



# Persian Heritage

www.persian-heritage.com

**Persian Heritage, Inc.**

110 Passaic Avenue  
Passaic, NJ 07055

E-mail: Mirassiran@aol.com

Telephone: (973) 471-4283

Fax: 973 471 8534

## EDITOR

**SHAHROKH AHKAMI**

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Dr. Mehdi Abusaidi, Shirin Ahkami Raiszadeh, Dr. Mahvash Alavi Naini, Mohammad Bagher Alavi, Dr. Talat Bassari, Mohammad H. Hakami, Ardehsir Lotfalian, K. B. Navi, Dr. Kamshad Raiszadeh, Farhang A. Sadeghpour, Mohammad K. Sadigh, M. A. Dowlatshahi.

## MANAGING EDITOR

HALLEH NIA

## ADVERTISING

HALLEH NIA

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

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

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

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

## PUBLISHED BY

**PERSIAN HERITAGE, INC.**

A corporation organized for cultural and literary purposes

Cover Price: \$6.00

Subscriptions: \$24.00/year (domestic);  
\$30.00 & 50.00/year (International)

Typesetting & Layout  
**TALIEH PUBLICATIONS**

# Persian Heritage

**Vol. 22, No. 85**

**Spring 2017**

<b>FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK</b>	6
<b>LETTERS TO THE EDITOR</b>	8
<b>NEWS</b>	
<b>The Plurality of Identity in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Iran</b>	9
<b>Scientist Makes Case to Edit Embryos</b>	10
<b>Third Line Exhibitions</b>	11
<b>COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>The "Clash of Civilizations" (K. Farrokh &amp; J. S. Gracia)</b>	12
<b>Iran's Carpet Exports to U.S. Go from Zero to Millions</b>	14
<b>What Is and Who Are Iranian-Americans</b>	15
<b>The Short List of Accomplished Iranian-Americans</b>	17
<b>The Iranian-Americans (Khashayar Nourishad)</b>	18
<b>The Historical Contributions to Humanity (Pirouz)</b>	19
<b>Debunking The Many Myths Americans Believe About Iran</b> <i>(Stephanie Lester)</i>	20
<b>THE ARTS &amp; CULTURE</b>	
<b>REVIEWS</b>	21
<b>The Sakas (Michael McClain)</b>	22
<b>A Short History of the Iranian Gendarmerie</b> <i>(Stephanie Cronin)</i>	24
<b>In the Memory of Touran Mirhadi</b>	26
<b>The World's Most Expensive Spice in Vermont</b>	28
<b>Alborz High School (Hossein Gharib)</b>	29
<b>Four Thousand Year Old Tree</b>	31
<b>Persian Dance Traditions and New Year History</b>	32

## Important Notice

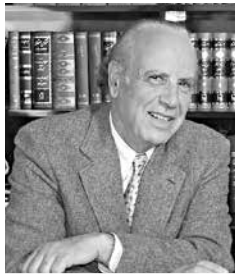
All written submissions to Persian Heritage with the expectation of publication in the magazine must include the writer's name, address and telephone number. When an article is submitted we assume the author has complete ownership of the article and the right to grant permission for publication.

Persian  Heritage

**Special  
announcement:**

Contact our  
California based Advertising  
Agent for your ads.

**(973) 471-4283**



## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

It is again spring and with this season comes the awakening of life, the trees begin to sprout, the flowers begin to bloom, the birds begin to chirp and a new beautiful Norouz begins. With the beginning of the Persian New Year we at *Persian Heritage* magazine celebrate the magazines birth. We now begin our 22<sup>nd</sup> year as a publication. From our *Persian Heritage* family, to Iranians throughout the world, we wish you a healthy, happy, peaceful and prosperous New Year. On a personal side, I want to take this opportunity to thank, from the bottom of my heart, my colleagues, who work tirelessly on this magazine and the subscribers. I will be forever grateful for your support over these years.

The last few weeks have been unsettling for many in the United States and the rest of the world. New concerns have risen especially for Iranians, over the possibility of war, discussions on the destruction of Iran and the rhetoric of violence. This has taken us all by surprise. There is nothing new about the turmoil in the Middle East or the conflicts between the leaders of countries such as Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Israel. The turmoil has kept the people of this region on their tip toes for a long time. With the new immigration policy proposed by the new administration of the United States additional fears have been added; a new refugee policy that temporarily bans immigrants from seven countries, Iran being one of them. This action has turned the table for Muslims! American citizens have stood up in protest against this ban. This support for Muslims within and outside of the United States was surprising and appreciated. Because of this citizen support movement and the filing of a legal claim against the order, the judicial took it under review and gave an opinion that reversed the order and lifted the ban.

The implementation of this executive order and the ban resulted in massive demonstrations by people of all faiths Moslems, Jews, Christians etc. and the general population. Courageously they voiced their opposition. The protests against the oppression of a minority was striking and beautiful and showed the souls of the people, unified and standing up for the American values of equality and human rights. This is something we have not witnessed in decades. Those who participated in the protests against the executive order knew no color, creed or religion. They simply came together in support of a discriminated minority group.

Again I and many around me were deeply moved. Their selfless fight for human equality took our breath away. Their actions reaffirmed the kindness, generosity and gentleness of the American people. It confirmed the reason for the United States leading the world. It is after all, the people, NOT the government, NOT the politicians that make a country GREAT!!

These revelations brought me back to my birthplace. I thought about the struggles the people of Iran continue to face, forty years after the revolution; a revolution they hoped would overthrow the reign of a dictator and return equality, human rights and free speech, for which they fought so hard. THEIR STUGGLES CONTINUE AND GET EVEN MORE BURDON-

SOME! Not only have they not been able to remotely achieve any rights, there is an increase in incarcerations of the innocent, corruption is on the rise, executions grow and Iran infamously has been placed on the list of top countries suppressing human rights. Human rights organizations continue to protest and STILL the suppression continues.

For the past 40 years Iranians have faced cruel immigration policies for traveling to Europe and the United States. Mothers, fathers, grandparents, sisters, brothers and friends have gone to their graves not being able to see their mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers and friends one more time. Iranians have been vetted during these years more so than most other people applying for visas to come to the United States. Iran continues to be labeled as a state that supports terrorism and Iranians will be subject to even greater vetting and constraints.

On so many occasions I have voiced my belief and cried out against the inhumane treatment of a people who suffers under the hands of their own government and by the leaders of the so called "enemy states." I ask WHY the innocent people, not the politicians and government officials, are the VICTIMS of the political rhetoric used by the world leaders of "so called enemy states?"

Here in the States the population has been overly influenced by a biased media and rhetoric of their politicians against the Iranian government. This bias and rhetoric voids the human aspect from the picture. We are not shown the suffering of the people in Iran under the present government, as we are shown in other countries. Over the years I have tried to explain to my friends, readers and acquaintances that the citizens of a country must be separated from the acts of their government. The majority vote, in most dictatorships, is not the true representative of the peoples' choice. Clearly only a few handpicked voices by the regime have a voice and those who oppose those voices are silenced.

Regretfully I admit that many of my family, friends and acquaintances respond with negativity to what I call my "Iranian-ness," which has gotten worse since Iran has been placed on the list of the seven most dangerous countries (labeled as supporting terrorism) selected by this and the former administration of our government. **I am angered**, as an American of Iranian decent, that the people in that country are labeled as potential terrorists. Can it be possible that we, the citizens of the United States, have forgotten the countries of origins of the individuals who have committed terroristic attacks on the United States and world? They include Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Yemen, Pakistan and Afghanistan, but they are not on the list as supporting terrorism, nor are their citizens considered potential terrorists. No these country's governments and citizens are called allies of the United States. They are not be labeled and perceived as terrorist nations. I ask the media and the world governments that IF you do not judge and label an entire government/country by an individual terroristic act by their citizen's, than why label or judge an entire group of citizens by a country's terroristic act?

In Iran the leadership of Iran has isolated the country and people from the world by using tough rhetoric and harsh comments. While there may be a variety of strategies behind their actions most see it as a way they are able to remain in power.

In the Islamic Republic male dominance is the law of the land and movements for women's rights are condemned or justified by the ridiculous theory that suppression is used to protect the woman's femininity; for example the mandatory implementation of the hijab. While women's rights are of the utmost importance, the Iranian government's concentration on this matter allows them to avoid addressing issues that are causing their citizens to live in peril, while they, the leaders line their pockets and international bank accounts with money that should be used to help their country and its people prosper. Drug trafficking and drug addiction is on the rise, yet corrupt government officials receive light sentences and the youth, instead of receiving treatment are incarcerated or executed. How can a government who says they are protecting its citizens turn away from its people and the children who are homeless and hungry? How can a government who says it is for its people turn away from its people and children who are being brutalized by the cold winter and are finding shelter in shallow graves of the cemeteries? When I see, when you see these images we should cry, our wounds and anger should deepen. When the WORLD sees these images they should cry! When WORLD governments see these images (of not just Iranians) they should cry and realize the consequences of their actions on the innocent!

The United States has allowed immigrants to obtain the same opportunities as a natural born. The United States is a country where you can find work and raise your family, a place where you have a right to practice your faith or no faith. The United States has allowed us to freely celebrate Norouz and other ethnic celebrations on the public streets of every state and do so without fear! In Iran, however, these ancient celebrations are being curtailed and suppressed. This cannot be allowed to happen, it is part of the foundation of an Iran and Iranian.

Can it be possible that after forty years, if one goes against the grain or the regime and discusses another religion they are still condemned and imprisoned? Baha'i neighbors are losing their livelihood and forced to close their shops. Young students of other faiths are not given the right to continue their higher education. The possibility of a permanent ban on future immigration or visa's of people from Iran, to the United States will increase the Iranian's plight and allow the inaccurate rhetoric of the Iranian government become a truth.

Yes my fellow readers, friends, colleagues and acquaintances twenty-two years have passed since the publication of the first issue of *Persian Heritage*. Each year we hoped the wounds left by the revolution and governments of Iran would heal, instead the wounds are deeper and the pain more unbearable. When will my Norouz letter to you be filled with happiness and joy, rather than hardship and despair? AGAIN, I try to remain an optimist. PERHAPS this coming year will be better than the last for all of us. PERHAPS our wishes for an end to the conversation of war and the talk of nuclear enhancement will be granted. PERHAPS our wishes to end to the suffering of the innocent people and refugees will become a reality and all can return to the land they call home. PERHAPS we as world citizens can wisely, intelligently, measuredly and systematically use social media and peaceful protest to continue the pursuit of human rights for all. Untethered, meaningless and destructive actions will only fall on

deaf ears and negate any positive gains! But I fear that as that as quickly a mass public protest and defense of an injustice arises, when the excitement ends it fades as quickly and we are left with "what could have been."

To all of you, whatever our future holds, I extend and will always continue to extend my best wishes for peace and harmony. I will continue to wish, to hope and to pray for the day to come when the words of religion, color or creed are replaced by the words kind, generous and interesting to describe a neighbor.

Wishing for these exceptional wishes to come true,  
I remain very truly yours, Shahrokh Ahkami

*Shahrokh Ahkami*

A Bilingual, Cultural & Educational Publication



Persian  
Heritage

*To Support Your Persian Heritage*  
**Subscribe Now!**

**Tel: 973 471 4283**  
**Fax: 973 471 8534**  
**www.persian-heritage.com**  
**e-mail: mirassiran@gmail.com**

**ADDRESS:**  
Persian Heritage Inc.  
110 Passaic Ave. Passaic, NJ 07055

**Yes!** I want to subscribe to Persian Heritage

\$32 for one year (US) \$52 for two years (US)

\$40 one year (Canada & Mexico - credit card only)

\$52 one year (Europe & other - credit card only)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this clip with the payment to  
Persian Heritage office.

## The Oscar Award for "The Salesman"



On February 26, 2017, the movie "The Salesman," directed by Asghar Farhadi, won the Oscar for best foreign film! This was his second win, having won the Oscar for best foreign film in 2012 for his movie "The Separation". In total he has had three nominations. This number places him with other foreign film winners of two Oscars, Federico Fellini, Ingmar Bergman, and Vittorio DeSica. Winning countries with two Oscars for foreign films include Iran, Germany, Hungary, Argentina, Austria, Switzerland and Czech Republic.

The most interesting part of Mr. Farhadi's win was the fact that he and his star Taraneh Alidoost boycotted the awards in protest of President Trump's executive order that temporarily banned immigration from Iran and six other countries. He accepted the award through the surrogate of Anousheh Ansari (an accomplished and successful Iranian immigrant and the only Iranian woman to travel to space). Accompanying her was Firouz Naderi, also a very successful Iranian immigrant who recently retired from NASA and worked on the Mars project.

In response to Mr. Farhadi's action the foreign minister of Iran, Mohammad Javad Zarif set out a Tweet. He stated that he was proud of the actors and the director of the movie "The Salesman" for standing up to Americas order banning Muslims to enter the United States. He also stated that he was proud that Iran represented culture and civilization for millennia.

Seeing Ms. Ansari and Mr. Naderi on stage, replacing the winner himself, Mr. Farhadi raised a question. I wondered how he and the others, who boycotted the Oscars in protest, would respond to the following question.

Are there any countries in the free world for example Germany, France and England or for that matter any country in the world, that would allow a foreign movie director, individually or through a surrogate, to appear on world television, in front of the entire world (245 countries), protesting against a President's order, get an applause and NOT FEAR REPERCUSSION BY THE GOVERNMENT? Could a citizen of Iran, a guest or immigrant to that country be allowed to do this and freely walk away?

## CENTRAL ASIAN ROOTS OF SCANDINAVIA-Y-DNA EVIDENCE

The possible existence of human "pure" race is more of a self-righteous and megalomaniac myth than any other fallacies since antiquity....we are more intertwined and intermingled that we could have ever surmised. As homogenously pure blond as the Scandinavians look, most if not all humans, have a major gene origin from the Mt. Altai region of the central Asia, transmigrating as foragers, hunter-gatherers post the glaciers receding northbound of the last major ice age.

*Davood Rahni*

## MOTHER TERESA'S INTERVIEW WITH SHIRIN BAZLEH

Having brought to your attention Shirin Bazleh's interview with Mother Teresa, I was surprised at the outcome of your colleague's very short conversation (not an interview) with Shirin as manifested by the article in the Winter 2016 issue (Pages 16-17).

I would have thought there would have been a brief introduction to or bio of Shirin and her accomplishments. After all *Persian Heritage* has always been an effective and credible supporter of members of the Iranian community.

*Parvin Ramazannia*

## SOMEONE SPECIAL.

You are something very SPECIAL. Thank you for being there. I see your grandson has inherited the papa's intelligence!

*Jahangir Jon Sedaghatfar*

## MR. VAGHEFI'S ARTICLE

Reference is made to Mr. Vaghefi's article "Shah's Fall" in the Winter edition of your distinguished magazine. On the second section of this article "OPEC is created", the first name of the Minister of Finance in Mr. Hoveida's cabinet erroneously is mentioned as Jahangir instead of Jamshid. Jahangir Amouzgar was Minister of Finance in Mr. Amini's cabinet.

*Kuros Amouzgar*

## EXTREMELY HONORED

Your journal has done much to preserve the heritage of *Iranzamin* and her mighty legacy.

*Kaveh Farrokh*

The foreign minister of Iran is certainly taking advantage of Mr. Farhadi's action. He boasts of Iran's 2000 years of civilization and culture and then admires the resistance of Muslim's ability to enter the United States. Could someone please ask Mr. Zarif why the creative geniuses of Iran, within Iran, such as Jafar Panahi have no work permit to continue to create?

I am proud of Mr. Farhadi's achievements and the achievements of other Iranians. But prouder am I of the American people whose government has given them the beautiful treasure and gift of liberty and freedom. It is something the remainder of the world desires. They dream of coming to the United States in the hopes of having a better life, to be able to say what they think and believe and do so without fear of execution or jail.



## Contemporary Artists Investigate the Plurality of Identity in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Iran at the Aga Khan Museum

Toronto — On February 4, 2017, a pioneering and insightful collection of post-revolution Iranian art was presented for the first time at the Aga Khan Museum. Featuring works by 23 contemporary artists, the world-premiere exhibition *Rebel, Jester, Mystic, Poet: Contemporary Persians* showcases the many identities of today's Iranians through 27 works selected from the private collection of Iranian-British financier and art collector Mohammed Afkhami.



