration and appreciation. Although artists produce work as a form of an internal dialogue and creative expression. Exhibitions, awards and patrons provide essential support for artists to continue their paths of expression.

In 2023, Ostad Ovissi and Maryam began creating a review committee for two categories of awards: 1. Awards for Master of Fine Art Students of Iranian Heritage 2. Awards for Programs promoting Iranian Art and Culture

The esteemed committee comprised of Her Majesty Farah Pahlavi, Dr. Houman Sarshar (Independent Scholar & Founder, Kimia Foundation) Ms. Laili Nasr (Art Historian) and Mr. Reza Paykazadi (Art Dealer & Advisor, Eran Art Gallery).

In 2023, the committee reviewed applications and voted on the Shahnameh Book Project by Parisa Faghil, sponsored by U.N.E.S.C.O.

The Ovissi Foundation has opened the next round of applications and welcomes individuals of Iranian heritage enrolled in Masters of Fine Arts programs in the United States along with artistic programs promoting Iranian art and culture to apply. Deadline is March 1, 2024. Please visit GalleryOvissi.com and click on the foundation tab to learn more details.

Ostad Nasser Ovissi is a living legend and has forged an important path in Modern Iranian Art. As a founding member of the Saqqakhaneh movement, Ostad Ovissi recognizes that without the support of his family, fellow artists, collectors, patrons and important opportunities made available to him early in his career in Iran, he would not have been able to devote his life to creative expression and celebration of Iranian art and history. At 89 years old, Ostad Ovissi along with his daughter, Maryam Ovissi began working on legacy projects that will remain for many years to come. In 2023 the Ovissi Foundation was born with a mission to supporting artists and programs created by individuals of Iranian descent and promoting Iranian art and culture.

In a recent talk given by Ostad Ovissi, he was asked who were the most important figures in launching his path as an artist, with tears in his eyes, “My mother and Shahbanoo

Qazvin City; Symbol of Iran's Art and Traditions

MEHR NEWS AGENCY, SEP 1, 2023



Qazvin Grand Mosque

Located on the foothills of the Alborz Mountain range at an altitude of 1278 meters, Qazvin is one of the most historical cities of Iran and once was the capital for part of Safavid history. Qazvin city is believed to be founded in the Sasanian Empire era, by King Shapur II (r. 309 – 379 AD).

Apparently, the king ordered the construction of a fortress in this area to prevent the invasion of Deilamites, and the foundation of the city was gradually laid according to this order. Some historians believe that the name Qazvin comes from the word Kashvin meaning border, and some orientalist also believe that the word Qazvin is derived from the name of a tribe called Caspians, a group living in the west of the Caspian Sea.

Sights of Qazvin have given this city the first rank in having historical buildings in the country. Qazvin was also a crossing point for traders and merchants due to the Silk Road. The city is also home to many great Iranian Artists such as Mir Emad Qazvini (1554-1615) and in addition to all this, is also a city of delicious dishes and sweets.

Qazvin is famed for Persian carpets and fine art such as Miniature paintings and calligraphy as well as its grapes and delicious sweets.

Qazvin Calligraphy

Of the various **traditional calligraphy** styles, such as *Banaii*, *Mohaqqeq*, *Taliq*, *Meidani*, *Nastaliq*, *Shekasteh-Nastaliq*, *Naskh*, and *Sols*, only the last four are still used in Iran. Many prominent calligraphers, including **Mir Emad Qazvini** in the Safavid era, **Mirza Zeinolabeddin Mujeznegar** in the Zand era, and **Malek**



Qazvin Calligraphy

Mohammad and Mirza Mohammad Hossein Seifi Qazvini (Emadolketab) in the Qajar era, who contributed to the refinement of Iranian culture, came from this city.

Each of these masters developed a specific style of calligraphy. The works of Mir Emad Qazvini and other Qazvini calligraphers are world-famous.

Qazvin sweets:

In Iran, food and desserts are known to be delicious. Iranians use food as a way not only to nourish themselves but to preserve their culture and customs as well.

Qazvin is known for having the biggest sweets collection among the cities in Iran. During important ceremonies, these sweets are served.

With the varied colors and flavors of nuts and dried fruits together with a desire for sweet flavors, Qazvin sweets have become special and diverse. Housewives in the Qazvin province often bake sweets that vary in color, smell, and flavor during different ceremonies and holidays.

Baklava is a symbol of many Iranian cities: Yazd, Kashan, and Isfahan. However, Qazvin baklava is among the neglected delicacies in Iranian dishes. Every layer on the flag represents one of the famous products of the Qazvin traditional gardens.

It is a point of contention that the pistachios in Qazvin baklava have to be made there. Because the citizens of Qazvin hold a special opinion about the quality of this pistachio.

Paderazi, like most sweets in Qazvin Province, has a semisweet flavor and is served with tea or dark coffee. It is made of three types of flour: wheat flour, chickpea flour, and rice flour along with egg,



Chehel Sotoun

ginger powder, vanilla, saffron, sesame, powdered sugar, milk, and oil. It is usually prepared in three different colors and flavors for Nowruz. Having a Paderazi with a cup of evening Persian tea is a fantastic way to end the day. In the Paderazi, the taste is dominant.

Chickpea sweets are popular in most cities of Iran but originally came from the Qazvin province. They are mostly requested on Nowruz and entertaining guests. Chickpea sweet is quick to bake and extremely satisfying. These delicious desserts are typically prepared with pistachios, pea flour, egg yolks, sugar, powdered sugar, and powdered cardamom.

There are many types of **thin bread**, such as sesame thin bread and walnut thin bread, but the one that is most commonly used is pistachio thin bread.

It is also known as Besak by the local people of Qazvin. These ingredients go into this yummy sweet: white flour, fine sugar powder, eggs, solid oil, vanilla, yogurt, melted butter, salt, baking powder, sourdough powder, walnut powder, pistachio powder, saffron, and sesame.

All of your assumptions about sponge cakes will be challenged after you have had a **syrop cake**. These cakes are delicious just like most others, but also have the slight difference that syrop of saffron, cardamom, and rose will eventually be added to them to make it a little moist and fragrant.

An aromatic and delicious cake is cut into a rhombus shape and topped with pistachios and nuts. Its ingredients are flour, sugar, yogurt, cardamom, oil, and eggs.

Delicious Foods of Qazvin:

Qazvin province has a unique geo-



Baklava

graphical location and climate due to being surrounded by the central Alborz mountain range, and this issue, in addition to the ancient history of this city, has had a unique impact on the local cuisine of this area.

Most of the Qazvini dishes have a sweet and mellow taste and are made with beans, meat, all kinds of edible nuts, and fragrant local spices. This province also takes the lead in cooking sweets in the country, as well.

Gheymeh Nesar is one of the famous and local foods of Qazvin province. It is made with pieces of mutton or beef, hot onion, almond slices, pistachio slices, orange peel slices, and barberry. They pour these ingredients over rice to serve it. Contrary to its name, this delicious dish is not very similar to the traditional Gheymeh stew. That's why there are no cobs or other legumes in it.

Anar Polo is one of the most delicious Iranian dishes, which is usually served on Yalda night. And its cooking is common in different cities of Iran. Qazvini Anar Polo is a combination of pomegranate, rice, raisins, saffron, coriander, and pistachio slices that creates one of the wonderful versions of this delicious dish that will surprise you with its taste and appearance. They serve this food in Qazvin with saffron chicken or shredded chicken. They also cook this food in the same way in Fars province; with the difference that the Shirazis add carrots to the rice mixture, as well.

The main ingredients of **Kal Joosh** are Kashk (a product from milk), walnuts, and mint. But in some regions of the country, they use yogurt instead to prepare this dish, which gives it a wonderful taste.

Meat is not one of the common ingredients in this dish and is rarely added to it. For this reason, Kal Joosh is a suitable food for vegetarians. They serve Kaljoosh with hot bread, including Sangak or Barbari, and side dishes such as vegetables



Gheymeh Nesar

and pickles. It is better to know that Kaljoosh is a watery food and they usually put bread in it and eat the mix. You can taste this food as an appetizer, snack, or even as a side dish.

Qazvin Historical Sites and Attractions

Qazvin province is one of the oldest central provinces of the country. This province dates back to the Sassanid period. Qazvin city was the capital of Iran for about 57 years during the Safavid rule. And for this reason, there are plenty of Qazvin tourist attractions inside and outside this ancient city. Some are historic sites and some are natural spots.

Ovan Lake is one of the natural attractions of Qazvin that attract many domestic and foreign tourists, due to its magnificent and spectacular views. This picturesque lake is surrounded by four villages: Evan, Vein, Zavardasht, and Zarabad. Ovan Lake is one of the natural lakes of Iran which is famous for its spectacular scenery. A convenient road to the lake and facilities on the fringes of the lake have provided the perfect recreation for families. The campground is another feature of Ovan Lake that attracts nature enthusiasts to nature.

The Ovan Lake is freezing in winter and autumn, and it is considered a suitable haven for migratory birds such as swans, geese, and ducks. Due to the elevation of 1815 meters and the cold weather of this area in the winter, the lake surface is frozen and allows skiers to Ice skate. On the other hand, the weather is very glorious for fishing, swimming, and boating in the summertime.

Qazvin Grand Mosque

The Grand Mosque (also known as the Jameh Mosque) is a collection of architectural styles of various historical eras. One can notice the architectural styles of the Seljuk, Safavid, and, to some extent,



Alamut Castle

Qajar periods. The Jameh Mosque of Qazvin, known also as Atiq Mosque, is open to the public every day.

The stunning building of **Shazdeh Hossein Shrine** is the mausoleum of one of the numerous sons of the eighth Shiite imam, Imam Reza, located in the city center of Qazvin.

The shrine was first built in the 1220s however during the reign of Safavid kings it received some restoration and became a magnificent architectural complex. The actual mirror work inside the building was added to the building in the 1840s.

A vast courtyard, flanked by the northern and southern gates, provides enough space to gaze at the edifice. Of all the entrances, the northern one is an imposing piece of work. Geometrical patterns, decorative tile works, tall gates, and 6 mini-minarets have given the northern entrance a unique style.

Alamut Castle

Alamut Castle is located in the north-east Qazvin province near Gazorkhan village at an altitude of 2163 m. The fort has only one entrance on its northern face with more than 400 stone steps. There is a gorge on the southern slope of the mountain that blocks any way of penetration. The castle is almost 120 meters long and between 10 to 35 meters wide. While standing at the top of the fort, a distance of about 10 Km can be seen.

Qazvin Chehel Sotoun Edifice

Chehel Sotoun or Forty Columned Edifice is a Safavid palace located in the old town of Qazvin. This square-shaped mansion was built when Shah Tahmasb, the Safavid king, transferred the capital to Qazvin due to the threat of Ottoman Turks. The palace is constructed according to the design of a Turkish architect with a hall in the middle of a beautiful garden that has very attractive wooden windows.



SAADI'S GULSTAN

Some thoughts on the first story in
Saadi's Gulstan, (food for thought in this
world of 'mis-information' and lying!)
(born 1210; died 1291 or 1292)

Fathali Ghahremani



Chapter One: On the Character of Kings Story Number 1

I heard a Padishah giving orders to kill a captive. In desperation, the powerless man using foul language began to insult him. There is a saying that he who washes his hands of life, says whatever he has in his heart.

*In time of need, when flight is impossible,
The hand will grasp the tip of a sharp sword
A desperate man says what he will
he is like a vanquished cat attacking a dog.*

When the Shah asked what is the man saying, a kind hearted vizir replied: "My lord, he says: '... and those who restrain anger, and those who forgive people. God loves the doers of good.'"

(Quran, Sura 3, al Imran, verse 134)

The statement moved the Shah and he forgave the captive; but another vizir, who was against the first, said: "Men of our rank ought to speak nothing but the truth in the presence of the Shah. This fellow has insulted the Shah and spoken unbecomingly."

The Shah, was displeased with these words and said: "That lie was more acceptable to me than this truth you just said because it was with good intentions and this was with an evil intent; and wise men have said: "A conciliatory lie is better than a chaos producing truth".

*He whose advice the shah follows,
It is a pity if he says anything but virtuous words.*

On the portico of the hall of Fereyduan it was written:

*O brother, the world remains with no one.
It is enough to give your heart to the Creator,
Do not depend on possessions and this world
Because it has raised and killed many like you.
When the pure soul is leaving the body,
What matters if one dies on a throne or in the dirt?*

*I have given you a summary of this complex subject
You must see the whole story from this summary*

(Oman Samani 1842-1904)

Based on the phrase "A conciliatory lie is better than a chaos producing truth", this story from Saadi's Gulistan is usually cited as a justification for 'white lies'¹. Yet, 'lying', whether for good or bad, has dire social consequences and is not a subject to be taken lightly, especially by a master such as Saadi! So a deeper analysis and interpretation of this story is necessary.

«باب اول در سیرت پادشاهان» حکایت شماره ۱

پادشاهی را شنیدم به کشتن اسیری اشارت کرد. بیچاره در آن حالت نومیدی ملک را دشنام دادن گرفت و سقط گفتن، که گفته اند هر که دست از جان بشوید، هر چه در دل دارد بگوید:

وقت ضرورت چو نماند گریز / دست بگیرد سر شمشیر تیز
اذا یسئ الانسان طال لسانه / کستور مغلوب یصول علی الکلب

(translation from Arabic)

گر انسان ناامید شود، زبانش دراز می شود / مثل گربه شکست خورده ای

که به سگی حمله می کند)

ملک پرسید چه می گوید؟ یکی از وزرای نیک محضر گفت: ای خداوند همی گوید: وَالْكَاطِمِينَ الْغَيْظِ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ. ملک را رحمت آمد و از سر خون او درگذشت. وزیر دیگر که ضد او بود گفت: ابنای جنس ما را نشاید در حضرت پادشاهان جز به راستی سخن گفتن. این ملک را دشنام داد و ناسزا گفت. ملک روی از این سخن در هم آورد و گفت: آن دروغ وی پسندیده تر آمد مرا زین راست که تو گفتی که روی آن در مصلحتی بود و بنای این بر خبثی. و خردمندان گفته اند: دروغی مصلحت آمیز به که راستی فتنه انگیز.