The show, curated by Dr. Fereshteh Daftari, will feature artists: Hamed Sahihi, Shirin Neshat, Monir Farmanfarmaian, Parastou Forouhar, Shadi Ghadirian, Khosrow Hassanzadeh, Shirin Aliabadi, Shirazeh Houshiary, Y.Z. Kami, Nazgol Ansarinia, Afruz Amighi, Abbas Kiarostami, Nazgol Ansarinia, Shahpour Pouyan, Timo Nasserri, Alireza Dayani, Mohammad Ehsai, Parviz Tanavoli, Morteza Ahmadvand, Rokni Haerizadeh, Ali Banisadr, Farhad Moshiri, Shahpour Pouyan, Shiva Ahmadi, and Mahmoud Bakhshi.

The works of art featured in the exhibition confront such issues of today as gender, politics, and religion — topics familiar to those in the Western world — through quiet rebellion, humor, mysticism, and poetry. These paintings, videos, sculptures, and photographs created since 1998 present a different side of Iran, previously unseen by Western audiences, and yet very familiar in its medium and meaning.

“Despite the sanctions, isolation, and political unrest characterizing Iran in this millennium, the creative forces of Iranian artists have not been dampened,” says Dr. Fereshteh Daftari, curator of *Contemporary Persians*. “The narratives presented in the exhibition are woven out of genuine obsession and eloquent resilience. This is not the first exhibition on the subject, but it is the first to cast these artists and their works in light of their fortitude.”

### EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

A fighter jet made from 32 stacked Persian carpets by Shiraz-born artist Farhad Moshiri;

A triptych from the *Snow White* series, which began just after the outbreak of the Iranian Revolution, by late photographer and filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami

Exhibition-related programming includes an Artists' Symposium, featuring scholars from both Iran and Canada, and performances by renowned Iranian artists.

The Aga Khan Museum in Toronto, Canada, has been established and developed by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC), which is an agency of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). The Museum's mission is to foster a greater understanding and appreciation of the contribution that Muslim civilizations have made to world heritage while often reflecting, through both its permanent and temporary exhibitions, how cultures connect with one another.

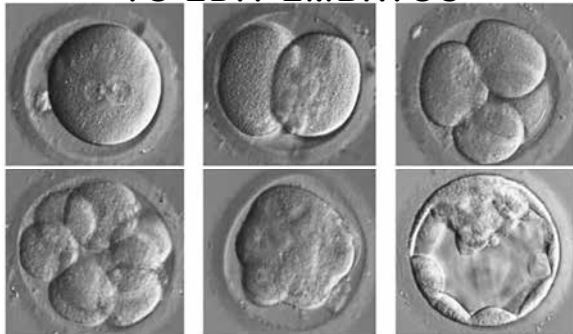
## WOMEN MAKE UP 10% OF IRAN'S ADMINISTRATION: VP

Source: Tehran Times

TEHRAN - Women compose ten percent of the Iranian administration, the vice president in women and family affairs, Shahindokht Molaverdi, said here on Sunday. The United Nations has affirmed the statistics about the number of women in the administration, Mehr news agency quoted her as saying.

The Department of Women and Family Affairs is responsible for regulating women's activities in the administration. There existed a wrong imagination about women's role in Iran after the victory of the Islamic revolution, however, women changed the misconception proving their abilities. Before the Islamic revolution in 1979, women composed 31 % of university students, while today the number has increased by 14 times. 22% percent of Iranian women are active in the agriculture sector, and 25% of women are active in the industrial sector. About 52 % of women are active in the service sector. About 2.27 % of women are working in state-run sectors and 72 % of women are working in privately-owned sectors. Women are also active in political fields and the number of female members of the parliament is now at the record high of 18.

## SCIENTIST MAKES CASE TO EDIT EMBRYOS



The embryo divides and develops from a single fertilised egg (top left) to a blastocyst (bottom right) – Image copyright Kathy Niakan

**BBC News:** Kathy Niakan wants to provide a better understanding of the earliest moments of human life. A scientist has been making her case to be the first in the UK to be allowed to genetically modify human embryos. Dr. Kathy Niakan said the experiments would provide a deeper understanding of the earliest moments of human life and could reduce miscarriages. The regulator, the Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority (HFEA), will consider her application soon. If Dr. Niakan is given approval, then the first such embryos could be created by the summer. Every person has gone through a remarkable transformation from a single fertilized egg into a fully fledged human being made of trillions of precisely organized cells.

### Exactly How This Takes Place Is a Mystery.

Dr Niakan, who has spent a decade researching human development, is trying to understand the first seven days. During this time we go from a fertilized egg to a structure called a blastocyst, containing 200-300 cells. But even at this early blastocyst stage, some cells have been organized to perform specific roles - some go on to form the placenta, others the yolk sac and others ultimately us.

During this period, parts of

our DNA are highly active. It is likely these genes are guiding our early development but it is unclear exactly what they are doing or what goes wrong in miscarriage. Dr Niakan, from the Francis Crick Institute, said: “We would really like to understand the genes needed for a human embryo to develop successfully into a healthy baby. “The reason why it is so important is because miscarriages and infertility are extremely common, but they’re not very well understood.”

Of 100 fertilized eggs, fewer than 50 reach the blastocyst stage, 25 implant into the womb and only 13 develop beyond three months. She says that understanding what is supposed to happen and what can go wrong could improve IVF. “We believe that this research could really lead to improvements in infertility treatment and ultimately provide us with a deeper understanding of the earliest stages of human life.”

### Gene Editing

However, she says the only way to do this is to edit human embryos. Many of the genes which become active in the week after fertilization are unique to humans, so they cannot be studied in animal experiments. “The only way we can understand human biology at this early stage is by further studying human embryos directly,” Dr Niakan said.

## NARGES BANI ASADI Analyzing and Interpreting Whole Human “-omes”



Bina Technologies launched in 2011

planning to attack one of the major challenges facing the genomic data analysis industry: infrastructure. The startup, headed by Narges Bani Asadi, cofounder and CEO, built a hybrid software-hardware analysis offering: the Bina Genomic Analysis Platform.

Bina is in the fast-paced, challenging and demanding position of a startup in the early stages of commercialization, expanding globally, recruiting clients and looking to expand its 20-person staff. Bani Asadi is, of course, in the thick of it, and she is inspired and intrigued by the daily challenges facing her.

“I see every challenge as an opportunity,” she told Fierce Biotech. “There is so much innovation in the [healthcare] industry now,” and “what we do at Bina to enable and empower personalized medicine is build software to analyze information.” Every day, she feels more optimistic about what they have and what they can do. Bina’s goal is ultimately to make decisions easier for doctors by providing more information more quickly. It used to take days, even weeks, to sequence genomic data; Bina can do it in hours. This is crucial for a wide swath of patients, from those suffering from life-threatening diseases such as cancer to infants in the NICU shortly after birth. Currently, in “the absence of genetic information, [doctors] have to make an educated guess,” Bani Asadi said. This is what companies like Bina work to avoid; they build the systems that scientific and medical researchers use to quickly and accurately understand and manage genomic information.

Bani Asadi was born in Iran and completed her undergraduate computer science degree at the University of Tehran, where, she told Fierce Biotech, more than half of admitted students are women. “Girls take education very seriously in Iran,” she said. She traveled to Stanford University for her master’s and Ph.D. in electrical engineering and very soon learned about the exciting work happening there. She became interested in how to demystify cancer: how to understand the disease at the molecular level and, using mathematical models, how to analyze it. Bani Asadi and her team won a \$7.5 million grant from the National Cancer Institute for their work, and after 6 years at Stanford, she was ready to use what she learned from her “humbling” and interesting experiences there with passionate people to start her own company in the heart of Silicon Valley. Three years after graduating, Bani Asadi has led Bina through several successes, including a \$6.25 million Series B round and a partnership with Dr. Elizabeth Worthey at the Medical College of Wisconsin to aid analysis of sequenced newborn genomes in an effort to quickly catch genetic diseases during the first month of life.

One of the most difficult challenges facing Big Data is how to use the massive amounts of information to make informed decisions. And Bani Asadi took that on. “I wanted to challenge myself, and I wanted to learn something new. I wanted to know what it takes to build a business.” And challenges have certainly arisen. Two of the stickiest issues Bani Asadi is facing now that her company is up, running and funded are people-based: staffing and customer relationships.

## THIRD LINE EXHIBITIONS



The Third Line, a Dubai based art gallery presented from December 21, 2016 through January 28, 2017 two exhibitions.

**Gallery 1**, *Line / Khat*, displayed a solo exhibition by Golnaz Fathi that explores the relationship between experimental calligraphic mark-making and non-traditional mediums. Golnaz's approach to abstraction in calligraphy, and signature style of visuals created through indecipherable lettering, has expanded to include non-traditional media such as ballpoints and rollerballs. Through this series, Golnaz explores an intimate narrative through the practice of diary keeping. Golnaz's new body of work originates from a fascination with diaries and notebooks and was prompted by a visit to Shanghai, where she encountered a series of folded handmade books. These triggered nostalgias around the notebooks she used to carry around and collect as a child, causing a return to the ritual of diary keeping. Obsessively and repetitively penning down her thoughts on a daily basis, every page turned into an abstract artwork. Golnaz refers to this process as a voyage into the unknown world. The exhibition presents a selection of notebooks, and works on paper and canvas from this series. Works on paper in the Black Series and Blue Series are made with archival ballpoint pens, an uncommon medium for calligraphers to use. For Golnaz, being a classically trained calligrapher, the use of this pen can be seen as a subtly rebellious and unconventional approach to the practice. Running out of ballpoints, and not being able to obtain new ones, Golnaz then switched to rollerball pens, which she uses in combination with acrylic paint, culminating in works on large canvases. Moving on from bold painterly lines to the use of ballpoint and rollerball, Golnaz uses her background as a trained calligrapher to skillfully transform known language into form and abstract compositions. By making the words illegible, she paradoxically allows the work to become more comprehensible; by being understandable for no one, the visuals become accessible to everyone.

**Gallery 2** displayed *Nowherescape*, a solo exhibition of new works by Alireza Masoumi. In the exhibition, Alireza explores emblematic landscape portrayal through oil paintings on canvas and ballpoint works on paper. Influenced by the Post-war Abstract Expressionists and reflecting the emotive qualities of 19th century Romantic painters, Alireza creates turbulent and dramatic contemporary landscapes that are inspired by the correlation between the mundaneness of the everyday, the rush of the metropolis and the beauty of nature. *Nowherescape* presents a diverse body of work that ranges across large paintings spanning over two meters wide and intimate ball point drawings on paper. Alireza employs layer upon layer of frenzied lines and brush strokes, exploring different structures within the different media. While the works on canvas result in painterly and expressive pieces that command attention,



the works on paper invite the viewer to appreciate the finer details in the dense ballpoint lines scratched on paper. Although visually different, both series in essence demonstrate similar principle and intention. Through this process, Alireza creates powerful imagery that is not immediately locatable, and yet has discernible elements. Traditional in his approach, Alireza is inspired by the beauty he encounters in daily life and in his surroundings. His works are an interpretation of his personal experiences; a narrative that he attempts to transfer to the viewer, expressed through color, motion and his unique relationship to the medium.



### Majda Cicic Dedicates AVC Qualification Tournament Title to Iranian Women

Iran women's volleyball coach Majda Cicic has dedicated the title of the 2018 FIVB Volleyball World Championship Qualification Tournament Asian Central Zone to Iranian players and coaches. Iran defeated Nepal and the Maldives at the three-day event which took place in Male, capital of the Maldives. Majda Cicic's girls defeated Nepal and breezed past the Maldives in straight sets. Iran qualified for the next round which will be held in September, featuring 10 Asian countries. "I am satisfied with the way my girls played in the tournament. Iran was participating in the competition for the first time and finished the tournament with two 3-0 wins," Cicic said. "First of all, I congratulate to the players and coaching staff because they fought until the end in an extremely hot weather," she added. "I dedicate the title to all Iranian players and coaches who helped us win the championship," Cicic concluded.

"Our players went to great lengths during the encounter against Nepal, and subsequently brought the opposite side's players under control. The Iran women's national volleyball team exhibited a flawless performance and tremendously defeated their opponents in three consecutive sets," the Iranian outfit's coach Fatemeh Abdollahi said after the game.

Only the top team in this competition will qualify for the next round due to take place later this year. The 2018 World Women's Volleyball Championship will be held from September 30 to October 21, 2018, in Japan.



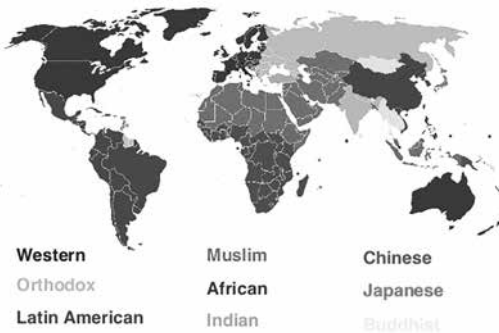
# The “CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS” Paradigm and the Portrayal of the “OTHER”

Kaveh Farrokh & Javier Sánchez Gracia

Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of the 2015 US election campaigns is the popularization of certain concepts for portraying the “Other” such as “Muslims”, “Hispanics”, etc. It is important to note that terms such as “Muslims” and “Hispanics” are invented constructs to simplistically portray groups of (non-West European) peoples as the “Other”. This phenomenon now surfacing in the US election campaign is a dynamic that has run far deeper and over a longer period of time than most citizens may realize. To simplify, the dynamic of the so-called “East versus Paradigm” has been essentially recycled (or repackaged) as the “Clash of Civilizations”. It was the late Professor Samuel Huntington (1927-2008) whose New York Times Bestseller “*The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*” proposed two main premises: (1) that all wars are the result of a “Clash of Civilizations” and that (2) there has been a hostile long-term “East (mainly “Islamic” & “Middle East”) vs. West” dynamic. Bernard Lewis, who first coined the “Clash of Civilizations” myth in his article “*The Roots of Muslim Rage*” (penned for the September 1990 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*) defined the dynamic as thus: the “Islamic World” (itself a simplistic concept) has been at war with the “West” for centuries. Huntington simply takes Lewis’ argument by extending the so-called “war against the West” to antiquity; as if the “East” and “West” have always been isolated from one another (with no civilizational links) with their relations having only been warfare since the dawn of history.

Huntington and Lewis have reinvigorated the Eurocentric views of “Race” and how this “explains” the so-called “East vs. West” conflict with a nebulous but unitary “Eastern Other” as the primary villain. Essentially based on a British-West European Orientalist historical manipulation (if not deceit) of historical events, much of the argument made by Lewis and Huntington can be dismantled, a vast topic deserving of a full series of articles and even textbooks. Suffice it to say that the “Clash of

## Major Civilizations: One Model



*Civilizations*” paradigm has done much to revive Eurocentricism in entertainment, media political venues and academia. The Hollywood and entertainment industry has certainly played a significant role in the perpetuation of racial, cultural, etc. stereotypes, a vast topic that has elicited a cornucopia of research literature, textbooks and popular articles. Notable is the Guardian newspaper’s Rick Moody who noted in his November 24, 2011 article “... popular entertainment from Hollywood is – to greater or lesser extent – propaganda. And Miller has his part in that, thanks to films such as 300...”. The two “300” movies and the Alexander epic are of interest in that all three have deliberately portrayed ancient Iranians and Greeks in caricatured views consistent with the “Other” notions of Eurocentricism.

Certainly, the “300” movies have reproduced the old stereotypes and we can point to the time and the author(s) that built this catalogue of prejudices that, even today, we see pervading in comics, cinema, the media and even academia. The time is the Persian War, when Persia invaded Greece and was defeated by the always-proud ancient Greeks. The authors are, in tandem, two, belonging to different genres: a poet and a historian. Aeschylus, in his *Persae* (written in 472 BCE), speaks since the heart (because, according to the tradition, he fought in Marathon) and, in this tragedy, he places on the scene the three *loci communes* that, forever, are associated with the ancient Persians: cowardice (because they fought from afar with archers); effeminacy (for their clothes, more volatile and light

than those used by the Greeks); and even sexual debauchery. Aeschylus wrote with passion and his tragedy is, in reality, what people wanted to see, and not the reality of historical events; but the crowd of the audience wanted to witness their bias and prejudices on the stage. Persia invaded Greece and was defeated, so, the Greeks, soon, became proud of themselves and began to consider themselves superior to the Persians. One arena where Greece and ancient Persia were markedly different was in the status of women. In Achaemenid Persia women worked for equal pay with men, acted as project managers and were also seen in military command, such as Artemesia who was one of Darius the Great’s naval commanders during the second Achaemenid invasion of Greece in 480 BCE.

Herodotus is the other face of the same coin. He participates in this popular feeling, but writes as a historian, that is, from a “scientific” point of view; disguised as neutral, and speaking as an erudite, he transmits the same negative image, which is not the product of its prejudices, but the “reality”, because he has investigated the history, traditions and customs of the Persians. However, the reality is different, and Herodotus is as fallible and biased as any human being. He speaks as a proud and victorious Greek and has in mind one idea: Greeks are superior to the Persians. It is this reason that propels him to search for the way to demonstrate his own (and contemporary Greek society’s) bias. So, we can see that this “Clash of Civilizations” is nothing new and is a *continuum* of a negative image created in the 5th century BCE.

Specifically, the “racial” aspects have been now resurrected in order to provide a clear delineation in the “East versus West” paradigm of the “Clash of Civilizations”. Central to that difference is the premise of a distinct skin tone or color prejudice in defining the “Other”. But the reality is that the vast plethora of Greco-Roman sources make no mention of a “color” bias; in fact the portrayals in Greek and late Roman arts do not portray the ancient Achaemenids, Parthians and Sassanians with different



“Other” physiognomy.

Eurocentricism however provides a selective interpretation by superimposing a northwest European “racial” and/or “color” interpretation on the past conflicts between ancient Iran and Greco-Roman realms. This helps explain why virtually no Greek actors were used to portray the Greek characters in the Alexander and 300 movies with black and other non-Iranian actors hired by Hollywood to portray the ancient Iranians. Ethnic misrepresentations are not confined to Iranians of course. Jack Shaheen for example has noted in his books “*The TV Arab*” and “*Reel Bad Arabs*” of Hollywood caricatures of Arabs and in its selective hiring of actors to portray propagandistic images of (again) the “*hostile other*”. Interestingly, even ethnic groups within the Western civilizational orbit are also stereotyped, or more accurately, misrepresented, notably the Hispanics of the United States. Hollywood has often portrayed negative images of Hispanics, who as Spanish speakers, are often incorrectly assumed to be (or classified as) equivalent to the Iberian Spaniards of Europe.

The common denominator is again “*race*” or more specifically the complexion of the person, as if this were somehow a significant indicator of personality, character and intellect. Unfortunately however, the Eurocentrist pundits of the “*Clash of Civilizations*” thesis do believe in the existence of such correlations. It is difficult to comprehend how profoundly Eurocentrists believe in the link between skin tone, personality and intellectual characteristics.

If we turn our eyes, again, to the ancient world we can observe that this *racial stereotype* doesn’t exist (or, almost, it does not exist with the connotations of today). What we see in the Classical literature are the cultural stereotypes of the Greek authors; there are no indications of a “*racial other*”. To be clear, the biased Greek images were derived from cultural and religious differences, and not from “*racial*” perspective. When classical authors speak about, for example, Germans, there are consistent topics that are oft repeated: they are tall, with long (and blond) hair, glazed eyes; besides, they are also described as drunk, savage, living amidst the din of banquets and battles. This stereotype of the northern European reaches its climax – almost comical – in the description of a Celtic Gaul barman by Ammianus, who is described as a quarrelsome giant (as the Gauls of the popular Asterix and Obelix comics are today) rather than a local and Romanized

inhabitant). But, on the other hand, these typically “*racial*” descriptions don’t exist with respect to the Persians (certainly, we can read some prototypical descriptions – for example, all Persians are thin, bearded and mild – but this view does not a pejorative purpose).

The main aspects producing the negative image of ancient Persia in Greece and Rome were of a cultural nature. Monotheism, the importance of the magi and the semi-divine character of the king are some of the aspects that underlie this negative image, and, as we can see, these are cultural, and not racial characteristics. Thus, the clash between Greece and Persia was not a racial war (indeed, in Classical Greece there was some kind of “*ethnocentrism*”, but not racism), it was a cultural battle.

However that *racial* image is the product of our current mentality and it is transferred to the Ancient World to justify it. So, for example the late John Philippe Rushton of the University of Western Ontario, produced volumes of studies claiming to have proven that persons of “*whiter*” complexion (and Chinese descent) are more intelligent than persons with darker complexion. Despite the fact that the scientific validity of Rushton’s studies have been seriously questioned by top international experts in the field of intelligence studies, Eurocentrist and racist activists continue to cite his works. What is significant is how works such as those of Rushton are used by Eurocentrists to promote the “*Clash of Civilizations*” myth. Put simply this thinking system proposes that people of so-called “*non-White*” persuasion are “*so different*” (or inferior?) in terms of intellect and temperament that “*East is East and West is West and never the twain shall Meet*”. With this simplistic and dangerous fallacy the proponents of the “*Clash*” myth dismiss of role of economic and political factors in the promotion of conflicts in history.

As an example, the Greco-Persian wars (490-479 BCE) are explained by Eurocentrists as having been an ideological contest between the “*Democratic*” West versus the “*Despotic and Barbarian*” imperial East. But history is far from being that simple: the Greco-Persian and later Roman-Persian wars had as much to do with political rivalry as they did with economics: control of lucrative trade routes and commerce. As the Achaemenid Empire expanded into Western Anatolia and the Mediterranean Sea, the mainland Greeks now witnessed new rivals in their maritime commerce. The Greeks had already estab-

lished settlements in much of the Mediterranean as far as southern France and the Black Sea. The shipping of the Persian Empire was in essence a threat to Greek economic dominance. In practice, ancient Greece had always had concerns with the rise a powerful economic and political entity along Western Anatolia long before the Achaemenids, notably the kingdom of the ancient Hittites. Eurocentrists of course ignore this aspect of history in order to portray the wars as early “*evidence*” of the “*Clash of civilizations*”.

There are also several positive references to ancient Iran in the Classical sources, such the role of Cyrus the Great in his governance and especially religious and cultural freedoms. Eurocentrists, notably in academia (with numbers of these now prominent in Iranian Studies venues), dismiss the ancient sources providing this information. This was amply expressed in the articles of Spiegel Magazine and the Daily Telegraph in June 2008: both papers citing several professors in Iranian Studies venues, called Cyrus the Great a despotic and brutal ruler.

These papers also made a point at dismissing all ancient sources citing Cyrus in a favourable light as “*ancient propaganda*”. Eurocentricism is thus able to trace the evolution of human rights exclusively to ancient Greece by claiming that the “*East*” (ergo: Persia) had no contributory role. Similar claims have been made with respect to intellectual and technological achievements, when in effect ancient Greece (and the later Roman Empire) were influenced by several innovations in Persia such as the postal system and Royal road, aqueduct systems, the water wheel, etc. Put simply: the “*West*” and “*East*” have mutually influenced each other in highly constructive ways over the millennia in the fields of arts, architecture, technology, communications, theology and mythology, and culture.

This information exposes the fraudulent nature of the Eurocentrist “*Clash*” myth, especially with its heavy emphasis on animosity and conflict since the dawn of history. It is an unfortunate fact that this view has dominated, not just in academia but also, as alluded to before, the movie and entertainment industries as well as the news media. Meanwhile a whole new series of simplistic terms (such as “*Middle East*”, “*Muslim World*”, etc.) have been appearing since the early twentieth century. Terms such as these, which are highly promoted in academia, serve to oversimplify vastly diverse regions, peoples, cultures and his-

stories as if these were somehow monolithic since ancient times.

Yet the proponents of the “Clash” myth are quick to (correctly) point out the richness and diversity of the Western hemisphere, and are careful not to use simplistic terms such as “Christians” to lump together vastly different peoples (and regions) such as Filipinos, Europeans, Africans, Arabs, etc. who happen to practice Christianity’s highly diverse denominations.

Yet, thanks to Eurocentric dominance in much of academia, media and popular culture, a vast plurality of North Americans for example, now incorrectly believe that Iranians (and all “Muslims”) are Arabs who share the same language, history and culture. This exemplifies the success of the “Clash of Civilizations” narrative in oversimplifying the “Others” of the “East”. Educational discourse remains the most effective medium for elucidating a reality of history that has too often been ignored: civilizations of the east and west have often exchanged ideas, technologies, arts and learning. It is this process that has propelled civilization (both east and west) forwards to the present day.

### IRAN’S CARPET EXPORTS TO U.S. GO FROM ZERO TO MILLIONS

Tehran Times: About \$69 million worth of Iranian carpets were exported to the United States during the first 10 months of the current Iranian calendar year, ended on January 19, while the figure was zero in the entire preceding year, ISNA quoted Hamid Kargar, the head of Iran’s National Carpet Center.

As Kargar elaborated, addressing the opening ceremony of a carpet exhibition in the northeastern province of Golestan, following the implementation of the nuclear deal in January 2016, Iran restarted exporting its carpets to the U.S. after about five years.

During the same time, Iran could manage to export \$275 million of carpets to 80 countries across the globe, registering 19 percent increase in comparison with the same time span in the previous year, he said.

The exported carpets weighted 4,400 tons, showing 10 percent rise, the official added. The U.S. imposed a ban on carpet imports from the Islamic Republic, among other products, in September 2010. It was Iran’s major market for Persian rugs and the sanctions caused total carpet exports to drop by 30 percent - the embargo meant no American could buy, sell or import Persian rugs, even if they were purchased outside of the Islamic republic. But with many of the west’s sanctions lifted after Tehran reached a historic nuclear deal with western powers last year, the industry has been enjoying a boom and sales to America have increased.



# What Is and Who are IRANIAN-AMERICANS

The information in this article is taken from Wikipedia. It contains a small list of Iranians WHO now call the United States home, WHO proudly have rooted themselves in the soil of this country, WHO are represented in all of the United States political parties, WHO have invested in the future of the United States for the sake of their country and their children, WHO proudly have assimilated into American society, WHO took the time to learn English and American customs (secular or not), WHO continue to be proud of their culture and customs, WHO want to share its goodness with those WHO are unaware, WHO were properly vetted prior to entry to the United States and most importantly WHO want their neighbors to understand that they are not , nor are non hyphenated Iranians, lawless living in a third world country, BUT, are people hungry for freedom, respect education and equality.



## TERMINOLOGY

Iranian-American is used interchangeably with Persian-American, partially due to the fact that Iran was officially called Persia prior to 1935; as well as the fact that “Iran” and “Persia” have been used interchangeably since classic times. There is a tendency among Iranian-Americans to categorize themselves as “Persian” rather than “Iranian”, mainly to disassociate themselves from the Iranian government and the negativity associated with it, and also to distinguish themselves as being of Persian ethnicity, which is around 65% of Iran’s population. A majority of Iranian-Americans are of Persian-speaking backgrounds, however there is also a significant number of non-Persian Iranians within the Iranian-American community leading some scholars to believe that the label “Iranian” is more inclusive, since the label “Persian” excludes non-Persian minorities from Iran.] The Collins English Dictionary uses a variety of similar and overlapping definitions for the terms “Persian” and “Iranian.”

## EARLY HISTORY

One of the very first recorded Iranians to visit North America was Martin the Armenian, an Iranian-Armenian tobacco grower who settled in Jamestown, Virginia in 1618. Mirza Mohammad Ali, who is also known as Hajj Sayyah is another Iranian who came to North America in the 1800s. He was inspired to travel around the world due to the contradiction between the democratic ideals he read about around the world and how his fellow Iranians were treated by their leaders. He began his travel as a 23-year-old looking for knowledge and to gain perspective on the lives of others to bring back with him to help Iran’s progress. His stay in the United States lasted 10 years, and took him across the country from New York to San Francisco. He also met with powerful people like Ulysses S. Grant. Hajj Sayyah was the first Iranian to become an American Citizen on May 26, 1875. He was imprisoned upon his return to Iran for making a stand against the living conditions there. He looked to the United States to protect him but to no avail. During the peak period of worldwide emigration to the United States (1842–1903), only 130 Iranian nationals were known to have immigrated.

## FIRST PHASE OF EMIGRATION

The first wave of Iranian migration to the United States occurred between the late 1940s to 1979, or alternatively 1977. The United States was an attractive destination for students, for Ameri-

can universities offered some of the best programs in engineering and in other fields and were anxious to attract students from foreign countries. Iranian students, most of whom had learned English as a second language in Iran, were highly desirable as new students in the United States colleges and universities.

By the mid-1970s, nearly half of all Iranian students who studied abroad did so in the United States. By 1975, the Institute of International Education’s annual foreign student census figures listed Iranian students as the largest group of foreign students in the United States, amounting to a total of 9% of all foreign students in the country. As the Iranian economy continued to rise steadily in the 70s, it enabled many more Iranians to travel abroad freely. As reported by Bozorgmehr and Sabagh, consequently, the number of Iranian visitors to the United States also increased considerably, from 35,088 in 1975 to 98,018 in 1977.

During the 1977–78 academic year, of about 100,000 Iranian students abroad, 36,220 were enrolled in American institutions of higher learning. During the consecutive 1978–79 academic year, on the eve of the revolution, the number of Iranian students enrolled in American institutions rose to 45,340, and in 1979–80 the number reached a peak of 51,310: at that time, according to the Institute of International Education, more students from Iran were enrolled in American universities than from any other foreign country. It is notable to mention that the pattern of Iranian migration during this phase usually only involved individuals- not whole families.

Due to Iran’s increasing demand for educated workers in the years before the revolution, the majority of the Iranian students in America intended to return home after graduation to work, including those who had received financial aid from the Iranian government or in industry as part of jobs or internships upon graduation. However, due to the drastic events that followed very soon afterwards in the 1979 Revolution, matters changed and the students ended up staying in the United States as refugees. At the same time, these several thousand visitors and students that had been or still were in the United States during the revolution unintentionally became the basis of the cultural, economic and social networks that would enable large-scale immigration in the years that followed.

Second phaseThe second phase of Iranian migration began immediately before and after the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the overthrow of the Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, and became significant in the early 1980s. As Prof. Ronald H. Bayor adds,



“The 1979 Revolution and the 1980–88 war with Iraq transformed Iran’s class structure, politically, socially, and economically.” The revolution drastically changed the pattern and nature of Iranian emigration to the United States, while the Iran-Iraq War that ensued closely afterwards, was also another factor that forced many of the best-educated and most wealthy families into exile in the United States and other countries. Once basically an issue of Brain drain during the Pahlavi period, it was now predominantly an involuntary emigration of a relatively large number of middle- and upper-class families, including the movement of a considerable amount of wealth (in liquidated assets). During and after the revolution, most students did not return to Iran, and those who did were gradually purged from the newly established Islamic Republic. Many students who graduated abroad after the revolution also did not return, due to ruling clergy’s repression. As a result, the educated elite who left Iran after the revolution and the new graduates in the United States who chose not to return home created a large pool of highly educated and skilled Iranian professionals in the United States. Over 1.5 million Iranians have chosen to leave Iran for other countries due to the Islamic government’s authoritarian practices.

A further notable aspect of the migration in this phase is that members of religious and ethnic minorities were starting to become disproportionately represented among the Iranian American community, most notably Bahai’is, Jews, Armenians, and Assyrians. According to the 1980 US Census, there were 123,000 Americans of Iranian ancestry at that time. Between 1980 and 1990, the number of foreign-born people from Iran in the United States increased by 74 percent.

### CONTEMPORARY PERIOD

The third phase of Iranian immigration started in 1995 and

continues to the present. According to the 2000 US Census, there were 283,225 Iranian-born people in the US. According to the same 2000 US Census, there were 385,488 Americans of Iranian ancestry at that time. The 2011 American Community Survey (ACS) estimate found 470,341 Americans with full or partial Iranian ancestry. However, most experts believe that this is a problem of underrepresenting due to the fact that “many community members have been reluctant in identifying themselves as such because of the problems between Iran and the United States in the past two decades.”, and also because many were ethnic minorities (as is the case with Jewish, Armenian, and Assyrian Iranians) who instead identify as the ethnic group they are part of rather than as Iranians. Higher estimations of 1,000,000 and higher are given by many Iranian and non-Iranian organisations, media and scholars. Kenneth Katzman, specialist in Middle Eastern affairs and part of the Congressional Research Service, estimates their number at over 1,000,000 (published December 2015). Professors Paul Harvey and Edward Blum of the University of Colorado and the University of San Diego estimate their number at 1,000,000 (published 2012), as well as Al-Jazeera. According to the PAAIA (Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans), estimates range from 500,000 to 1,000,000, numbers backed up by Prof. Ronald H. Bayor of the Georgia Institute of Technology as well. The Atlantic stated that there are an estimated 1,500,000 Iranians in the United States in 2012. The Iranian interest section in Washington, D.C. claimed to hold passport information for approximately 900,000 Iranians in the US, in 2003.