هر که شاه آن کند که او گوید / حیف باشد که جز نکو گوید

بر طاق ایوان فریدون نبشته بود:

جهان ای برادر نماند به کس / دل اندر جهان آفرین بند و بس
مکن تکیه بر ملک دنیا و پشت / که بسیار کس چون تو پرورد و کشت

چو آهنگ رفتن کند جان پاک / چه بر تخت مردن چه بر روی خاک

من از مفصل این نکته مجملی گفتم / تو خود حدیث مفصل بخوان از این مجمل
(۱۲۵۸-۱۳۲۲ ه. ق) عمان سامانی

It is good to remember, we are not talking about just anyone, this is Saadi, perhaps one of the greatest social commentators of all time. He does not delve lightly into any subject and there must be a reason why he chose to start the Gulstan's *First Chapter* - which is about the character of kings - with this specific story. Saadi is addressing a fundamental basis of society, i.e., gover-

nance (in this case, the society of 13th century Iran, the Mongol invasion period, where the very basis of government and society were in question). This story is the foundation on which the whole chapter on advice to rulers is structured.

Unfortunately, society has reduced this fundamental story to a single phrase “**A conciliatory lie is better than a chaos producing truth**” which is often quoted to justify ‘white lies’. Yet, lying, for whatever reason, can destroy social trust and it is dubious that Saadi would promote it on any level.

The above story can be summarized as follows:

A prisoner of war (not a criminal) is condemned to death by a Shah. In desperation the captive curses him. The Shah asks his vizir “What is this man saying?”

The vizir, on behalf of the prisoner, says he is quoting the Quran “... **and those who restrain anger, and those who forgive people. God loves the doers of good.**”²). The Shah is moved by this quotation and pardons the prisoner.

A second vizir takes offense and tells the Shah that the prisoner was actually insulting the king. In response, the Shah comments that the first vizir told a lie with good intentions and the truth you say is based on malice quoting “**Knowledgeable persons have said:**

A conciliatory lie is better than a chaos producing truth.”
و خردمندان گفته اند: دروغی مصلحت آمیز به که راستی فتنه انگیز.

The story ends with a line, purportedly from one of the ancient, mythical Iranian Kings -Fereydun³- stating that everyone is equal in death.

While superficially it appears that Saadi is endorsing white lies, there is more to this tale - ‘*context*’ is important here. Saadi is very careful about social issues such as: Is ‘saving a life’ more important than ‘saving the integrity of society’? Are all humans equal or are rulers superior to others? Or even on a broader scale, what is the relation between power, justice and the individual in society?

While in the common vernacular, this whole story is reduced to a single line justifying a ‘white lie’, i.e., ‘**A conciliatory lie is better than a chaos producing truth**’, the scope is much greater and this ‘justification of white lies’ *should not define* the depth and layers of what Saadi is saying. A deeper insight may invalidate the common ‘take’ on this story.

There are multiple subjects broached in this short story:

The first is the Shah: Post Turcic/Mongol invasion of Iran, the issue of justice in society had degraded to the opinion of the conquering ‘sultan/warlord’. The conqueror had absolute power and could dictate life and death for anyone and, for that matter, anything. Such absolute power had to be controlled and, in this story, Saadi is raising the issue that the Shah *is not and should not* be an absolute arbiter of right and wrong and, further, in the last line he is stating that both the Shah and the accused are equal in death.

The second point is the Law: The quotation from the Quran Sura 3 verse 134 where the beneficent are rewarded by God is a - not so subtle - reference to the power of God over the Shah. Before God, even the Shah is a subject, equal to all others. The fact that Saadi chose this particular Sura and verse, is critical. He is essentially warning the Shah those unjust decisions have consequences and God will judge him based on his actions, good decisions will be rewarded, bad ones will be punished. Saadi

is pointing out is that the Quran and, by extension God, is the ultimate arbiter and that actions have consequences and political positions require responsibilities.

The third point is the court: The Shah apparently has multiple vizirs (advisers) and in this case two of them come forward. The two vizirs define two opposite takes on the given situation. It is left to the Shah/judge, to make a decision based on what each puts forward. In effect the first vizir is defending the accused and the second is acting on behalf of the state. This dialectic between the two vizirs is the suggestion of a court of law with the responsibility of clarifying the ‘truth’.

The fourth point is the accused: Although he is a captive (not a criminal) and at the mercy of a foreign Shah, he is not utterly broken. He takes it upon himself to state his case (in his own language, i.e., to curse the Shah) in face of an injustice. Had the captive meekly accepted his fate, without complaining, he would have been executed. Yet his courage in confronting the Shah created a ‘court’ where the two vizirs deliberated on his case. Individual courage, regardless of position in society and in the face of adversity and potential injustice, is thus encouraged and rewarded.

Now we come to the question of **Lying** instead of telling the **Truth**. Without a question the first vizir, by quoting the Quran, is misrepresenting the words of the prisoner. Being aware that the Shah has already made an unjust decision, the vizir confronts him by quoting the divine guidance (albeit through the medium of the captive). In short, seeing the Shah’s lack of linguistic ability, the vizir could have chosen to say the captive is praising the Shah, or begging for forgiveness, etc., etc., but he chose to quote the Quran to him. It is the Shah who, in order to save face and retreat from his original unjust decision, conflates the Quranic guidance with a comment by unknown ‘wise men’ about lying. Note that neither vizir is implicated, dismissed or executed for their opinion since one quoted the Quran and the other stated the facts. Saadi does not find fault with either vizir but puts onus of the decision directly on the Shah/judge who is responsible for meting out justice!

Finally, we must consider who Saadi was addressing in the Golestan: he is the Salghurid governor of Shiraz during the Mongol Invasions - Abū Bakr ibn Sa’d ibn Zangi (1231–1260). This was a tumultuous period of Iranian history when warlords governed and military power determined who ruled. Note that in such a time Saadi deliberately uses the term ‘Shah’ in this story rather than ‘Sultan’ or ‘Khan’ or ‘Khaghan’ – the more ‘contemporary’ Turko-Mongolian royal title. By using the word ‘Padishah’ he is linking the ‘present’ to the mythical ‘past’ and by implication he is saying is telling the Sultan that history records justice, not power, i.e., to be remembered - like Fereydun, the mythical shah/king and the very symbol of justice in Iranian mythology - be just, because power and position are ephemeral and short-lived!

So where does that leave the moral of the story? First and foremost, using this story as an endorsement of ‘white lies’ is plainly wrong. The story *should not be defined* by one quotation from the Shah (“A lie resulting in conciliation is better than a truth producing chaos.”) but must be taken as a whole.

In fact, Saadi has, in one short story, outlined a judicial system where the law is above power, where the court is an open

forum for decision making and where the rights of *all* individuals must be considered. Saadi is not compromising the integrity of society (by justifying a ‘white lie’) but charging everyone - the Shah, vizirs and even prisoners - to act within the requirements of social justice, thus putting JUSTICE and its defense as the greatest good for society.

Saadi turns the Machiavellian comment that a ruler is ‘better to be feared than loved’ on its head and emphasizes JUSTICE as the ruler’s greatest power. He also shows that law is not arbitrary and outlines the fundamentals of a judicial system: a court with an ‘impartial’ judge, with ‘prosecuting and defense attorneys’ who are responsible to defend the law and facts, and an ‘accused’. He notes that justice is not an absolute, but nuanced with shades of grey - both truths and lies - and the judge must look at the situation, consult and then discern what is best. Further, using the specific quotation from the Quran, he is warning the judge that he too will be judged.

The final summation by Saadi himself gives the greatest advice to any ruler:

جهان ای برادر نماند به کس / دل اندر جهان آفرین بند و بس
مکن تکیه بر ملک دنیا و پشت / که بسیار کس چون تو پرورد و کشت

O brother, the world remains with no one.