Today, the United States contains the highest number of Iranians outside of Iran. The Iranian-American community has produced individuals notable in many fields, including medicine, engineering, and business.

# The Short List of ACCOMPLISHED IRANIAN-AMERICANS

(taken from Wikipedia)

## BUSINESS/TECHNOLOGY

Iranian-Americans are among the most educated and successful communities in the U.S., according to a report by Iranian Studies group at MIT, Iranian-Americans have founded and/or participated in senior leadership positions of many major US companies, including many Fortune 500 companies such as GE, Intel, Citigroup, Verizon, Motorola, Google, and AT&T. Pierre Omidyar, founder/CEO of eBay is of Iranian origin, as well as the founder of Bratz Isaac Larian. Hamid Biglari is Vice-Chairman of Citicorp. Bob Miner was the co-founder of Oracle Corporation and the producer of Oracle's relational database management system. In 2006, Anousheh Ansari, co-founder of the Ansari X Prize, became the first female tourist in space. Ansari is also the co-founder and former CEO of Prodea Systems Inc. and Telecom Technologies, Inc. Other well-known Iranian-American entrepreneurs include designer Bijan Pakzad, entrepreneur Sam Nazarian, business executive Hamid Akhavan, former CEO of Unify GmbH & Co. KG (formerly Siemens Enterprise Communications), Omid Kordestani of Google, CEO of YouTube Salar Kamangar and Sina Tamaddon of Apple Inc., and Shahram Dabiri, Lead Producer for the massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) World of Warcraft from 1999 to 2007.

## PHILANTHROPY

Many Iranian Americans are active philanthropists and leaders in improving their community. In 2006, the University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center was the recipient of a 10 million dollar donation from an Iranian American couple based in Houston, Texas. The University of Southern California was also the recipient of a 17 million dollar gift from an Iranian-American, as was San Francisco State University which also received a 10 million dollar gift from an Iranian-American couple, and Chicago's Swedish Covenant Hospital (\$4 million), Portland State University (\$8 million), and UC Irvine (\$30 million).

## SCIENCE/ACADEMIA

Well-known Iranian Americans in science include Firouz Naderi director at NASA, Ali Javan inventor of the first gas laser, Maryam Mirzakhani the first female winner of the Fields Medal, Nima Arkani-Hamed a leading theoretical physicist, Gholam A. Peyman, the inventor of LASIK, Lotfi Asker Zadeh, Vartan Gregorian, Cumrun Vafa, Babak Hassibi, Nouriel Roubini, Pardis Sabeti, Vahid Tarokh, George Bournoutian, and Rashid Massumi, M.D., a pioneer in the fields of electrophysiology and cardiology. Prominent Iranian Americans in American higher education include Rahmat Shoureshi, researcher, professor, and provost of New York Institute of Technology (NYIT) and Nariman Farvardin, president of Stevens Institute of Technology.

## MEDIA/ENTERTAINMENT

Well-known media personalities of America, of Iranian descent, include Daron Malakian, member of rock band System of a Down, Susie Gharib of Nightly Business Report, Asieh Namdar,

Roya Hakakian, Yara Shahidi and Rudi Bakhtiar. In literature, Cyrus Copeland, the Iranian-American author of *Off the Radar*, a chronicle and investigation of his father's imprisonment for alleged spying on behalf of the CIA...

## IRANIAN AMERICAN ACTORS, COMEDIANS AND FILMMAKERS

are including the Academy Award nominee and Emmy Award winner Shohreh Aghdashloo, actresses Catherine Bell, Sarah Shahi, Nadia Bjorlin, Nasim Pedrad, Desiree Akhavan, Sheila Vand, Rosie Malek-Yonan, and Bahar Soomekh, comedians Max Amini and Maz Jobrani, filmmakers Bavand Karim and Kamshad Kooshan, actor Adrian Pasdar, producer Bob Yari, Farhad Safinia, author and performer Shahram Shiva, and Daryush Shokof.

## SPORTS

NFL football players T.J. Houshmandzadeh, David Bakhtiari and Shar Pourdanesh, professional wrestlers Shawn Daivari and The Iron Sheik, professional mixed martial artist Amir Sadollah, professional soccer players Sobhan Tadjalli, Alecko Eskandarian and Steven Beitashour, and professional baseball player Yu Darvish.

## POLITICS

The son of the late Shah of Iran, Reza Pahlavi, lives in the United States, as well as several high-ranking officials in the Shah's administration such as Hushang Ansary and Jamshid Amouzegar. Goli Ameri is the Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, as well as the former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs from 2008 to 2009, during which she was the highest-ranking Iranian-American public official in the United States. Beverly Hills elected its first Iranian-born Mayor, Jimmy Delshad, in 2007.[91][92] Bob Yousefian served as the mayor of Glendale, California from 2004–2005. In November 2011, Anna M. Kaplan was elected Councilwoman in the Town of North Hempstead, New York, becoming the first Iranian-American to be elected to a major municipal office in New York State.[93] Cyrus Amir-Mokri is the highest ranking Iranian-American official in government as of 2012, who was appointed as the Treasury Department Assistant Secretary for Financial Institutions by President Obama.[94] Also, in November 2012, Cyrus Habib, from the 48th district in Washington State, became the first Iranian American elected as a state legislator. Alex Nowrasteh is a well-known political commentator, policy analyst, and economist.

Subscribe Now!

Persian Heritage

973 471 4283

Let's start by saying that I absolutely love my country, the United States, and throw out any misconception as to the objective of this article.

We are Iranian-Americans. An iconic immigrant community. A symbol of what immigrants should be like and for America to seek more. Perhaps you dismiss this statement as arrogant. So, let's see what makes us iconic immigrants and ones that America should wish for more of.

Since 1979 millions of Iranians immigrated to the United States because of unfortunate circumstances at home. Many brought with them tremendous amounts of personal wealth, and were not among the poor, and the hungry that the Statue of Liberty seeks. This was considered by many as a brain exodus from Iran to the United States as they came as trained scientists, surgeons, engineers, entrepreneurs, authors, investors, developers, artists, and experts in every aspect and trade of the society. These economically-empowered newcomers were just the seeds that flourished in 37 years to be the most economically powerful immigrants in California, and other states, yet, ignored by the political system, passed over, and dismissed with no recognition for their accomplishments and contributions. Although they participate in politics by voting, contributing financially, endorsing and supporting parties and candidates, they are totally disregarded by the candidates of both major parties, and no hand is extended to them. The communities with much less economical influence are sought after and addressed by the candidates, but the Iranian-American community remains in the dark, and no candidate has ever extended a hand or addressed this community for its contributions and accomplishments. In part the Iranian-American community is somewhat at fault for not unifying and organizing or lobbying organizations that could bring about attention from the parties and the candidates.

They settled in the United States, mainly in California. They established small to large businesses and employed and provided job opportunities. They became innovative and created new technologies and large scale businesses like Expedia.com of Mr. Khosrowshahi, Ebay of Mr. Pierre Omidyar, Mr. Omid Kordestani of Google, and Twitter's, Siavash Alamouti, CTO of Broad Band and Intel fellow, in-

ventor of the Alamouti Code, code-communication engineer, Gholam A. Peyman, inventor of the Lasik eye surgery, to name a few and the list goes on and on. Their engineers are a high percentage of both JPL, and NASA, yet in movies such as *The Martian* there is no character reflecting an Iranian-American. Indeed one character in the movie somewhat is based on the Iranian-American scientist, Mr. Babak Ferdowsi of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratories, but presented as being of a different ethnicity.

They also grew and flourished in literature, media, academia, music, arts and entertainment. Artists such as Sara Shahi, Maz Jobrani, Catherine Bell and world renowned journalist Christian Amanpour are just a few examples. They also dominate the professional job arena as doctors, surgeons, dentists, professors, and small business owners. They became major property owners and developers. It is estimated

that they did not get involved in human trafficking, or racketeering; crimes that so many other communities have a history of. This is their most significant value and contribution to a nation that constantly throughout its short history has been fighting such organized criminal establishments.

Despite all above, this iconic immigrant community is routinely overlooked, except of course a cliché New Year message from the officials in the government. They have been constantly misrepresented in the corporate controlled media by associating them with negative news, and never reporting their large scale charity and humanitarian activities. Their cause and effect has been ignored, and at any possible occasion they are mislabeled, Hollywood movies such as *300* erroneously and in an ignorant fabricated history insulted their heritage, and in movies such as *Argo*, Ben Affleck is risen to absolute career failure by por-

traying Iranians as backwards, and simple. Some have gone so far as to credit their 3000 years old heritage to other countries by declaring Norouz, the celebration of the Persian New Year to central Asia countries. Some have attempted to change the names of their geographical borders by calling the Persian Gulf as the Gulf. Mrs. Clinton in a speech to the Persian Gulf Arab countries called the Persian Gulf "the Gulf". That was somewhat understandable as a multi-billion-dollar arm sales to the U.A.E, and the Saudis was underway.

The extent to which this community is mislabeled, ignored and dismissed is unbelievable and not intelligent. This community with its economic power and growth will be hard to ignore, and so, it is destined

to play a major role in its adopted new home, the United States of America. The parties and their candidates should embrace Iranian-Americans today, to enjoy the fruits of their phenomenal growth and support in the future. It would be a definite loss of opportunity for any party and it's candidate not to recognize this tremendous economically strong immigrant community.

***Khashayar Nourishad is an Iranian-American living in Thousand Oaks, California.***

\*Sisdehbedar. Thirteenth day of Persian New Year celebration that all Iranians go to the nature and parks for a family picnic.

\*Nowrooz, Persian New Year. 530BC. Celebration of life and rejuvenation. First day of Spring.

## The Iranian-Americans

KHASHAYAR NOURISHAD



that thirty-seven percent of the properties in Beverly Hills are owned by Iranian-Americans.

Even their celebration of their cultural heritage such as \*Norouz, the Persian new year, and *Sizdehbedar*\*, brings revenues to cities and local communities. For example, City of Irvine that provided the public park for the average 70000 Iranians that attended the *Sizdehbedar*\* celebration, and brought in parking revenues close to 500,000 dollars on a single day, every year for the last 37 years.

Most profound quality and value, of this immigrant community is that its members have never been involved in any sort of organized crimes. They did not organize Mafia style gangs, did not create drug car-



**A**rcheological and historical evidence support the current plateau of Iran—spanning from northern India to central Asia, through the Caucasus, southern Russia and Asia Minor, Mesopotamia and then stretching across down to the southern shores of the Persian Gulf—has since antiquity (back at least as far as 200,000 years ago) served as the African-Asian crossroad for the Homo sapiens and other Asiatic human species to propagate. It must be noted, however, that Neanderthals never crossed into Asia, but rather went straight to Europe from the horn of Africa, and were later mixed with Homo sapiens that later emigrated westbound from the Iranian plateau, just to be extinct 10,000-25,000 years ago. That is why most today's Europeans possess 4-7 % Neanderthal genes, whereas the rest of us still from the southwest Asiatic side, have none!

Our earliest ancestral Homo sapiens who settled on the greater plateau of Iran, were by as late as 1,500 years BCE, mixed with the new arrivals of Medians and Persians...moving southbound from east of the Caspian Sea. In fact, we do have archeological evidence such as human settlements and remains, artifacts, military hardware, potteries and figurines at London and Louvre Museums among other major collections, from as far back as 20,000 years ago. Through a politically arranged intermarriage between Mandana the daughter of Astiagi the Medians King, and Cyrus the Persian King of the Achae-menides dynasty who inaugurated the first giant world empire, THE PERSIAN EMPIRE over 2,500 years ago, the modern first post Neolithic era civilization has commenced and continues ever since. Thence, such kings and dynasties emerged and disappeared into the oblivion bin of history; nonetheless, peoples, places, and their integrated psyches have perseverated and evolved (at times devolved) since.....

A form of organized central government in one form or the other, as ruled by over 30 dynasties and each comprised of a few to a dozen or so kings or queens, ruling from 43 major metropolis capitals, have governed IRAN since antiquity. Some kings were just but most were absolute monarchs, who declared themselves shadows to god (s). In fact, one cannot casually overlook the pivotal contributions of the indigenous and later arrived Iranians (Persians), during the past 10,000 years, for some of the most fun-

## IRAN AND IRANIANS The Historical Contributions To Humanity

By Pirouz (@Pirouz)



damental discoveries including the roots of most today's Indo-European derived languages, writing scripts, mathematics and astronomy, literature, the arts and architecture, aesthetics, etc. as well as the concept of religiosity and faith, first through Persian Mithraism, Zoroastrianism, Mazdeism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and later as they metamorphosed into, and integrated with Judaism, Christianity and finally Islam. Very few surpassed the first just King in history, Cyrus the Great, who declared the first codes on Human Rights and dignity, and allowed the conquering lands and nations, today constituting over 30 sovereign countries, to preserve and practice their own identities, autonomies, religions and cultures, unlike the latter arrived Alexander of Macedonia who went on pillage and rampage and in futile struggle in the east of Hellenizing them all.

Fast forward, although the last 1,000 years of European dark ages and waves of bloody crusaders into the orient, was first awoken by Magna Karta of 1215, and later the Renaissance in the 14th through 17th century yielding enlightenment, the east including IRAN was inflicted with the introvert state of depression and dark ages that was only healed surreally, by isolated spiritual Sufism, mysticism, and melancholically music and poetry. For instance, after the first camera gifted to Nasser-eddin Shah Qajar in 1842, followed by the moving camera in Iran circa 1875 (watch the attached video), most Iranians, less than 10 million at

the time, were illiterate, serfs and poor due to heavy taxes levied on them, and forced to give up in droves their Jewish, Zoroastrian, Christian and Baha'i faiths and become Shiite Muslims. In retrospect, it was so ironic that the majority of Iranians Muslims, comprised of half the population of a couple of million in the 15th Century were Sunnis. Instigated by the Europeans colonialists especially the Vatican, who feared the re-occupation of Europe with the second Islamic wave driven by the new Ottomans, and through giving guns and cannons, training and persuading the newly converted Persian Sunni Safavid dynasty Kings, sheik Safi, Ismael and Abbas et al, Iranians were forced by swords to Shi'ism adopting many Catholic rituals, passion plays and processions, thereby opening up a lethal eastern front against the Ottomans so as to divert and deter them from the utter overrun of Europe, as it had occurred back in 7th century.

After the home return of the waves of Iranian doctoral students from Farang, i.e., France and Austria, and later Germany in the 19th century, the modernization and reforms in the context of the many good aspects of Iranian culture, led to the 1907 Constitution Revolution to replace absolute monarchy. The rest of the 20th century, witnessed rapid transformation of the modern nation, as narrated (watch).

Hence, the homegrown process of reformation, secularization, and modernization, fast approaching 200 years in the making, still continues today.

In closing, please watch the nostalgic video below, recorded in 1956 and presumably computer color enhanced. It captures the daily lives on a still famous Tehran downtown quarter, Lalehzar (the tulip prairies). I was born in Shemrian a few miles north, (off Niavaran Ave. on Haghghat alley behind the still standing Firehouse in Dezashib) and grew up in Evin (outside the tall impassable walls) along the Parkway before emigrating "to the promised land..." The rest is history.

The above notwithstanding, humanity is a universal phenomenon and as such has no boundaries. As in this illustration, it is true most if not us all physically resemble Darwin on the upper right corner next to the pink flamingo! However, the 64 quadrillion dollars question is that we must each decide in life where we truly fit on this stratified diagram in terms of our behavior, (mis-) conducts and psyche as to the evolutionary distribution of species.

# Debunking The Many Myths Americans Believe About Iran

**STEPHANIE LESTER**

**Director of Operations, American Iranian Council**

With the election of Donald J. Trump, now more than ever, it is important to separate truth from fiction, facts from opinion, and to question prejudices and misconceptions. This directive applies in all areas of life, but perhaps no place on earth is more misunderstood, and worth a re-examination, than the country of Iran; particularly as U.S.-Iran relations enter a new phase of uncertainty.