It is enough to give your heart to the Creator,

Do not depend on possessions and this world

Because it has raised and killed many like you.

و آهنگ رفتن کند جان پاک / چه بر تخت مردن چه بر روی خاک

When the pure soul is leaving the body,

What matters if one dies on a throne or in the dirt?

The last statement, “*What matters it if one dies on a throne or in the dirt?*”, summarizes Saadi’s entire philosophy of government. It is the ultimate, timeless admonishment of Saadi to all humans, rulers and ruled, to regard all mankind as equal and it is the government’s duty is to be responsible and JUST to *all people equally*. Further, since everyone -rulers and ruled - will die and be judged; all humans are, *de facto*, equal in death but only the just will be remembered.

Final note, it is sad that such a *tour de force* by a master such as Saadi has been distorted and misrepresented by the politically expedient phrase that sometimes a ‘white lie’ is acceptable!

¹. Even Britannica mentions this, see <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Sadi>, “... a well-intended lie is admitted to be preferable to a seditious truth...”, viewed August 6, 2023

². Talal Itani translation of Quran Sura 3, Al Imran (<https://www.clearquran.com/001.html>)

132. And obey God and the Messenger, that you may obtain mercy.

133. And race towards forgiveness from your Lord, and a Garden as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the righteous.

134. Those who give in prosperity and adversity, **and those who restrain anger, and those who forgive people. God loves the doers of good.**

135. And those who, when they commit an indecency or wrong themselves, remember God and ask forgiveness for their sins—and who forgives sins except God? And they do not persist in their wrongdoing while they know.

136. Those—their reward is forgiveness from their Lord, and gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein forever. How excellent is the reward of the workers (doers of good).

³ According to the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi, Fereydun was one of the descendants of Jamshid who with Kaveh, the blacksmith, revolted against and defeated Zahhak (the snake shouldered tyrant and the epitome of injustice in Iranian mythology). He is famous for being Just.

Oneness

By N.S. Lajevardi

*Once upon a time, in the Eastern Dawn,
There was but one number, the number one.*

Who was dancing like a shining star?

Tango and waltz, forgetting the old memoir.

Turning round, like a Sufi, on and on.

In tavern, on the dirt, and on the lawn.

The number one, the substance of our “una”.

Who gets the sun’s light on its “laguna”.

Absorb the Existence, like la “Luna”.

Nothing but the one, the number one.

I become one with the “Oneness”.

My heart taking over my dumbness.

All my prejudice and ego disappeared, toneless.

The rest of the body has gone, but one

I am in the Divine Bar, like a “Clocharde”.

What a sensation of oneness with Almighty “Attar”

I am voiceless in junction to the number one.

I look around, nothing is left of me.

I am a dead branch, without Thee.

Just a glance at me, you will see.

That I’ll be alive, not a dead Sea.

Once upon a time there was but one,

The number One.



Study on the Burnt Fabrics of Persepolis

DR. KAVEH FARROKH



The Persepolis Terrace in the evening



Relief on the southern wall of the east stairway of the Apadana depicting Lydians who offer vases, cups and bracelets and a chariot drawn by horses

The remains of burnt fabrics, which were found in the initial excavations of UNESCO-registered Persepolis in the southern province of Fars, were examined and studied during a 10-day project. The small and various pieces of burnt fabrics, which have been kept in the treasure trove of the UNESCO-tagged site, were considered as remnants of the site's palaces' curtains, but the examination of the surface layer of this collection has shown they include a variety of different fabrics and it seems they had different usages, ISNA quoted researcher Shahrzad Amin Shirazi as saying on Wednesday.

The project aimed at separating and identifying different parts of fabrics and prepares them for further studies and protections measures, as noted by Shirazi. She also noted that due to their nature, fabrics are considered to be among the most vulnerable objects and for this reason, among the findings of archaeological excavations, they are much rarer and more limited than

other objects, while the range of information that can be obtained by them is very wide.

Persepolis, also known as Takht-e Jamshid, whose magnificent ruins rest at the foot of Kuh-e Rahmat (Mountain of Mercy), was the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire. It is situated 60 kilometers north-east of the city of Shiraz in Fars Province. The royal city of Persepolis, which ranks among the archaeological sites which have no equivalent, considering its unique architecture, urban planning, construction technology, and art, was burnt by Alexander the Great in 330 BC apparently as a revenge to the Persians because it seems the Persian King Xerxes had burnt the Greek City of Athens around 150 years earlier.

A video presentation entitled "Persepolis A Virtual Reconstruction" which provides a detailed reconstruction of the Persepolis city-palace (Source: MANO FONNOONI of Persepolis 3D). Note that from 2 minutes and 25 minutes seconds into the above video, the building re-

constructions also show the interiors in details, notably with respect to carpets, garments, upholstery, etc.

The city's immense terrace was begun about 518 BC by Darius the Great, the Achaemenid Empire's king. On this terrace, successive kings erected a series of architecturally stunning palatial buildings, among them the massive Apadana palace and the Throne Hall ("Hundred-Column Hall").

This 13-ha ensemble of majestic approaches, monumental stairways, throne rooms (Apadana), reception rooms, and dependencies is classified among the world's greatest archaeological sites.

The terrace is a grandiose architectural creation, with its double flight of access stairs, walls covered by sculpted friezes at various levels, contingent Assyrianesque propylaea (monumental gateway), gigantic sculpted winged bulls, and remains of large halls.

By carefully engineering lighter roofs and using wooden lintels, the Achaemenid architects were able

to use a minimal number of astonishingly slender columns to support open area roofs. Columns were topped with elaborate capitals; typical was the double-bull capital where, resting on double volutes, the forequarters of two kneeling bulls, placed back-to-back, extend their coupled necks and their twin heads directly under the intersections of the beams of the ceiling.

Persepolis was the seat of the government of the Achaemenid Empire, though it was designed primarily to be a showplace and spectacular center for the receptions and festivals of the kings and their empire.

The terrace of Persepolis continues to be, as its founder Darius would have wished, the image of the Achaemenid monarchy itself, the summit where likenesses of the king reappear unceasingly, here as the conqueror of a monster, there carried on his throne by the downtrodden enemy, and where lengthy cohorts of sculpted warriors and guards, dignitaries, and tribute bearers parade endlessly.

First Evidence of Early Administrative Management in Eastern Iran

Leman Altuntas (Arkeonews, June, 21 2022)

sent in by Kaveh Farrokh



Iranian archaeologists believe they have discovered the first evidence of early administrative management in an eastern Iranian province, which they think will provide fresh information about the people who lived there 6,000 years ago.

The discovery was made during the third archaeological excavation season which is currently underway in Kale-Kub, which is situated in Sarayan county of South Khorasan province. Kale Kub is a prehistoric site that is located in Ayask town, in Sarayan District, South Khorasan Province, eastern Iran.

This exploration is very important because Eastern Iran, especially in the prehistoric period, is a completely unknown region on the Iranian archaeological map. More than one hundred years after the beginning of archaeological excavations in Iran, the eastern regions have received little or no attention from archaeologists for various reasons, and there are very lim-

ited publications as well.

As noted by CHTN archaeologist Mohammad-Hossein Azizi Kharanaghi who has led the surveys:

“More than ten days after the start of the excavation, we found remnants of industrial architecture, adobe brick walls, and potteries, which offer evidence of social complexity and an administrative management system”. As further explained by Azizi Kharanaghi, Kale-Kub is one of the few historical sites in the region that has archeological evidence of the sequences of different cultures from the fifth to the second millennium BC. In reference to previous excavations at the site, the archaeologist further stated that “In 2018, two trenches were opened to identify the stratiography of the high amount of beveled rim bowls in addition to other pottery styles belongs to fourth millennium BC which are already known in southwestern Iran.”