On the whole, Americans tend to view Iran as a backward country, mired in extremism and averse to modernity. Anyone who travels there is considered crazy – or even suspicious.

I should know. I am a Jewish-American woman who recently traveled to Iran alone for 10 days with the express goal of proving that - contrary to expectation - the country is safe, beautiful, and welcoming to Americans. Before my travel, I had to explain to friends and family that there are no roaming hordes of ISIS militants in Iran; upon my return, I had to convince members of U.S. Homeland Security that I was not a terrorist sympathizer during nearly two hours of detention and questioning.

In addition to being a Jewish-American woman, I am also the Director of Operations at the American Iranian Council, a non-profit organization that works to improve U.S.-Iran relations by promoting dialogue and intercultural understanding. In this role, I recognize that a negative public opinion of Iran (exemplified by my experiences with friends, family and members of Homeland Security) can directly affect the course of policy-making, emboldening politicians to use red-meat rhetoric and speak about Iran as our irreconcilable enemy.

Since a more peaceful world starts with strong intercultural understanding and an informed citizenry, combating misinformation about Iran is vital. There are too many misconceptions about Iran to address here, but let me raise a few facts in light of my recent visit, that may be surprising to some readers:

## IRANIANS LOVE AMERICAN TOURISTS

I cannot express this enough. This was my third visit to Iran, and no different than prior experiences in terms of the overwhelmingly positive response that I received from the Iranian people, who enthusiastically express their hope and strong desire for rapprochement with the West. I often say that if you want to be treated like a rock star, you should travel to Iran as an American tourist. On my first visit in 1999, Iranians regularly requested my autograph; this time it was selfies. While the revolutionary line is officially anti-American, I even met a member of the notorious “Basij” on my latest trip, who — when I told him where I was from — was so excited, he gave me a free jar of honey (which he was selling) to express his affection for the United States and hope that I would view Iran more positively.

## IRAN IS A SAFE PLACE TO VISIT

Contrary to the belief of many Americans (including some of my friends who actually inquired whether my head would be “chopped off in a YouTube video”): ISIS doesn’t hold territory



in Iran; ISIS follows a warped version of Sunni Islam, and Iran is a primarily Shia country. They are enemies and Iran has been helping the US in its fight against ISIS. Further, there have been no major terrorist attacks in Iran. Guns are illegal among the general population and violent crime is extremely low. As a woman, I felt comfortable walking around alone at night in the major cities.

## WOMEN ARE EDUCATED AND ...

Women are educated, drive, vote, and hold senior jobs — many of them in math and science. Iranian women are also incredibly chic; they wear make-up, cute form-fitting manteaus and tight jeans, and many young women barely cover their hair. As a tourist, I have always felt incredibly dowdy by comparison.

## LARGEST JEWISH POPULATION IN MIDDLE EAST

Iran has the largest Jewish population in the Middle East outside of Israel. There are many functioning synagogues in the country, and Iran’s constitution actually requires that there be a Jewish representative in parliament. I described myself as Jewish on my latest visit without experiencing any anti-Semitism; I also visited a synagogue in Tehran and asked members if they had any concerns or problems living in Iran; the response I received was adamant, “Not at all.”

Finally, to the people in U.S. Homeland Security who wondered if I went to Iran to become “radicalized”: After years of government-forced religiosity, Iran is one of the **least religious countries in the Middle East** with a less than two percent Friday prayer attendance rate.

None of this is intended to excuse or defend the atrocious human rights record of the current Iranian government, its jailing of dual-nationals, its support of Hezbollah, its lack of transparency, or any of the other serious concerns that the U.S. has with Iran. The government is not one that we should be eager to work with; however, ultimately the young, secular, Western-loving, modern population of this country — over 70 percent of who were born after the 1979 revolution — will inherit the country from the aging hardliners. Let’s not squander the opportunity for future reconciliation with the newer generation by viewing the entire country through the lens of decades old resentments and misconceptions. The notion that Iran is our irreconcilable enemy is simply untrue.

REVIEWS

PERSIAN FIRE AND STEEL  
Military History 1900-Present

By: Dr. Manouchehr M. Khorasani

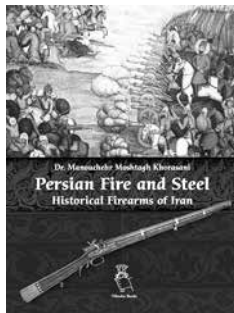
The project for the book “Persian Fire and Steel: Historical Firearms of Iran” came about from Dr. Manouchehr M. Khorasani’s desire to share with the world the beauty and the sophistication of historical Persian firearms, and his respect for the skill of the craftsmen who made and decorated them, the ingenuity of the engineers who designed them, and the bravery of the people who used them.

Like his previous book, *Arms and Armour from Iran*, the aim of *Persian Fire and Steel* is to give the reader a view of these artifacts not only as instruments of war, but also as objects of art and great beauty.

This book is the result of several years of research and translation by Dr. Khorasani in several collections and archives in different countries. It is his hope that lovers of art, history, and weaponry all find in it something that speaks to them.

With over four hundred pages and hundreds of high quality photographs and illustrations describing over, *Persian Fire and Steel* represents one of the most comprehensive insights into the world of historical Persian firearms ever written.

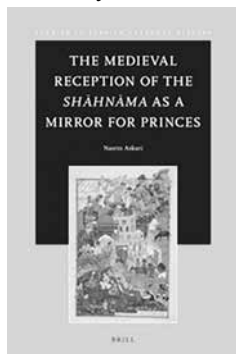
Ranging from small arms to artillery, it covers everything on the subject from their manufacture to their deployment in battle as described in contemporary treatises. Many of these texts are included in this book, where they have been translated to English for the first time.



THE MEDIEVAL RECEPTION  
OF THE SHĀHNĀMA AS A MIRROR FOR PRINCES

Nasrin Askari

University of Toronto



Nasrin Askari explores the medieval reception of Firdausī’s *Shāhnāma*, or *Book of Kings* (completed in 1010 CE) as a mirror for princes.

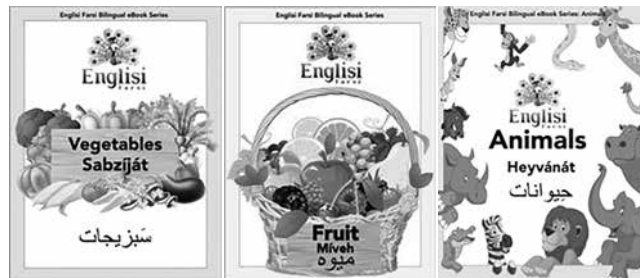
Through her examination of a wide range of medieval sources, Askari demonstrates that Firdausī’s oeuvre was primarily understood as a book of wisdom and advice for kings and courtly elites. In order to illustrate the ways in which the *Shāhnāma* functions as a mirror for princes, Askari analyses the account about Ardashīr, the founder of the Sasanian dynasty, as an ideal king in the *Shāhnāma*.

Within this context, she explains why the idea of the union of kingship and religion, a major topic in almost all medieval Persian mirrors for princes, has often been attributed to Ardashīr.

ENGLISI PERSIAN EDUCATIONAL TOOL  
FOR CHILDREN

Mona Kian

Mona Kiani, the author, of this new iBook series, was born



in Taiwan and raised in Australia by Persian parents.

She grew up surrounded by family and friends who spoke to her in Persian, Mandarin and English. Coming of age she longed to return to her roots and engage her son in her Persian heritage, but resources were lacking.

This sparked the journey to unlock her rich and generous culture and share it with her multinational family, as well as like-minded friends.

She created an English-Persian iBook series, which are practical learning tools for English-speaking families seeking to bring alive the Persian language for their children. Covering a wide variety of topics, these books are an ideal platform to engage young minds and nurture bilingual language development using the English alphabet.

The Englisi Persian Bilingual iBook series are designed for English speaking families with family connections to Iran (mixed families with one spouse being Persian and the other English speaking descent).



Michael McClain

# The Sakas

Part three

As we have said before, the encounter between the Sakes and the Britos was, in fact, the third encounter between Celts and Iranians, the first being very ancient indeed, usually called “Indo-European” by many people, as there is no way to date it, the second being the result of the westward expansion of the Scythians. Elements from all these encounters are very numerous and varied, and occur in the literatures of the Celtic and Iranian peoples, as well as many other aspects. So, it is quite wrong to assume that every affinity between Celtic and Iranian literatures is the result of late Saka influence, as we shall see.

In the book *Celtic Heritage: Ancient Tradition in Ireland and Wales* by Alwyn Rees and Brinley Rees, one can hardly find a page without a reference to the Vedas or the ancient Iranians. We have encountered some of this in the essay on Persian music.

Like the Magi, the Celtic Druids had their sacred fires, call “atarsh” in Avesta “ata” in Pahlavi Says Henri Hubert:

“... in Kildare (Ireland) the nuns of Ste. Brigid - who took the place of an ancient goddess (of the same name) - avoided with the same care as the Persian Magi the contamination of the sacred flame with their breath.”

In pagan times the sacred fires were far more numerous. In pagan Ireland the main fires were at Tara, the site of the royal palace, and at Uisnech, traditionally the geographic center of Ireland. In the Rig Veda it is said: “Agni (god of fire) is at the center of the universe.”

We have a fist-hand, eye-witness account of a ceremony practiced in Ireland as late as 1085 AD which is virtually identical to the Vedic “asvamedha” or “horse sacrifice”.

At least in certain periods, Celtic chiefs were buried in a manner identical to that of the Scythian chiefs, even in the detail of the life-size monolithic stone sculpture topping the mound.

The number “3” is sacred to the Druids, Magi and Brahmins. The Celtic Trinity was Brian, Iuchar and Iucharba. In pagan Ireland, the sacred fires, including those at Tara and Uisnech, were always triple: two main fires and one auxiliary fire. Likewise, among the ancient Indo-Aryans the sacrificial

fires were always triple, called Garhapatya, Arhavanīya and Dakshina, following the same pattern as in Ireland. In Sassanian times in Iran, there were also three classes of sacred fires: Farnbag, Gushnasp and Burzin Mihr.

The Trinity of the Vedas is Indra, Mitra and Varuna, and in later Hinduism is Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The Trinity of the Achaemenian Persians and Parthians was Ahura Mazda, Mithra and Anahita. In Spain as in other countries with a Celtic background, June 23, St. John’s Eve, the eve of the day of St. John the Baptist, the old Celtic midsummer festival, or the festival of the Summer Solstice, is celebrated with enormous bonfires. A song known all over Spain but especially popular in Asturias goes:

To gather clover, clover, clover  
the night of St. John  
to gather clover, clover, clover  
my loves go

In Iran, bonfires are also part of the celebration of “Norouz”, the Persian new year, which falls on the date of the Spring Equinox. To this day in Iran it is a custom to jump over the bonfires of Norouz. Jumping over the bonfires of St. John’s Eve (June 23) is also a custom in Spain, where I have seen young men burned doing this.



There is a word in Gallego (language of Galicia in northwest Spain) called “aturuxo” (pronounced “aturusho”). It is the name of a dance which does indeed resemble a ritual dance around a sacred fire, and of a sort of yell which is generally believed to be derived from a Celtic war cry.

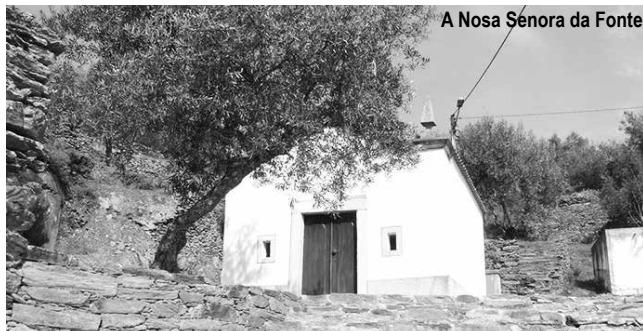
Said word is clearly not derived from Latin, nor does it mean anything in any of the surviving Celtic languages. However, note its resemblance to the Avestan “atarsh” (Sanskrit - “atarva”). How apparently Zoroastrian: the word “aturuxo” associated with a sacred fire! Perhaps at one time the Celtic languages had a word for “sacred fire” related to the Avestan word “atarsh”, and that said word survived in Spain, in Galicia and Asturias to be exact.

Water as well as fire was a sacred element to the Druids as well to the Magi. The Celtic goddess of water was Danaan, at times called Anu, equivalent to the Vedic Danu and the Iranian Anahita. Memories of this goddess linger in the names of rivers from the river “Don” in Ukraine to the river “Don” in Scotland, and in an infinite number of sacred wells and springs. Said relics are particularly abundant in Spain.

It is difficult not to see a dim memory of this goddess in the multitude of sacred springs throughout the length and breadth of Spain, perhaps the most famous of which is Fuensanta (Holy Spring) near Murcia, with its patroness “Madre Mia de la Fuensanta” (Our Lady of the Fuensanta) say the Murcianos.

Near the large marshy area known as “Las Marismas” not far from the mouth of the Guadalquivir is the shrine known as “Donana” pronounced “Donyana”. Now, in Spanish “Dona Ana” means “Lady Anne”. However, “Donana” is always pronounced as though it were one word and not two, and there is no tradition whatever concerning a “Doria Ana” for whom the shrine could have been named. “Donana” is the shrine of “Nuestra Señora del Rocío”, “Our Lady of the Mist”, one of the multitude of sights sacred to the Virgin Mary. It is obvious enough that the name “Donana” is derived from the name of the Celtic goddess “Danana” or some local variant of it. Donana is perhaps the most popular pilgrimage site in western Andalusī, from whence the song “Camino de Rocío” 11 (Pilgrimage) Road to (the Shrine of) Our Lady of Rocío”. The very marshy area and the name “Rocío”, which means “mist”, are certainly appropriate for the goddess Danaan. ...

On the outskirts of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia is a strong spring of very good water. Beside this spring is a medieval chapel called “A Nosa Señora da Fonte” (Our Lady of the Spring),



and very nearby is one of the traditional site of fires on the Night of St. John. The continuity with pre-Christian Celtic times is obvious.

In all northern Spain rivers named “Deva” or “Diva” abound. This Deva or Diva is simply the Sanskrit “Deva” (a god), the Avestan *Daeva* (a demon), in Old Gaelic “*Dia*” (nom), “*Dee*” gen, “*Deuo*” in Gaulish, “*Suw*” in Old Welsh. Said name retained its original form fossilized in place names. Once again, the farther back one goes in time the nearer are the Celtic languages to Sanskrit, Avestan and Persian. Confusion between “L” and “R” is rather common, and I do not refer to jokes about the Chinese who orders “fled lice” or the Japanese who says: “You are surprised that I speak your language; I study at UCRA.” Confusion between “L” and “R” is notably common in parts of Andalusia. The etymology of the Saka tribal name “Alan” is unknown; many say that it is the local word for “Aryan”. This brings us to the etymology of the name “Andalus” or “al-Andalus”, which is, in fact unknown. The old theory that it is derived from the Vandals is not discredited in academic circles, and there is really no accepted answer, only a number of unproven theories. I warn the reader that my own theory, is just that: a theory, not a proven fact.

The Hispano-Muslim historian *Isa ibn Ahmed ibn Muhammad al-Razi* (9th-10th century) says that the name *al-Andalus* derives from the *Alandalush*, a pre-Roman people of Spain descended from *Japhet* who were “*Majus*” or *Magi*, i.e., Zoroastrians by religion.

Now, *al-Razi*, as his name indicates, was of Persian ancestry, so he almost certainly had at least a slight knowledge of Zoroastrianism.

Obviously, *al-Razi* had heard something concerning the “*Alandalush*” which led him to believe that they were Zoroastrians.

*Al-Razi*’s text certainly indicates that the “*Al*” at the beginning of “*Alandalush*” is part of the name and not the Arabic article “*al-*” Since the name “*Alandalush*” has no possible Arabic etymology, writers in Arabic confused the “*Al*” of “*Alandalush*” with the Arabic article “*al-*” The name “*Alandalush*” fits perfectly with Celtic phonology, and could therefore have a Celtic etymology; indeed, the number of possible Celtic etymologies is quite large.