The archaeologist hopes

their studies would clarify the importance of the Kale-Kub site for identifying the dispersal zone of “Beveled rim bowl pottery style” through the classification and typology of the discovered potteries and then a comparison between the pottery style in this site with other sites related to this period.

As further averred by Azizi Kharanaghi:

“Also, we attempt to trace the possible routes for this pottery style to the East and the interaction between the east and west of Iran. Pottery collection from the excavation in Kale-Kub includes a high amount of beveled rim bowls, Banesh tray, and some other pottery styles which are well-known from the fourth millennium BC such as nose handle and spouted wares.”

In modern Iran, these pottery styles are reported from the southwest, central Zagros, central plateau, and southeast. Experts believe findings in Kale-Kub show the extension of this culture to the east part of Iran. The late 4th millennium BCE Mesopotamian beveled rimmed bowl is: a crude piece of pottery easily cupped in two hands and has straight sides that terminate in a beveled rim. Bevel-rimmed bowls (abbreviated BRB) are unsightly, sturdy, and inexpensively constructed, as they are created with a mold rather than a wheel. Because of the coarseness of the pottery, the bowl is porous and will not hold liquid. Their size is surprisingly stable.

Beveled rim bowls are supposed to have been used

to measure portions of barley and oil. The rations would be given as payment to laborers for services rendered. Moreover, Beveled rim bowls are one of the most iconic ceramic types found during the Uruk period in Mesopotamia.

Inter-regional interactions had a significant effect on the movement of raw material and production in the extended area. Because of the geographical situation of Kale-Kub in the east of Iran and the existence of metal mines in the region, this site possibly appeared as a supplier place in the interaction networks for the southwest of Iran during the fourth millennium BC.

These cultural evidences, which can be considered to belong to the Susa II horizon or late Uruk cultures, include the typical pottery of this period, such as bevelled rim bowls, rough Banesh trays, tubular and nose handle jars, and fine and painted wheel-made pottery, which is well known in the south-western, western, north-western, south-eastern regions and central plateau of Iran, but which have now been identified and introduced for the first time in eastern Iran.

On this site, three cultural periods have been identified so far. They have been classified from the bottom level and the top of the virgin soil are 1: KALE KUB I (Chalcolithic period, fifth millennium BCE), 2: KALE KUB II (Susa II horizon, fourth millennium BCE), and 3: KALE KUB III (Bronze age, third and second millennia BCE).

Three Iranians Who Made a Difference

part One

M. REZA VAGHEFI

INTRODUCTION:

In many cultures and countries, the role of some elite scientists, core science or society, is so significant that they are looked upon as major national assets. They bring the fruits of modern science to the office, kitchen and skies. In the following pages the author presents the role of three people: two men and woman, in having left behind numerous works of science, statecraft and economic thinking processes that were applied and brought on lasting effects for the world as well as Iranian society. I am positively sure that there were more than a handful of such people, but I would start with three that I know a lot about; their careers and how they managed to overcome odds in order to achieve their ultimate objective, or due to conditions out of their control and rigidities in the system, left the world heartbroken.

ABUL HASSAN EBTEHAJ:

Abul Hassan Ebtehaj was born into an upper-class family in the city of Rasht, province of Guilan on the shores of Caspian Sea. His early work experience was at the Imperial Bank of Iran. The Bank was neither Imperial, meaning being under the rule of Iranian government at the time, nor Iranian, a British franchise, but it had wide powers of a general bank in addition to printing the legal tender currency for the Iranian government. The experience at the Imperial Bank was enriching and frustrating at the same time. Enriching because this was Ebtehaj's first financial and banking experience which allowed him, later, to assume responsibilities that would have been impossible had he not been exposed to intricacies of the banking system at Imperial Bank of Iran. It seems that this period formed some fundamental tenets in his mind that for years distinguished him from many high officials in the Iranian government.

A recent concept in teaching of economics is called "Economics of Strategy" meaning that in business or even in personal life you adopt a strategy of how to do things that you have in mind; you should also think of the economic implication of that strategy. It simply says you must think of the outcome of such a strategy. Is it worth it? How much does it cost? How else same objective can be achieved at a lower cost and many other issues that one must analyze and think about critically before jumping into action. Ebtehaj applied such analytical concept way before it was discovered by academic world. He had mastered the analytical concepts way before academicians thought about it. The only problem with such a concept was that it took a lot of patience and pure doggedness to convince the people with resources which were not their own. He was unique nationally and internationally. He was the most important non-monetary asset that Iranian government had which was not always appreciated.

His first work experience at the Imperial Bank of Iran tested his pride. Imperialism mind-set was quite evident the way the Bank treated the Iranian employees vis-à-vis the British. Seeing such treatment was the first test of his personality. His first job was "Interpreter" whereas he was performing many banking du-

ties. At the time, Iran's financial system had not developed. There was no national banking system, which also meant that there were opportunities to be developed. Everything was from the ground up. By the same token there was a great opportunity for someone of Ebtehaj caliber to take the lead. It may be just fair to say that late Abul Hassan Ebtehaj was endowed with the highest human qualities that one could find not only in Iran but world-wide. This was evident in his daily contact with Iranian nationals, from the Shah down to foreign dignitaries. He always thought an Iranian expert in a field is as good as a foreign one. All the people in high places respected him for his honesty and integrity. There was no one in the government or private organizations that could deny Ebtehaj's views on issues normal or complicated. Even those that opposed him or for some reason could not stand him admitted his righteousness and agreed that he was unique in analytical thinking. He was unchallengeable. He was the security of any international loan given to Iran.

I had the privilege of interviewing him for the book "Entrepreneurs of Iran" 1974, Library of Congress. Before assuming the most challenging responsibility as managing director of Plan Organization, he had been given the opportunity to head the major financial institution of Iran, The National Bank of Iran which was responsible for banking operation in addition to printing Iran's legal tender currency in addition to assuming the role of Central Bank. In this position he had to represent Iranian government in all international organization which he did and established Iran's name as a credible member of emerging institutions before and after WWII.

Ebtehaj's name became synonymous with precision, integrity and allocation of resources in meaningful and productive ways. From the Head of State, the Shah, down all officials in the government knew that he was one person that could not be fooled in any way. At the Plan Organization, which at the time was the only organization in charge of planning and implementation of major projects, his major concern was the unscrupulous people in the government and private enterprise trying to make money surreptitiously and he was the only obstacle preventing such unlawful acts. His constant fight was against people trying to make money unlawfully. It was a constant challenge but still he was responsible for initiating development projects that had undeniable benefit for the nation. Major dams to harness water, to road construction to facilitate commerce, the list is long but extremely meaningful. I personally witnessed how he managed to invite some top international experts to visit Iran as advisors and consultants. Such visits produced some major dams which produced electricity and water, which up to the moment, had been wasted. I recall a statement by the former director of Tennessee Valley Authority about David Lilienthal, a well-known name in international circles. Lilienthal said that "Ebtehaj fulfills his responsibilities with Missionary Zeal". A case that ended his service was development of a Chemical Fertilizer Plant in Shiraz, Province of Fars in Southwestern part of Iran. As head of the Plan Organization, he was asked about the project. He was flabbergasted when he learned that such a major invest-



ment was being undertaken in a city which was totally void of the required conditions and factors that would be most essential for a fertilizer plant. No proximity to water, or natural gas, the major ingredient in such an operation and no access to port for exporting the product that it would produce. Very soon he realized that some local politics had been behind the proposal. He insisted that some serious studies must be conducted before a contract could be signed. He would not budge from his position based on logic and economics of the business world-wide. Unfortunately, he was in the minority which also meant that local politics had overwhelmed common sense and business logic. For years the Plant had to be heavily subsidized. The author had an opportunity to meet the managing director of the plant in his office in Tehran. Indirectly I raised the issue of the location of the plant and its operation. The man said, "that is not my responsibility". Ebtehaj's serious opposition to the plant ended the active life of a man whose accompaniments have enriched the life of people all over the country. He was unique and unparalleled in dealing with problems. Logic was his language. Analysis was his method, and a positive outcome was his goal. He thought about all of this before undertaking any missions. Creating wealth and maintenance of that wealth for the nation was his ultimate objective, phenomena that few in high positions understood or even cared to know.

The late Abul Hassan Ebtehaj expressed his deep regrets about the way the oil issue ended the life of one of the most honest patriots in the 20th century, Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh. He firmly believed in his patriotism, honesty and integrity of the man who put Iranian claims against Imperialism on the global map. Unfortunately, Dr. Mossadegh did not look at the aftermath of the law nationalizing this massive undertaking. And sadly, he did not have sophisticated advisors to help him analyze the issue. His advisors were good people but hapless and unprepared to understand the complexity of the oil industry and the multidimensional nature of this global business. His technical advisor knew nothing about the oil industry. They all shared in hatred of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company but nothing else that they would agree on. Although Dr. Mossadegh wanted to trust his advisors the people around him were not technically qualified to tackle such a complicated and multidimensional issue as the oil industry. Dr. Mossadegh was more inclined to listen to Mr. Hassibi who believed in "his own dream that the oil issue will be resolved amicably in Iran's favor" Ebtehaj's Memoire, 277. That sort of mentality ultimately ended in disaster.

Late Ebtehaj was overseas when Islamic revolution replaced the Shah's regime. His house (his only belonging) was looted and ransacked. He passed away unceremoniously.

DR. SIMIN DOKHT BOLOURCHI:

Dr. Bolourchi was born in the ancient city of Hamedan, the summer residence of Achaemenian kings of Persia. Located in the foothills of Alvand mountain, the city prides itself as being the homestead of some great poets and luminaries: Folky poet Baba Taher comes to mind. The city also is where the mausoleum of Avicenna, the pioneer in health medicine and author of a four-Volume medical dictionaries.

She was raised in a well-educated middle-class family and received her schooling at an American school sponsored by Presbyterian church in the city. Her father was the deputy manager of the only bank, a branch of the National Bank of Iran. Her mother was a rowing reader of many poets' works including Hafez, Saadi

and Baba Taher. Her grandfather had effectively participated in the constitutional revolution in Iran early in 20th century.

After completing high school in Hamadan, she moved to Tehran where her father had been promoted deputy director of the accounting department at the headquarters of the National Bank of Iran. Early in her life she expressed a deep interest in the science of Nutrition. She began to work as a volunteer at Namazi Hospital in Shiraz, the only modern hospital, 1950s, in the southern part of Iran serving local people in addition to the wealthy Sheikhs coming from the southern shores of Persian Gulf. The Dietetic Department at Namazi Hospital was managed by an American lady. She welcomed the young and ambitious volunteer from Hamedan.

And there began a long-term education in Dr. Simin's career. Soon she applied for the college entrance examination in Tehran and in four years she graduated Suma Cum Laude. Having topped the roster of graduating students, she was awarded a scholarship by the Iranian government to study in the United States beginning 1961. Her American family friends searched for the best nutrition program in America and found one at Michigan State University, Michigan at the time one of the best programs in Nutrition in the United States. She was also lucky. Her registration at the University also coincided with the arrival of a top Nutrition scientist who had left the National Institute of Health being recruited to work at the University. Her blossoming began in earnest. A combination of the finest program, a pleasant educational environment and arrival of Professor Olaf Mickelsen effectuated an ideal condition for the young student from Iran. And that was the beginning of a productive journey that she had pursued for so many years.

Beginning a nutrition program under the leadership of a nationally known scientist was a gift from heaven and the young Iranian student made most of it. The scholarship she was granted had a four-year sunset. Therefore, she had the challenge of her life before her. Her first task was to begin and complete a master's program. Then a research grant initiated by her academic advisor bore fruit and she was asked to lead research: Caloric value of bread. She recommended a popular Iranian bread which seemed to have wide appeal, Sangack, in her native land, Iran. Of course, tremendous amount of logistic was involved because the bread had to be imported from Iran. Her advisor accepted and the process was initiated. Subjects selected; training in the subject was a challenge but doable. In addition to the extensive Lab work, courses in Biochemistry, physiology, anatomy and advanced nutrition had to be completed plus comprehensives in each field. Then it was time to put together the data collected for her dissertation to be presented to the Department faculty. A month later the result of her research was published in the Clinical Journal of Nutrition, a highly reputable Journal in the United States. Then it was time to go home.

Her arrival in Tehran coincided with the chancellorship of Professor Fazlullah Reza who had been invited by the Iranian government with explicit recommendation of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi to lead Araya Mehr University of Technology and

later Tehran university. The oldest university in Iran was ripe for revitalization. This was a great momentous occasion for Dr. Bolourchi's career. Soon she applied for an academic job at Tehran University's College of Health. She was interviewed by the Chancellor of the University. During the interview she realized that there was a great chance to be recruited. Two days later she received a phone call from the Chancellor's office confirming her employment at the College of Health, University of Tehran. Her dream of contributing to her homeland came true although there were many challenges ahead.

Dr. Bolourchi soon found that she had an enthusiastic audience among medical students taking her course in Basic Nutrition. This was totally opposite to misogynistic attitude she had faced among the male faculty in the College of Health calling her Massachusetty? There were other derogatory nuances that were unacceptable. Like Chinese calling foreign educated returnees to China as Haigui (sea turtle The Economist March 11, 2023). While enjoying the achievement she had behind her, she was also frustrated with the male dominated academic environment which seemed void of new medical and scientific knowledge. It was a toxic environment in which working on scientific matters which require intense concentration of thinking, analyzing data and coming out with empirically proven conclusion would be very hard. Of course, her presence may have caused the older faculty's unfriendly and sarcastic behavior primarily due to her superior scientific know-how but would not provide a pleasant laboratory atmosphere in which she could do further research or meet with enthusiastic students in medicine and health, and there were many of them coming to the Office and asking for her advice. Especially medical students seemed to be delighted learning new concepts and scientific methods in trying to investigate issues close to their heart and mind.

So, she decided to change her environment by responding positively to a request to join the research faculty at the Institute of Nutrition, part of the Ministry of Health. The Institute was commissioned to provide teaching opportunities in addition to research in nutrition. The Institute was ripe for a thrust into the future. Given her research background and publications she decided to do some creative work for common purposes in nutrition.