There a Celtic god known as “*Lug*”, whose name is derived from the Indo-European word for “light” Place names derived from *Lug*’s name are particularly abundant in Spain and Portugal. “The name “*Lug*” also has a variant, i.e., “*Lus*”, from whence comes “*Lusitania*”, a name for Portugal, which name in turn comes from the *Lusitania*” a Celtic tribe one of whose leaders was “*Viriatus*”, the Torque Wearer, who resisted the hated Romans so fiercely and today is a great national hero of both Spain and Portugal. During the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39, about 8,000 Portuguese came to fight on the Nationalist side in Spain and were known as “*Viriatus*”.

We have noted that many believe that “Alan”, the name of the famed Saka tribe, is a variant of “Aryan”. The Celtic genitive preposition “*Da*” “*De*”, or “*Di*”, which passed to Vulgar Latin and later to French, Provençal, Spanish, Portuguese, Catalan, and Italian, now enters the picture so that we have “*Alan da Lus*”, i.e., the “Aryans of (the god) *Lus*”. Another possible Celtic etymology for “*Alandalush*” would be from “*Atarsh*”, The People of the Sacred”. The initial “*A*” of “*Atarsh*” would be sonorized, something common in the “patois” of many parts of Spain, and very notable in Portuguese. The “*T*” could be sonorized to a “*D*”, the “*R*” changed to an “*L*”, and we have “*Andalush*”. Recall the word “*aturuxo*” (pronounced “*aturush*”) still used in Galicia and Asturias on St. John’s Eve to mean a cry, said to be derived from a Celtic war cry.

As we have noted, all Aryans are Indo-Europeans, but not all Indo-Europeans are Aryans. In fact, there are only three Aryan peoples: Indo-Aryans, Iranians and Celts. So, the ancient period which many scholars call “Indo-European”, for our purposes it would be more accurate to call the “Aryan period” as it refers only to Iranians and Celts, with at times a reference to the Indo-Aryans of the Vedic period.

The total number of affinities between Celts and Iranians is vast indeed, including a huge number of characteristics, so, it is a topic which could fill a large number of volumes. Among said characteristics is ‘literature; said affinities in the field of literature between Iranians and Celts go back to the Aryan Period, probably to the period of Scythian expansion towards the West, and finally to the Sarmatian and Alan cavalry troops brought to Britain in the 4th-5th centuries AD.

In the *chanson de geste* of Kievan Rus’ (11th-12th century), known as “The Song of Prince Igor”, or in a more exact translation, “The Song of Igor’s Campaign” are found abundant Iranian elements, a heritage of Scythians, Sarmatians and Alans, as would be expected. However, *Vladimir Nabokov*, who translated said Kievan *chanson de geste* to English, noted that in said *chanson* are also Celtic elements, far too close and numerous to be coincidence. It is to be done more research into the Celtic field - *Nabokov*’s only source in this matter was the works of the Highland Scottish scholar *James MacPherson* - he would no doubt have found a great deal more Celtic elements in *The Song of Igor’s Campaign*. *James MacPherson*’s works deal only with the Irish-Highland Scot branch of the Celtic epic, and so, any influences of the Sarmatians and Alans brought to Britain by the Romans.

In other words, the Celtic influences which *Nabokov* found in the Kievan *chanson de geste* must date back to the Aryan Period, or to the time of Scythian expansion to the West at the very latest.

*Nabokov* theorized that the Vikings had served as the bridge between Celts and the Russian and Ukrainian steppes. However, had *Nabokov* done any research in the Viking sagas, he would have discovered that there is no resemblance between the Celtic epic and the Viking literature, neither in content nor in poetic form or prosody, so the Viking sagas formed no sort of literary bridge between the Celts and Kievan Rus’. Also, attempts to find Viking influences in *The Song of Igor’s Campaign* have failed.

This is at least slightly ironic, since the name “Igor” is itself Viking, derived from the Old Norse “*Ingvar*”.

So, there are deed affinities between Iranian literature and Celtic literature which are far more ancient than the transplanting of Sarmatian and Alanic cavalry to Great Britain. We shall not explore some of this.

The British component of the Commission was headed by Major-General W. E. R. Dickson and four of its nine Persian members were gendarme officers: Colonel Azīz-Allāh Khan Zargāmī, Lieutenant-Colonel Fazl-Allāh Khan Āqevlī, Captain ‘Alī Khan Rīāzī, and Doctor Amīr A’lam, doctor-in-chief of the Gendarmerie. The Commission assembled in January 1920 and at the beginning of April presented a report containing a comprehensive survey of the existing military forces and institutions and recommending the merging of these forces and the construction of a uniform national force under British officers (Cronin, 1997a, p. 50).

The involvement of the gendarme officers was necessary both because of their individual military expertise and because of the prestige of their corps, but they were unhappy with the work of the Commission and the nature of British proposals for building a new army, feeling that they damaged Persian independence and national dignity. When the Commission eventually produced its report only two of the four gendarme members, Zargāmī and Rīāzī, actually signed it. Āqevlī had, shortly before, committed suicide, an act which was widely interpreted in Persia as a protest against the agreement and the military subjection of the country.

The Gendarmerie now constituted a factor of considerable political importance in Persia and certain circles within the force were drawn into the coup preparations being made in late 1920-early 1921 by Sayyed Zīā’-al-Dīn Ṭabāṭabā’ī and Rezā Khan, the civilian and military heads of the movement respectively. Sayyed Zīā’-al-Dīn had apparently been cultivating a relationship with individual gendarme officers for some time. He had defended the Gendarmerie in the pages of his newspaper, Ra’ḍ, and was particularly close to the two officers, Captain Kāzem Khan Sayyāḥ and Major Mas’ūd Khan Kayhān, who were assisting the British officer, Colonel Smyth, in his reorganization of the Cossack division at Qazvīn, the Russian Cossack officers having been dismissed.

During 1919-20 the traditional hostility and rivalry between the Gendarmes and the Cossacks had been modified and even partially superseded by a recognition of common interest. It was their common opposition to British control, implied in the proposals of the Anglo-Persian Military Commission, which first forged political links. This was the first step on the road which led to successful collaboration in the execution of the coup and by the spring of 1920 active liaison between the cossacks and the gendarmes had been established.

Captain Sayyāḥ and Major Kayhān accompanied the Cossacks on their march from Qazvīn to Tehran and the presence of these officers helped ensure that the coup would take place without any dissent from the Gendarmerie in the capital. In fact there is some evidence which suggests that elements within the Gendarmerie, conscious of the seriousness of the impending political collapse in Tehran and the urgency of formulating a response to it, may have been planning a coup of their own which was only just pre-empted by the march from Qazvīn (Afsar, p. 272).

For the support which they had given to Sayyed Zīā’ and the coup d’état, the Gendarmerie was rewarded with important posts in the new government and with considerable power in the provinces. The two gendarme officers who had played such an important role at Qazvīn and on the march to Tehran, Captain Sayyāḥ and Major Kayhān, were appointed military governor of Tehran and minister of war respectively. In the period following the coup d’état the Gendarmerie attained the zenith of its influence, occupying the

commanding heights of political power in both the capital and the provinces, the gendarme officers’ perception of themselves, both collectively and individually, as capable of offering national leadership was particularly apparent in the regime headed by Colonel Moḥammed-Taqī Khan Pesyān and firmly entrenched in Mašhad (Cronin, 1997b). However by the end of 1921 the Gendarmerie had largely succumbed to the ascendancy of the Cossack Division within the structures of the new army, as a result of Rezā Khan’s twin tactics of cooption and repression.

### THE PAHLAVI PERIOD (1921-1979)

In December 1921 the Government Gendarmerie was amalgamated with the Iranian Cossack Division to form the new army. In the following March the Majles approved the establishment of a new force, to be entitled amnīya-ye koll-e mamlakātī (The State Gendarmerie) to take over the duties which had formerly been carried out by the Government Gendarmerie, particularly the protection of the main roads. The first commander of the new amnīya was an ex-Cossack officer, General Sardār Ref’at Naqdī. His successor, appointed in 1925, was another ex-Cossack, General Aḥmad Āqā Khan Amīraḥmadī. However, many of the senior officers of the amnīya in the Rezā Shah period, and also occasionally its commander, were ex-officers of the Government Gendarmerie. In 1930, for example, General ‘Azīz-Allāh Zargāmī was appointed commander (Afsar, p. 238).

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s the amnīya remained a small and relatively weak force, scattered in small posts of three or four men at considerable intervals along the roads. Its main duty was to give warning of the existence of robbers and to identify the perpetrators of any robbery, generally leaving their pursuit and capture to the army. Amnīya recruits usually served locally and this served to fix the responsibility for the safety of the road on to local villages, actually a continuation in new dress of the old system of village and tribal road guards.

Yet this system meant that the local knowledge of the men of the force made them useful intelligence agents and guides for the regular army (Cronin, p. 137-38). In fact the broad responsibility for tribal pacification and rural control down to 1941 remained with the army.

Following the collapse of Iranian military forces after the Anglo-Russian invasion of 1941, discussions took place between the Persian government and the Allies about meeting Persia’s defense and internal security needs. Between May and November 1942 the Persian government and the United States Department of State reached a series of agreements for the provision of American advisers. Three U.S. missions arrived in Persia, that of Major-General Clarence S. Ridley as adviser to the Persian army; of Colonel H. Norman Schwarzkopf, with Lieutenant-Colonel Philip T. Boone and Captain William Preston, to the Imperial Iranian Gendarmerie, and of Arthur C. Millsbaugh to the administration of finance.

On 27 November 1943 a formal agreement between Persia and the United States was signed, effective retrospectively as of 2 October 1942, under the terms of which the United States Army Military Mission with the Imperial Iranian Gendarmerie was established. The purpose of the mission, commonly known as GENMISH, was to advise and assist the Persian ministry of the interior in the reorganization and training of the Gendarmerie, with the American officers maintaining precedence over all Persian Gendarmerie officers of the same rank.

## A SHORT HISTORY OF THE IRANIAN GENDARMERIE

### THE SECOND AND LAST PART

STEPHANIE CRONIN

Encyclopeda Iranica



According to the agreement, the interior minister was to appoint the chief of the mission as head of the Gendarmerie and, according to Article 20, the American chief of the mission was also granted the right to recommend to the interior minister the appointment, promotion, demotion, or dismissal of any employee of the Gendarmerie with no other authority having any right to interfere. Persia also agreed that no officers of other countries would serve in the Gendarmerie while members of the U.S. military mission were engaged (Ricks, p.168).

GENMISH, and particularly its first chief, Colonel H. Norman Schwarzkopf, became the target of considerable nationalist opposition, both popular and organized. Furthermore, both the shah and the Persian army were unhappy with the arrangement. The shah was incensed at the very broad powers exercised by Schwarzkopf while many senior army officers, including General Faraj-Allāh Āqevlī, the Persian commander of the Gendarmerie, disliked the interior ministry's control of the Gendarmerie and tried to have it placed under the authority of the military (Ricks, pp. 169-70).

GENMISH's U.S. personnel comprised a total of eight officers (one of whom was from the Coast Guard), four warrant officers, and twelve enlisted men. From 1942 onwards GENMISH reorganized, trained, armed and commanded a twenty thousand strong rural police/paramilitary force. By 1944-45, GENMISH had achieved considerable success with its reorganization, recruitment and training programs and had gone some way towards re-establishing the central government's authority in the countryside. By December 1944 the U.S. military attaché in Tehran believed that the army and the Gendarmerie had improved to the point where Allied troop withdrawals would not jeopardize the security of the central government (Ricks, p. 172). In 1946, the Gendarmerie supported the army in its military reconquest of the self-declared autonomous provinces of Kurdistan and Azerbaijan.

In May 1950, U.S. military assistance to Persia embarked on a massive expansion with the establishment of the Mutual Defense Assistance Program and it was decided to extend the maximum possible aid to the Gendarmerie (Iran Almanac, 1964, p. 174).

GENMISH became responsible for the planning, preparation, administration, and supervision of the U. S. Military Assistance Program for the Imperial Gendarmerie. The broad purpose of the Military Assistance Program was to increase the effectiveness of the Gendarmerie by improving its mobility, firepower, and communications. Major items provided from the beginning of the program included small arms, vehicles, medical equipment, radio equipment, and light aircraft. An important part of the program was the training of specialists in the United States. By 1964, over four hundred officers and men had received training in the U.S. services under this program (Iran Almanac, 1964, p. 157). Funds were also allocated to literacy programs for the gendarmes as this was essential if they were to use modern weapons. In 1953, illiteracy within the Gendarmerie was 75 per cent, but by 1957 this had fallen to 10 per cent (Iran Almanac, 1964, p. 174).

From the 1950s to the late 1970s the Gendarmerie was able to take over the task of maintaining law and order throughout the countryside, allowing the army to focus on its main task of national defense. During those decades only on rare occasions of major tribal unrest was the army called in to assist in re-establishing law and order. The Gendarmerie, together with the police, functioned under the interior ministry, although it was clearly a paramilitary force. Its officers were provided by the army and, as in the army, the shah personally approved all senior promotions. The other ranks were all volunteers. There was, however, great disparity between

the Gendarmerie and more prestigious services such as the air force and navy in terms of pay and living conditions (General Mahmūd Kay, 1985, quoted by Zabih, 1988, p. 89). While the police were responsible for law and order in the cities, the Gendarmerie remained the main instrument of rural control, responsible for half the population and over 80 per cent of Persia's territory (Halliday, p. 77).

Gendarmerie stations were located in villages, at the crossings of rural roads and at key points of the border areas. In 1963 the Gendarmerie took over border control, with the transfer to it from the Ministry of War of the Frontier Guards. The Gendarmerie was responsible for the administration of conscription and, in 1972, also assumed responsibility for the National Resistance Forces, a militia mobilized in time of war.

By 1957, the Gendarmerie consisted of about 24,000 gendarmes, 1,000 commissioned officers and 23,000 of all other ranks, spread throughout the country in over 2,000 outposts, most of which were small posts consisting of 8 to 35 men each. By this time they had at their disposal about two thousand jeeps, trucks, armored cars, motorcycles and bicycles. (Prior to the Military Assistance Program the gendarmes' sole means of transport had been horses.) The Gendarmerie had also acquired thousands of miles of telephone lines for their communications (Iran Almanac, 1964, p. 174).

During the 1960s one of the major tasks of the Gendarmerie was still the suppression of tribal disorder. The first targets of the 1963 Fārs tribal rebellion were Gendarmerie outposts. It was after several of these had been overrun and disarmed that the army was called in. At one outpost, the entire garrison, including its commander, was massacred (Iran Almanac, 1964, p. 174). The rebellion was easily quelled by the army but the Gendarmerie casualty figures were never released. In 1967-68 the Gendarmerie was mostly occupied in attempting to pacify the Kurdistan area.

Another increasingly important function of the Gendarmerie was the suppression of smuggling, particularly the traffic in narcotics and opium smuggling from Turkey and Afghanistan.

With the launch of the guerrilla struggle in 1971, however, the Gendarmerie became primarily a counter-insurgency force (Halliday, p. 77). Just as the Gendarmerie, as the physical manifestation of the state in rural Persia, had been the first target of tribal rebellion, so the guerrilla struggle also began with an attack on the Gendarmerie post at Sīāhkal in Gīlān. In order to fulfill its new role the Gendarmerie was greatly expanded and further modernized. In the mid-sixties the Gendarmerie's authorized strength had reached about 35,000 officers and men (Iran Almanac, 1964, p. 157); ten years later it had doubled to 70,000 (Halliday, p. 77).

It had also become highly mechanized, with its own aircraft, helicopters, jeeps, and marine patrol craft (Halliday, p. 77). In 1976 alone the Gendarmerie established 130 new stations in remote parts of the country. In 1965 General Mozaffār Malek had been replaced as commander by General Gōlām-'Alī Oveyssī. In 1974 Oveyssī was in turn replaced by General 'Abbās Qarabāgī. Although in general U.S. military assistance to Persia continued to increase, on 3 March 1976, on the shah's orders, the U.S. military mission to the Gendarmerie came to an end, and Colonel John O. Batiste, the last head of GENMISH, and his men left the country. After the Revolution of 1979 and the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Gendarmerie, along with other military institutions of the previous regime, was purged of its commanding officers and lost much of its power and influence. In 1990, the Gendarmerie, the police force (Šahrībānī), and the revolutionary committees (Komītāhā-ye enqelāb-e eslāmī-e Irān) were incorporated into the Security Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Nīrūhā-ye entezāmī-e jomhūrī-e eslāmī-e Irān).



## In the Memory of **Touran Mirhadi** The Gardener of the Life's Tree at Farhad School

From Wikipedia

Touran Mirhadi (1927 – November 8, 2016) was an Iranian educator, author and researcher. She was the founder of the Farhad School a progressive kindergarten, elementary and middle school in Tehran which was a source of many pedagogical innovations.

She was also the co-founder of *The Children's Book Council of Iran* and *The Encyclopedia for Young*.

### EARLY LIFE

Fazlollah Mirhadi, Touran's father, left Iran in 1909 to study mechanical and structural engineering in Germany. He was part of the first wave of Iranians to study abroad after the Iranian Constitutional Revolution. Many of these young Iranians, Mirhadi among them, were interested not only in western science and technology but also progressive social and political ideas of the modern world.

Fazlollah met Touran's German mother, Greta Dietrich, during the difficult years of the First World War. In spite of Greta's strict Catholic upbringing and the objections of her parents, the two got married and returned to Iran in 1919.

Touran was the fourth of five children born to Fazlollah and Greta. The young German, who was a sculptor and had studied art in the University of Munich, focused her life on her children but stayed connected to the arts through her association with the Kamal Almolk Insti-

tute in Tehran. Greta raised her children as Iranian but ensured that they stayed connected to Europe by teaching them German and French and tutoring them in European history, art and culture.

When the Allies occupied Iran during the Second World War, all Iranians with connections to Germany were interned. Faslollah Mirhadi, who had played a prominent role in building the Iranian railroad, was imprisoned for 13 months during 1941 and 1942. During that time, Greta managed all the affairs of the household and kept them afloat by renting the house that later became the site for the Farhad School.

Greta's character and determination, her perspective on life and children, and her broad knowledge that her children accumulated under her tutelage, were central to Touran's worldview and her love of children and education.

### EDUCATION

Starting in 1932, Touran began her formal education in schools in Tehran while her mother continued to teach her languages. Upon graduating from high school, she was admitted to Tehran University to study biology. It was there that she first met Jabbar Baghtcheban, the leading authority on pedagogy in Iran. Influenced by Baghtcheban and her own love of teaching, Mirhadi decided to abandon her studies at Tehran University and

move to Europe to study child psychology and education. Her original plan was to study in Sweden but she ended up in Paris in the fall of 1946, a year after the end of the war. She was so moved by the post war devastation in Europe that she joined student groups that participated in rebuilding efforts across the continent. Her travels in Europe solidified her conviction that education, literature, arts and knowledge are keys to preventing human misery and war.

Mirhadi completed her degree in Educational Psychology at the Sorbonne University. After graduation, she continued her studies in preschool education. At the time, Paris was a center of innovation in child psychology and education. Touran had the opportunity to study with the two towering figures in the domain, Jean Piaget and Henri Wallon. She was also exposed to the works and philosophy of John Dewey and Maria Montessori.

### PERSONAL LIFE

Mirhadi returned to Iran in 1951. She began teaching at a number of institutions in Tehran, including her former high school Noorbakhsh. At the time, Iran and the Iranian society were undergoing fundamental changes.

Fresh from her experiences in Europe, Mirhadi was looking for a way to affect the course of the society. In 1952, she met Jaffar Vakili—a young major in the Iranian army—and the two married a year later. The marriage was short-lived; however, since Vakili was arrested the next year for his association with the Tudeh Party of Iran and its clandestine military wing. In 1954 Vakili was executed, leaving Touran to raise their son Pirooz by herself.

After this tragedy, it was the support and encouragement of her mother that helped Touran get her life back on track and pursue her aspirations. She married Mohsen Khomarloo and together the two started the Farhad School.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS FARHAD SCHOOL

In 1955, Mirhadi started a kindergarten with only two classes. She was supported in this effort by her parents who provided her with a house to be used as the location of the school and helped her get the necessary license for the kindergarten. The school was named Farhad after Touran's brother who had died many years earlier in a traffic accident.

Her progressive and innovative approach to education was so quickly embraced by parents that two years later she was able to expand the school and offer first through sixth grade primary education. For most of the sixties and the seventies, the school was the incubator for research and innovations in education that were later incorporated in the national curriculum and education systems. Central to the Farhad system was the role that the library played in educating the children, broadening their knowledge and encouraging reading and critical thinking. Establishing a library in an elementary school was unprecedented in Iran in the 1950s.

Mirhadi has been a great advocate for self-expression and self-reliance of children. Class "representatives" in the school were responsible for setting the standards for behavior and dealing with conflicts. The students also helped each other by acting as tutors.

By the early 1970s, Farhad offered middle school education as well. A few years before the Iranian Revolution, the school had moved to a larger facility and was educating 1,200 students every year. After the revolution, the school, which had always been co-ed, was disbanded (as were all private schools) and writing and research became Mirhadi's main focus. Because of her work at the Farhad School, Mirhadi has been called the godmother of progressive education in Iran.

## CHILDREN'S BOOK COUNCIL OF IRAN

In 1963, along with a group of prominent teachers and educators, including Lily Ahi, Samin Baghtcheban and Abbas Yamini Sharif, Touran Mirhadi cofounded the Children's Book Council (CBC) of Iran. The council is an NGO focused on developing and promoting children's literature in Iran.

The council conducts and publishes research on children's literature and literacy. In 1964, CBC joined the International Board on Books for Young People

(IBBY). Mirhadi has been an active and leading member of the CBC, helping the council navigate the many changes in the Iranian society throughout its 50 years of existence. CBC is a reflection of her belief in the importance of books (beyond school texts) in educating children.

The Council pursues the following objective:

- To support the growth of a national literature for children
- To foster the growth of literary and information resources both in quality and quantity
- To explore ways for the better distribution of books
- To encourage Iranian production of quality works for children
- To raise the level of awareness about children's literature in society
- To enter into discourse with different social groups
- To create national models in reference works, libraries and reading culture
- To keep in touch with international trends and institutions.

The work of the council spans many areas but it is largely organized around the following three efforts:

- Children and Young People's Literature
- The Encyclopedia for Young People
- House of Librarians for the promotion of reading

In 2007, Mirhadi was honored during a ceremony at Tehran's Ibn Sina Cultural Center. Referencing her work with the Council, Keyhan Mohammadi, director of the Center, remarked that "**Iranians consider Mirhadi to be the founder of children's literature**" in Iran.

## ENCYCLOPEDIA FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Work on this monumental effort started in 1980 in response to the need for a reliable and objective source for the Iranian children and young adults to learn about themselves, their country and their world. When completed, the encyclopedia will span 5,000 alphabetically arranged and fully illustrated entries in 25 volumes.

The Encyclopedia is a collection of original work developed by a large group of prominent scholars and volunteers who have been working on the material for the past 30+ years. It is intended to address the gap in sources about the history, culture and heritage of Iran. In a 2011 interview about the collection, Mirhadi says:



**We were the children of a particular phase of Iranian history. It was the phase during which we were taught that we Iranians had achieved nothing culturally. And for this reason, we were told we should imitate the Europeans in everything. Intellectuals and teachers were the first to notice that the alienation from cultural roots represented a danger.**

To date, 16 volumes have been published. Mirhadi is the Executive Director and Chief Editor of the Encyclopedia.

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- *Index of Selected Books for Children and Young Adults*. Touran Mirhadi. Tehran, Children's Book Council, 1968.
- *Research in Methods and Approaches of Education*. Touran Mirhadi. Tehran: Atelier Publishing, 1983.
- *The one who left, the one who returned*. Touran Mirhadi. Tehran: 1998.
- *Touran Mirhadi*. Touran Mirhadi. Tehran: Dibayeh Publishing, 2007.

## AWARDS

In 2012, the Institute for Research on the History of Children's Literature in Iran nominated Touran Mirhadi to receive the 2013 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA). The award was established in 2002 to commemorate the Swedish writer Astrid Lindgren (renowned for the Pippi Longstocking series of children's books) and to promote children's and youth literature around the world. It is administered by the Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs. It is the world's largest for children's and youth literature and the second-largest literature prize in the world.

In July 2015, Mirhadi was nominated again for the 2016 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award by the Institute for Research on The History of Children's Literature in Iran (HCLI).



## Could the World's Most Expensive Spice Help Farmers in Vermont?

BY SHIRIN JAAFARI  
PRI's The World

Image copyright Shirin Jaafari

Saffron threads are very delicate and must be picked by hand



Small farmers in the US state of Vermont are concerned traditional business won't sustain their farms, but see potential in an unlikely and very expensive spice.

The snow-covered plains of Vermont are one of the last places you'd think saffron would grow. The world's largest crops of the high-priced spice grow in Iran, Spain and Italy. Not places you'd automatically associate with heavy snowfall and bone-shattering cold weather.

But Margaret Skinner, a researcher professor at the University of Vermont, wants to bring saffron to the farmlands here.

It all started two years ago when Arash Ghalehgholabbehbahani was finishing up his doctoral studies in Mashhad, a city in northeast Iran. The region is where about 90% of the world's saffron originates.

Ghalehgholabbehbahani's wife had been accepted to the University of Vermont and he went to the state to visit her. That's where he met Skinner.

"I know that saffron has good resistance to cold weather, so I suggested saffron to Margaret," recalls Ghalehgholabbehbahani. That suggestion led to a research project, at the University of Vermont, where Ghalehgholabbehbahani is now a postdoctoral researcher. He and Skinner started looking into whether it would be possible to grow saffron in Vermont.

"When we started back in 2015 we had no idea ... would they grow? Would we get any flowers at all? Would it be too hot? Would it be too cold?" recalls Skinner.

First they needed saffron corms, which look like bulbs - think tulip or hyacinth, but smaller. They found a local flower company which imported them from the Netherlands and picked up a few more from an elderly lady in Pennsylvania.

In fact, saffron has been grown in the US for years.

"It was very popular in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania in the late 1700s and early 1800s," explains Susan Liechty, a board member of the Herb Society of America.

"It was brought over by many, many immigrants from Spain and France and Italy and Germany," she says. "And a lot of them, especially the Germans - which is the Amish and the Mennonite that settled in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania - started growing it as a crop."

Liechty says these were small family farms. Over time, as older Mennonites and Amish farmers passed away, the number of saffron farms shrank. "At one point I was told that there was close to 250 different farms. Now they're down to about under 50."

Today, small amounts of saffron are grown in a few parts of the US. Some is grown in California, for example, because it's home to a large Iranian community.

But what's produced in the states is dwarfed by what the country imports. Skinner sees an opportunity here for the farmers in Vermont.

They planted the saffron corms in a high tunnel, which is similar to a greenhouse but

its bottom sides are open and it's not heated.

And what they found took them by surprise. "We got higher yields of saffron, in terms of the weight of saffron, than what's reported in field production in Spain or Iran," Skinner says.

Armed with her new results, Skinner asked if farmers would be interested in planting saffron as a side crop.

Some were skeptical about saffron because picking it involves a lot of labor. Once the saffron flowers are picked, they have to be separated and the petals pulled apart.

"There's three red [...] stigmas inside each flower," Liechty says. "That's the part that you want to pick out and it has to be picked out with your fingertips. Then they have to dry." Skinner argues that it's not much harder than making maple syrup. Plus, she says, it's something farmers can try in small quantities, alongside tomatoes and salad greens.

Rubaud will be trying out saffron as part of her herb production.

Next comes questions about marketing. Who's going to buy it? Saffron is expensive, and only a few strands can cost about \$20.

But flavoring rice and risotto dishes isn't the only use for saffron. It also has potential medicinal uses. That's what interests Guido Mase, a clinician at the Burlington Herb Clinic.

"I'd be so excited to use saffron," he says.

Mase says some studies have shown that saffron helps with depression.

"There's really no-one in the country who's extracting saffron for medicinal purposes right now. "We work with a lot of these aromatic plants, and to be able to add saffron in there as certified, organic from Vermont I think would be fantastic."

Skinner points to one more way that saffron has been put to use over the centuries: dyeing fabrics. She says one grower from the Amish-Mennonite community managed to sell some of it to Buddhist monks in Boston.

"Traditionally some monks use saffron to dye their robes and they really didn't want to buy saffron from overseas because of concerns about the politics," she says.

"So they really liked buying it locally,"

The way Vermont agricultural secretary Chuck Ross sees it, the US could see Vermont-grown saffron within the next 12 months.

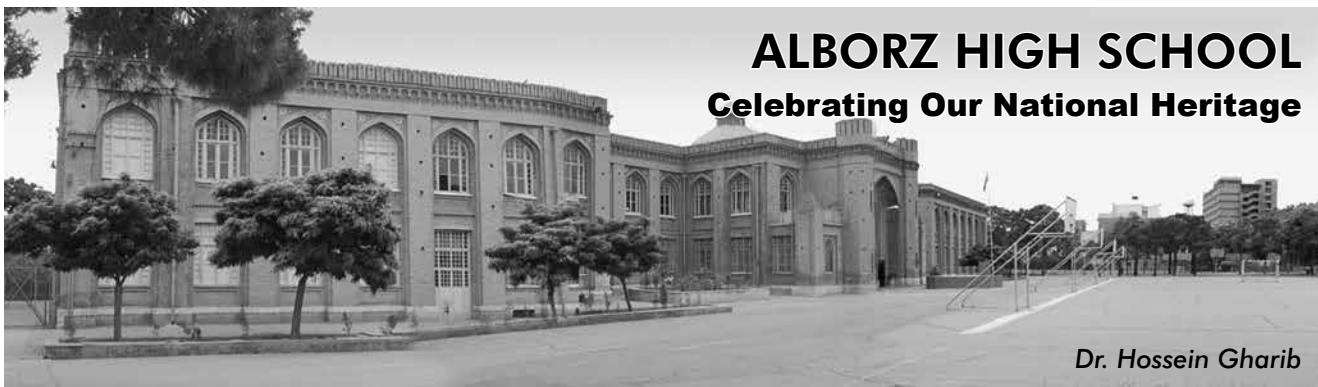
Meanwhile, Skinner and Ghalehgholabbehbahani want to raise money to do more research, including on medicinal uses and ways to maximize production.

For now, saffron has created a buzz here. And who knows? Maybe the spice that some consider exotic and mysterious could bring in much-needed income for farmers in the Green Mountain state. Skinner certainly hopes so.

"I grew up in this state and I love what it stands for," she says. "Part of that is our small family farms and so I want to do what I can to sustain them."

# ALBORZ HIGH SCHOOL

## Celebrating Our National Heritage



Dr. Hossein Gharib

### Introduction

This report is an abridged version of my presentation at the Academy of Persian American Physicians in Los Angeles on February 10, 2017. It briefly reviews the founding, growth, contributions and service of Alborz High School to Iranian education and society. It also highlights the lives, philosophies, services and legacies of two of its most revered principals: Dr. Samuel Jordan, with his American Administration, and Dr. Mohammad Ali Mojtahedi, with his remarkable dedication and discipline.

This commentary is dedicated to the memories of Dr. Jordan and Dr. Mojtahedi, two pioneers in modern education in Iran, and to the thousands of Alborz alumni worldwide.

### The Beginnings

The American Presbyterian missionaries arrived in Iran in 1833, as part of an evangelical mission to the Nestorian Assyrian peoples in Urumia and Azarbaijan, but soon expanded their reach to Tehran, Tabriz and Hamadan. This was during the reign of Nasser-eddin Shah (1831-1986) and his son, Mozzafar-eddin Shah (1896-1907). At that time Tehran was a small, dirty, underdeveloped city of a 100,000 people, with minimal health care or educational facilities.

In 1873, the missionary James Bassett, founded the American School for Boys, first located in Atabak Building in Lalehzar Avenue, and later relocated to Darvazeh Ghazvin. Eventually, the school was moved to north Tehran where 44 acres of desolate land became the home of the Alborz College. In 1899, Reverend Samuel Jordan arrived and took over as the school's new principal.

### Rev Dr. Samuel Martin Jordan (1871-1952)

Known as "Sam" to his friends and "Dr. Jordan" in Iran, he was born in New Park, PA. He received his B.A. at Lafayette College in 1895, where he was known as a colorful and energetic person, and his M.A. in Theology at Princeton, later to be ordained as a Presbyterian Minister in 1898. That same year, he married Mary Wood Park, and soon left for Iran, a journey that took 21/2 months!