When teaching medical students a few months before moving to the Institute she had learned that there was no document to guide students about caloric content of the items they would consume, and students showed a tremendous interest zealously in understanding not only for themselves but also as future doctors advising their patients. She decided to passionately pursue creating Dietetic guidance for common purposes. She asked one of her very talented students to work with her and the project got underway. It took about a year to collect the data, analyze and put together the information and produce a document a year later received a Royal Award. The Institute was ripe for extensive improvement in the programs and course contents. She recommended the Director to invite the person who had a significant impact on her academic career, Professor Olaf Mickelsen, a former high official at the National Institute of Health in Washington, D.C, U.S.A. His arrival provided the necessary momentum and in a short while the Institute was ready to admit students for a master's degree in nutrition.

It may be a coincidence, but the Institute director welcomed a Nutrition professor from M.I.T., United States, looking for a highly qualified faculty in Nutrition to be nominated as a coordinator of similar programs in the Middle East countries that were

receiving funding from the United Nations University in Tokyo, Japan. The United Nations University in Tokyo does not fit the standard university campus. It is a coordinating institution supervising the quality of different programs they support in different parts of the world. For Middle Eastern countries they appealed to the Nutrition Institute where highly qualified professors, Iranian and American were actively involved. There was a consensus among the faculty that Dr. Simin D. Bolourchi was most suitable for this highly significant position. So, she was appointed as U.N. Coordinator of Nutrition programs throughout the Middle East where the United Nations had funded such programs. In addition to producing the National Dietetic Handbook for assisting professionals advising people about nutrition, she also wrote a book about Nutrition that became a standard text in the field and was used for many years. She considered these efforts a national duty in view of the scholarship that the government had awarded her to study the field, so she was not collecting any authorship fees. Her future seemed loaded with opportunities that would potentially enrich peoples' knowledge about nutrition and the fact that proper nutrition would reduce such issues like diabetes and weight control which has become an international problem with devastating results if no guidance were provided. Such issues occupied her mind and searching for a solution became her daily preoccupation. There was so much more to do but political upheaval cut her efforts and dreams short.

At this stage, Islamic revolution replaced the Pahlavi dynasty and realizing the misogynous culture of the new regime she left Iran. She passed away two years ago.

to be continued

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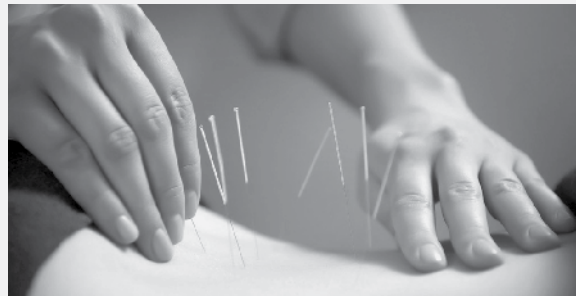
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‘I’m painting all the time,’ Ali Dowlatshahi states, while arranging the paintbrushes on his desk in his home studio in Stamford, Connecticut. ‘I’m busy all the time. Like a fish in the water, if you take me out I die.’ The sun shines brightly through the room’s large windows, lighting up a painting behind him that depicts a variety of political villains (including Jimmy Carter, Margaret Thatcher and Ayatollah Khomeini) burning in hell. ‘For me,’ he tells, ‘It was always very important to paint a story. The story of life. The story of the people. Everything around me.’ The canvas currently sitting on his desk is perhaps the work that best represents this statement: a stirring, intensely detailed interpretation of his own 87 years. It reveals intimate, personal details such as his birth and family tree, but also offers a subjective view on societal proclivity and the burden of mortality.

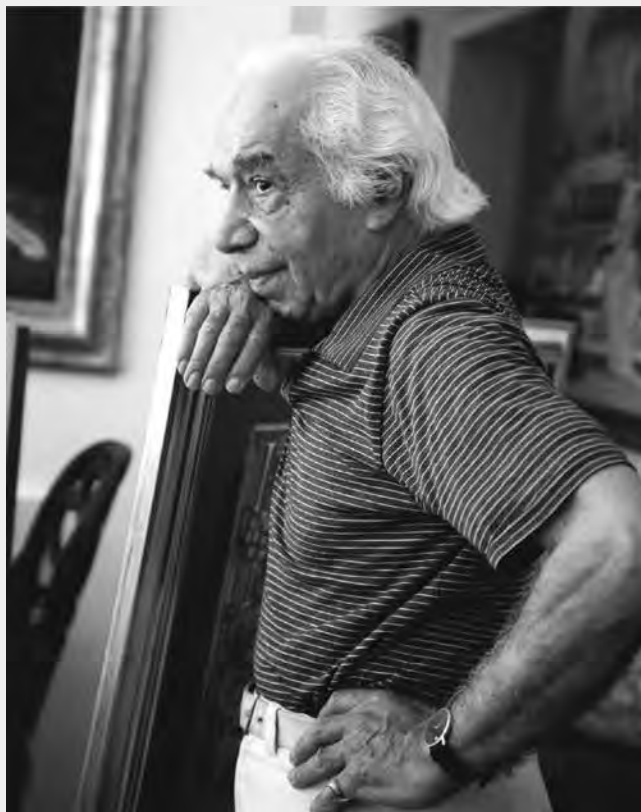
An acclaimed artist with a wealth of history and culture surrounding his every brush stroke, the Dowlatshahi house is covered in his art, from the vibrant paintings hanging on the wall to the intricate tiles lining the walls (‘This is the Persian ceramic, the color is turquoise and ultra blue. I designed it and sent it to Iran to kiln’). And off these walls reverberates the passionate sounds of his musings, his political distrust and disgust, his Persian drums



REFLECTIONS

Ali Dowlatshahi with Susan Linss

alidowlatshahiart.com



and, of course, his beautiful stories.

There are many. In this household of visions, imaginings, expression, creativity, textures and colors, it’s the sort of fertile environment where ideas are born with ease.

It seems only natural, then, that it would also be the inspired environment where an innovative, imaginative artist was born, a sharp eye who would ultimately design a new aesthetic for modern pop culture. Ali’s daughter, Susan Linss, has become one of the most sought after production designers in the music world, as well as the commercial market. Her productions often show subjects in everyday settings, but with an element of magic and the divine feel of fine art, composing colors that exist beyond this world, as if they’ve just walked straight out of an oil painting or beautiful photograph.

‘He’s a true artist,’ Susan says fondly, while Ali begins to take a number of colorful paintings out of a packed storage room. ‘He puts so much time and energy into everything he does. My parents always say I work so hard doing what I do, but I got it from the two of them! They’re such an inspiration to be proactive, and be creative, and to always de learning. In my country, the women are extremely strong and they believe in education; they have a hunger for progression.’

‘To me, without music and women and love, the world is empty,’ Ali quips, and his wife of 56 years smiles on the couch



nearby. He slowly fills the room with a large collection of portraits that were exhibited in Soho last year. ‘These were inspired by [Austrian Symbolist painter] Gustav Klimt.

He loves women, he loves the flower. I started to do some combining of the Persian art and Gustav Klimt together.’ He points at a man in one of his paintings. ‘This is a lover. He says to woman, “I love you, I give my heart to you.” She says, “Listen, there are so many hearts out there.” Everything’s always about love. Man like a horse, woman like a cat.’

Born and raised in Iran, Ali graduated from the School of Fine Arts in Tehran. While teaching art to high school students for 14 years, Ali frequently painted Persian royalty, including Empress Farah Pahlavi (the Shah’s wife) and her family members.