He served as the President of Alborz from 1899 to 1940. He took over a school in 1899 with only 150 students and 6 grades. By 1913, there were 500 students and 12 grades; in 1925 American College of Tehran opened its doors. By 1929, Alborz had nearly 800 students in 15 levels, including a 3-year accredited B.A. college program. In 1940, Alborz College had 850 students, graduated 106 from its junior college and granted 20 B.A.s, including 4 degrees to women.

Sam and Mary Jordan worked as a team, lived on campus, planned school development and expansion together, and were academically and socially involved with their students. Alborz had a large library, a laboratory, and an athletics department. It created Iran's first dormitory, called McCormick Hall, which opened in 1918.

Jordan's legacy was the establishment of a modern educational institution. He introduced advanced education in Iran, trained hundreds of outstanding graduates, and emphasized the benefits of character-building (*paravaresh*), not merely instruction (*amoozesh*). As such, Sam, Mary, and their Alborz colleagues, promoted student gatherings, group trips, sports, lab exercises, and the value of libraries. The friendly, fatherly demeanor of Dr. Jordan was a feature remembered by many of his Alborz pupils.

Jordan's love for Iran, its culture, and his students, was genuine and pro-

found. He was deeply saddened and disappointed when Reza Shah ordered the Iranian Government to take over Alborz by purchasing land and buildings in 1940. His personal plea to remain in Iran was denied by the Shah. However, Mohammad Reza Shah invited Dr. & Mrs Jordan back in 1944.

He was awarded a medal, toured the country for five months, and visited their many friends. During this visit, at a reception at Ferdowsi Hotel, the famous poet, and Sam's friend, Mohamad Taghi Bahar, recited his famous poem:

*What ignorance is this by which we die?  
Relief we must discover if we can  
Who is the doctor with discerning eye?  
A wise man said to me,  
"Jordan, Jordan."*

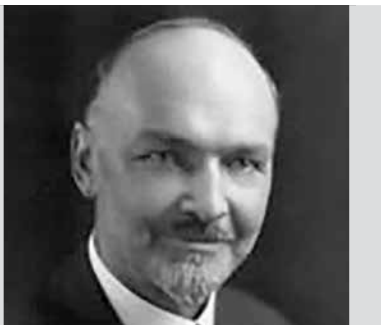
In 1948, the Alborz Alumni Association honored Jordan by placing his stone bust (tandis), created by *Ostad* Abolhassan Sadeghi, in the vestibule of the Alborz Jordan Hall. The bust was removed after the Islamic Revolution. He was also remembered by naming a major road connecting Tehran to Shemiran, Avenue Jordan. Although the road was later renamed Africa, many residents still call it "Jordan."

Jordan died on July 2, 1952 in Los Angeles. Two years later Mary passed away. Soon after his death, there was an outpouring of affection at a memorial service on Alborz campus. More than 1000 people attended the service, including dignitary-alumni such as Allahyar Saleh and Ali Asghar Hekmat.

### Dr. Mohammad Ali Mojtahedi (1908-1997)

Mohammad Ali Mojtahedi was born in Lahijan. After finishing Tehran's Darol-Moalemin Markazi in 1931, he went to France on a scholarship offered by Iranian government. He attended Lycee

Dr. Samuel M. Jordan



Blaise Pascal in Claremont Ferrant, and then the University of Lille, receiving a B.A. in Mathematics in 1934. He received a PhD with honors from Sorbonne in 1938, before returning to Iran with his French wife.

His first job back in Iran was at the Engineering Faculty of Tehran University where he taught mathematics for the next 30 years. In 1941 he started teaching at Alborz High School, and managed its boarding facilities. In 1944 he was appointed as Alborz's Principal, a position he held until 1979. His achievements were quick & impressive. During his first year, the number of students passing national exams (*emtehan nahae*) rose to 129 out of 179, compared to 29 out of 210 in the previous year.

Under Mojtahedi's leadership, Alborz continued to grow and expand, becoming a modern educational complex. The number of enrolled students was 600 in 1945, increasing to 1500 in 1958, and expanded to 5,500 by 1978. He was also instrumental in expanding the school's facilities, administrative staff, and raising the number and quality of its teaching staff.

The number of teachers increased from 30 to 345, between 1946 and 1979, just before Mojtahedi's tenure ended. The importance of physical activity through sports, left-over from Jordan's days, continued. Finally, financial assistance was offered to needy students, including residence in the dormitory, facts hardly known to public, and never publicized.

For Iranians, the names of Mojtahedi and Alborz are synonymous. Mojtahedi was a pioneer in secondary education, developed an effective and superior system at Alborz, and his success had great impact on general education in Iran. Mojtahedi's legacy was education and graduation of thousands of high-quality men who became professionals and contributed to the modernization and

development of Iran during the country's formative years, 1945 to 1980.

Mojtahedi ran Alborz with authority and success. He was well-informed, dedicated and disciplined. And he expected the same from his students.

It is a tribute to Mojtahedi's high public respect that, in a period when prime ministers and education ministers frequently changed, he remained the uninterrupted Alborz Principal over 3 decades. Although he humbly attributed the successes of Alborz to its outstanding teachers, it would not have happened without his exemplary leadership. He gave credit to Jordan, referring to him as the "Father of Alborz."

Sadly, with the 1979 revolution, the era of Mojtahedi came to an abrupt end. Soon thereafter, he was stripped of all public service and accused of "strengthening the Shah's regime." It is most ironic that Mohammad Ali Mojtahedi, a highly patriotic man, had to spend the rest of his life in exile in France. He died in 1997, a few months after the death of his only daughter, Suzie. His son, Parviz, died of cancer in 2003.

Soon after his death, 20 years ago this year, memorial services were organized at Alborz by his friends, colleagues, and former students. Two of his old & long-time Alborz associates, Mousavi Makooee & Mahmoud Behzad, gave brief, heart-warming eulogies. Memorial services were held, and obituaries published, in many other locations, including at the UCLA where an old Alborz teacher, Dr. Baruch Berookhim, spoke of Dr. Mojtahedi's profile and service.

### Alborz High School

Located in the heart of Tehran, in the land purchased by Jordan and at *chaharraheh College*, the high school is named after Alborz Mountain. The main building, *sakhteman markazi*, was designed by Nikolai Markoff, a Georgian architect and Iran resident.

It was constructed by *Ostad* Hossein Me'mar, in 1924. Additional buildings, *sakhteman sefid* and *sakhteman jadeed*, were later designed and built by Mohandes Hossein Amanat, an Alborz graduate. In 2006, the Alborz campus was designated as a historic site (*mandegar*), representing the largest, most prestigious high school in Iran.

Throughout its history, Alborz has played a major role in Iranian education. Alborz, now 144 years old, has survived



the reign of six kings (Naser-eddin, Mozaffer-eddin, Mohammad Ali, and Ahmad Shah Qajar; Reza & Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi), as well as four decades of Islamic Republic. Mir Assadollah Mousavi Makooee, a close associate of Mojtahedi, worked at Alborz as Director of Dormitories and *nazem*, from 1946 to 1978. He later served as a Majlis deputy and published a book on Alborz Dormitories (*Dabeerestan Alborz va Shabaneh Roozieh On*).

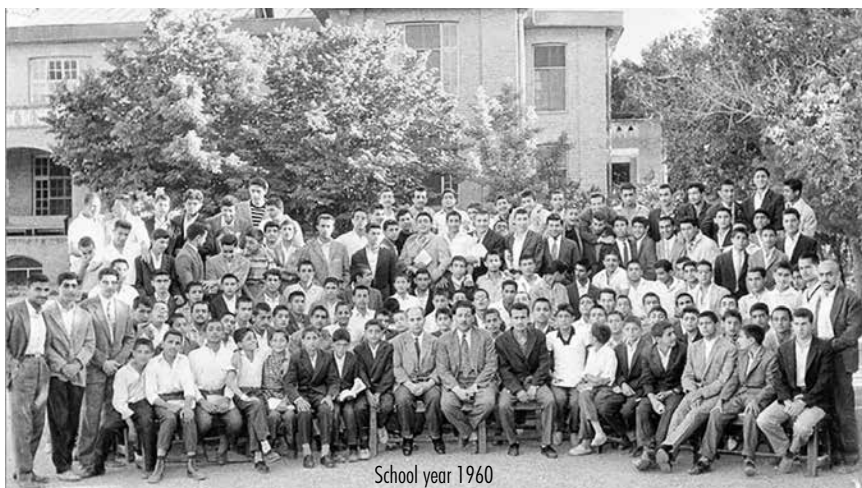
Some other legendary teachers include Dr. Mahmoud Behzad; Dr. Zeinolabedin Motamen; Dr. Baruch Berookhim; Ahmad Rafizadeh; Bagher Nahvi; Azizollah Khosravi Kamrani; Mir Zaki Kompani; Mostafa Derakhshesh; Sadegh Ershadi; Jalal Matini; Hassan Ali Vahid; Rohani, Saadat; Toosi, Moosa Azarnoosh; Tasleemi; Javad Heydari; Esmail Boozari; Yahya Dowlatshahi; Ali Akbar Kaveh; Mohammad Nasrollah; Jafar Golbabe and Parineh.

Among notable alumni are Mohammad Ali Nodooshan (author); Dariush Ashouri (author); Mostafa Chamran (Defense Minister); Houshang Chehabi (professor); Dariush Homayoun (politician); Homayoun Khorram, (musician); Homayoun Katouzian (historian); Khosrow Sinai (film director); Fariborz Mas-eeh (entrepreneur); and Hossein Amanat (architect of Azadi Tower).

Best estimates suggest that between 1940 and 1980, Alborz produced over 20,000 qualified graduates who went mostly into science, technology & medicine, and provided the leadership for Iran's advances & progress in the twentieth century. It is noteworthy that both Jordan and Mojtahedi, by providing superior education at Alborz High School, contributed significantly to Iran's upward move into the ranks of developing nations.

### Personal Reflections





School year 1960

I attended Alborz High School from 1952 to 1958. There were 289 in our graduating class: 202 in *tabyee* and 87 in *riazee*.

I remember the first day my father took me to Alborz to register me for 7<sup>th</sup> grade, and to see his friend, Dr. Mojtahedi. I also remember the last time I saw Dr. Mojtahedi in 1958, to say goodbye before I left for U.S.

Alborz was the place I studied and learned much, met so many nice people and established lasting friendships. It was where we discussed politics, smoked my first cigarette, contemplated my future and spent my teenage years.

For more than half a century, I have remembered and reflected many wonderful, fond Alborz memories.

It is with profound gratitude and nostalgia that I remember Alborz, Mojtahedi, my teachers and my classmates. I owe so much to so many.

**Sorood Alborz  
by Ostad Motamen (1945)**

*Ma sheer delan  
mazhareh niroo-yeh jahaneem  
az peel natarseem  
keh ma sheer zhyaneem  
niroodeh jesmeem-o fazayandeh janeem  
har ja honary hast  
namayandeh aneem  
cheneeneem-o chenaneem,  
cheneeneem-o chenaneem*

**Conclusion**

The success and fame of Alborz High School during the last century can be attributed to Rev Dr. Samuel Jordan’s educational philosophy. His early American Missionary team Dr. Mohammad Ali Mojtahedi’s remarkable dedication and discipline. A collection of devoted and gifted teachers selection, admission and education of top level & highly motivated students.

**FOUR THOUSAND YEAR OLD TREE**



The Cypress of Abarkooh, also called the Zoroastrian Sarv, is a cypress tree in Abarkooh, Yazd province. It is an Iranian national monument and tourist attraction standing an estimated 25-28 meters high and with a perimeter of 11.5 meters at its trunk and 18 meters higher up around its branches. Russian scientist Alexander Rouf has estimated its age as over four thousand years old and thus it may be the oldest living being in Asia. Some legends attribute its origin to Japheth, the son of Noah, while others believe Zoroaster himself planted it.

Favorable natural conditions of its location has been credited as the main reason for the tree’s longevity, although it is now being enveloped by an urban park and is thus open to disturbances by unnatural elements.

In ancient Iran, planting a tree was of great importance and can be seen in some of the carvings of Persepolis. In particular, the cypress tree was considered significant to Zoroastrians as it remained green all year long.

References to the tree have been made as early as the 14<sup>th</sup> century by Hamdollah Mostofi. In his book “NezhatolGhoolob” he describes Abarkooh as “there is a cedar tree there with global fame”.

Cypress has been the first choice for Iranian Gardens. In all of the famous Persian Gardens, such as Fin Garden, Mahaan, Dowlat Abad, and others, this tree plays a central role in their design. While the cypress tree of Kashmir was chopped down by the orders of the Abbasid Caliph Motevakkel and transported to Samarra, the Cypress of Abarkooh withstood the test of time. It was never forgotten by the Iranians and in fact its legend grew ever stronger with the passage of time while poets and artists kept depicting it in their works.

**Hossein Gharib, MD, MACP, MACE**

He graduated from Alborz High School in Iran in 1958, received his B.S. degree from the Ohio State University in 1962 and his M.D. degree from the University of Michigan Medical School in 1966. After an internship at Philadelphia General Hospital, he completed an internal medicine residency and fellowship in endocrinology and metabolism (1967–1971) at the Mayo Clinic. He joined the Mayo Clinic staff in 1972 and was promoted to the rank of Professor of Medicine in 1994.

Dr. Gharib is an international authority on thyroid disorders, has published more than 200 papers and has lectured at more than 350 national and international endocrine events. He has received many honors and awards, including the prestigious Paul Starr Award of the American Thyroid Association (ATA), the Distinguished Physician Award of the Endocrine Society, and Mastership of both the American College of Physicians and the American College of Endocrinology (ACE). He has served as the President of American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists, the ACE, and recently, the ATA. He has published 3 endocrine textbooks, and has been an editorial board member of many journals including JCEM, Thyroid, Endocrine Practice, Acta Endocrinologica (Buc), and US Endocrinology.



## PERSIAN DANCE TRADITIONS and NEW YEAR HISTORY

Spring replaces winter. Cold replaces warmth. Fragrant plants and flowers replace frozen lands. The first day of spring has been awaited eagerly by people of Persian descent everywhere as it marks the Persian New Year, Norouz, a day filled with joyous celebrations and feasting.

Norouz marks the change of season from winter to spring. Dating all the way back to Zoroastrian traditions in ancient Persia, Norouz, which means “new day” in Persian is a day that symbolises rebirth and revival. The festival is marked by a number of activities:

### ***Khoneh Takoonee***

***Cleaning.*** To prepare for this day, people in most of Central Asia perform the “khoneh takooni,” an annual spring cleaning in which they wash everything, make repairs, of various household items and donate the things they do not need anymore. The festival is marked by a number of celebrations:



### ***The Haft Seen***

***Seven S's table.*** This is not a table whose shape is an “s,” but rather, a table laden with seven items each of which begin with the letter “s” and symbolizes a certain idea in relation to the renewal. For example, “seer,” which is Farsi for garlic represent good health while “sabzeh,” sprouts, renewal. The other five foods on the table are Sumaq, Seeb, Samanu, Senjed and Sonbol. Additional items include a mirror symbolizing eternity and coins to symbolize wealth among other foods and items.

### ***The Chaharshanbe Suri***

***Red Wednesday.*** And no, red does not represent blood but is used to describe a bonfire ritual held on the last Wednesday before Norouz. People jump over flames from bonfires in the streets singing. Again the concept of renewal is highlighted as the repetitive catchy line accompanying the songs is; “give me your beautiful red color and take back my sickly pallor!”

### ***Uncle Norouz and Haji Pirouz***

***Persian Santa Claus and Street singers.*** Uncle Norouz gives children gifts while the Haji Pirouz wear redsuits and blackfaces and play tambourines in the streets.

Being a secular holiday marking important celebrations, you can also celebrate it. So folks, put on your new clothes, get Persian and celebrate the feast of revival, welcoming spring. Happy new year- Norouz Pirouz!

Wind and rain have gone. Lord Norouz has come. Friends, convey this message. The New Year has come again. This spring be your good luck The tulip fields be your joy. Common Song Sang by Haji Pirouz in Norouz Celebrations.

HAPPY  
NOROZ

HOPE THIS NOROUZ  
BRINGS  
LOTS OF LOVE  
AND WARMTH  
FOR YOU  
AND YOUR LOVED ONES.