His layered, storytelling artwork and elegant textile designs precede the instant-gratification generation; there is hardly a trace of his work on the internet beyond his Persian Design and Motifs book, an iconic reference for textile designers.

To truly encounter the detail of his paintings, physical proximity is key: his breathtaking works are on display at the Persian National Museum in Tehran, his portrait of Goethe hangs in the Frankfurt Museum, and his portrait of John and Jacqueline Kennedy (after being displayed in the White House for the duration of Kennedy’s administration) sits in the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

It was New York that first brought him to America, in 1961. ‘My first 25 years in New York were spent as textile design; my wife was a fashion designer,’ he explains. Susan was born in New York, but the family moved to Stamford when she was 8. ‘As far back as I can remember,’ she says, ‘my parents were always attending functions that were related to the arts from Iran. And

they entertained a tremendous amount as well. At least once or twice a month, they would host these huge Persian parties at our house, with live music and dancers, poetry readings, and food. Even now, they still have a bigger social life than I do - they’re always going to some cultural event.’

Dowlatshahi not only maintains and preserves, but helps progress their culture within a different country - yet he never changes the context.

The traditions, as Susan puts it, ‘don’t become Americanized at all. There’s a huge Iranian community in the Tri-State area, in Manhattan, Long Island, New Jersey and Connecticut. My father’s made himself known in that world, he’s center stage, he’s an emcee. He’s good at organizing and facilitating events.’

Susan’s organizational skills are hereditary, it seems, juggling a staggering list of projects through her boutique Susan Linss Design firm - from designing music festival sets, to interior design for high-end clients, to redefining the art of music videos. ‘I always try to find ways to use our culture in my work. With the furniture I’m creating, I want to do a piece with Persian calligraphy.’ Susan recently decided to collaborate with Decor Marmi in Italy and design a line of architectural furniture pieces out of precious stone. They will be exhibited in a set that she has designed.

With clients that include hip hop and pop royalty (Kanye West, Jay Z, Notorious B.I.G., Wu Tang) and iconic American brands (Levi’s, Target, Hewlett Packard, Neiman Marcus), how does she apply her deep sense of heritage into a commercial pop platform? Susan stops to reflect. ‘It’s the feeling that I’m able to express visually. When I hear a song, I can visualize how it should look in order to capture the emotion. Intuition is a huge part of my culture. And I learned that from my father through his art. A lot of his art is based on poetry and emotion, that’s how he visualizes it.’ Ali pulls out another painting from the closet, unaware of Susan’s comment. ‘This is famous poetry,’ he notes, sliding his fingers across the Persian letters in the painting. ‘It says, “The singing of the musician, and the sound of the music gives you the idea of love.”’ Susan smiles and says, still out of earshot, ‘That’s what I learned growing up, too, from him - maybe he couldn’t articulate it, but he could express it visually.’

‘In my culture,’ she continues, ‘We believe in life.

And love is a huge part of it, and family, tradition, and values. That becomes engrained in you, through whatever you do: you have to believe in it.



For my father, there has to be some kind of truth, even if it creates controversy.’ A sense of controversy has trailed alongside the various chapters of Ali’s life and work. Vehemently pro-Shah, he was blacklisted by the government to return to Iran. Ali’s artwork often veers towards a political stance, conjuring global debate: a painting in his bedroom tells of the injustice of 9/11, and a series of work in his living room elucidates the truth of Persian governmental control. He explains, ‘The Persian government - there’s not so many young people involved. The young generation needs something. They are very frantic. I connect with the people that have nothing, those that are suffering. I relate to the people. Everyday for me is a new day. I wake up and try to do something new.’ One of the newer things that has fueled Ali the last few years is a project that helps him relate to the people: the self-published political magazine he creates from his home, *Antar Nameh* (roughly translates from Farsi as *The Monkey Paper*).

Unafraid of controversy and openly embracing left-wing ideals, the magazine is a satirical take on the Iranian government, both in the Middle East and on US shores. What began as a 2 or

3 page commentary for a small circle of friends has expanded into a 20-30 page magazine that he creates single-handedly, and circulates to 1,000 to 2,000 people in the Iranian community.

Boxes upon boxes line his hallway when he prints the magazine a handful of times each year. The

support for *Antar Nameh* is testament to the power of the written word: his passionate fans often donate financial contributions to support the publication that binds their community.

Community and education are two themes that are present throughout both Ali and Susan’s every creative venture, as is passing on their legacy and tradition. In-between her many endeavors, Susan stays inspired by returning to her college, the School of Visual Arts, as a teacher. Teaching one day a week, she presents her students with projects beyond their wildest dreams (photo shoots with Q-Tip and Diesel, for instance). Ali, meanwhile, prefers to always sit on the other side of the desk. ‘I am like a student,’ he says, with his infectious smile. ‘Everyday I go to the museum, I take the reference, I learn. I’m not telling myself that I am a great artist - I am a student. Art is a big, big world.’

The Mother Cuisine: A Taste of Persia’s Ancient — and Influential — Cooking

SARAH KAGAN (sent in by Dr. Kaveh Farrokh)



Iran is such a hot-button issue these days that it can be hard to look at the country outside of the geopolitical context. But no one interested in food can afford to ignore what is one of the world’s most important and influential cuisines.

Iranian cooking is heir to no less than two and a half thousand years of saffron- and rosewater-scented history. The foods of the courts of ancient Persia (as Iran was called until the 1930s) included perfumed stews flavored with cinnamon, mint, and pomegranates; elaborate stuffed fruits and vegetables; and tender roasted meats — dishes that have influenced the cooking of countries as far-flung as India and Morocco. In many ways, Persian food is the original mother cuisine.

The history of Iranian cooking goes back to the sixth century B.C., when Cyrus the Great, the leader of a tribe called the Pars (Persians), created an empire that eventually stretched from India to Egypt and parts of Greece.

This vast, unified territory became a conduit of culture and cuisine, and native Persian ingredients such as saffron and rose water were spread throughout the empire. The Persians also traded with the kingdoms of the Far East: Caravans traveling along the Silk Road from China to present-day Syria brought citrus fruits, eggplants, and rice from Asia to the Middle East and the Mediterranean. The Persian empire eventually fell to Alexander and later to the Arabs (who converted the Persians to Islam), but each successive wave of rulers proved fond of the Persians’ flavorful cooking. The Arabs even brought Persia’s distinctive sweet-and-sour flavors to North Africa, and in the Middle Ages, exotic Persian techniques such as gilding (painting foods with elaborate gold or silver leaf) traveled to Europe via the Crusades, becoming all the rage at regal banquets.

From the 11th to 15th centuries A.D., Persian culture flourished despite Turkish and Mongol rule. This era saw a flowering of native poetry and art, and its rarified cooking, with rich sauces and pilafs strewn with nuts and dried fruit, became the foundation of the Moghul cuisine of northern India.

Contemporary Persian cooking wears its heritage on its sleeve. Rice has a place of honor, prepared with a prized, golden crust formed from clarified butter, saffron, and yogurt. Lamb and chicken are marinated and grilled as kebabs, or mixed into stews called *khoshes* with fruit and sour ingredients such as lime juice. Cinnamon, cardamom, and other spices are used in great abundance, along with a multitude of fresh herbs, and pickles and flatbreads are served at every meal.

Desserts feature rose water and pistachios, and refreshing drinks called *sharbats* are made from diluted fruit and herb syrups. Though largely unknown in the U.S., Persian food is perfect for American palates primed by its Middle Eastern and Indian cousins.