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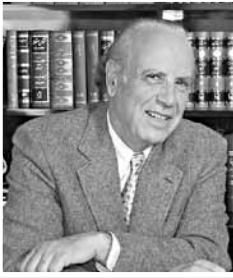
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IMPORTANT NOTICE

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.



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The 17th year of *Persian Heritage* begins with Norouz. My staff and I are so grateful to all of you, who have kept this magazine alive with your support. We thank you. I also want to personally thank my staff, who continue to donate their time to *Persian Heritage*. Their goal, as is the goal of this magazine, is to continue keeping the culture and traditions of Persia alive for generations to follow.

Should we or shouldn't we do a preemptive strike on Iran's alleged uranium enrichment centers?

This is the question on the front page of every newspaper and magazine, the lead story of every news program, the main topic on television political programs and I am certain in most households. Basically the percentage of those in favor of the attack is 51%- 53%.

Recently, I was on the *Voice of America* site. They were discussing the imminent attack on Iran. I was shocked to hear that 49% of Persian speaking people were in favor of the attack, 42% against and 7% undecided. Of course these statistics were gathered from Persian speaking people outside of Iran. It is doubtful that those residing in Iran would support any aggression and I was shocked to read that the 49% in favor of an attack were made up of Iranian Diaspora, I guess still hoping that a successful attack would permit them to return to Iran. Is it possible for such selfishness to exist among us? On the other hand, maybe they cannot help but feel this way. After all, the headlines are trying to convince the public on the necessity of this attack, for western protection and preservation of world peace. Add to this, the hard headedness of Iranian politicians, baiting the west, makes an attack inevitable.

Not long ago the same public preparation, for an attack on Iraq, took place in the United States. For months prior to the invasion, there were campaigns to convince the public that the invasion of Iraq was necessary. Saddam Hussein, we were told, possessed "weapons of mass destruction" and that if we did not preemptively destroy them, this "mad man" would use them on his enemies.

But, one has to ask, did Saddam Hussein wish to destroy himself? This of course is what would have happened if he used a WMD? The answer is, probably NO. Yet, he continued antagonizing the west with verbal bantering and idol threats. His actions, along with the Iranian counterpart leaders, during the Iran-Iraq war led to the death and injury of over 500,000 of his people and the death of over 1 million Iranians. Eventually his puffery caused his embarrassing demise. To date people

in Iraq, who fought in the name of freedom, continue to lose their lives to bullets, bombs and mines.

Destruction, which results from the wind of threats such as Saddam's, leaves, like a tornado, mass destruction and death of the innocent. A tornado, however, and its destruction brings people together while the destruction resulting by idol threats, further alienates nations and in the end results in greater separation and destruction.

It seems as if it is now Iran's turn to face "the music of war." The anti Iran campaigns strengthen support and sadly some Iranian Diaspora have joined. It is my sincere hope that everyone understands that war with Iran will result in more than just the destruction of alleged nuclear power installments, more than the deaths and injuries to the Iranian people and more than physical destruction. **IT WILL RESULT IN THE DIVISION OF IRAN**, as was done to Yugoslavia. With **that division comes the end of Persian history and culture.**

Thirty three years ago Iran had a revolution. With it, the people believed that they would be given the freedoms of speech, press and equality. Sadly, this has not happened. I am frightened that not much time remains for their DREAMS to become a reality. WHEN will these leaders of Iran recognize their bantering, like Saddam's, is compromising the future of its people. Your people look up to you for guidance and strength and what is returned to them is starvation, imprisonment and the possible of the destruction of their borders. WHY? It certainly cannot be in God's name.

On February 26, 2012, I watched the Academy Awards. Sandra Bullock presented the award for Best Foreign Film. After she read the nominations, I watched her open the envelope. Like a surgeon, she carefully undid the flap and read Mr. Farhadi's name. My mind wanted me to stand up, cheer and clap. It was my heart, however, that ruled. With its beats increasing, my wife and I sat together and cried.

Mr. Farhadi, unlike other winners of the prestigious award, did not spring to his feet with excitement and child-like joy. He walked graciously towards the stage. He knew the world was watching and waiting to hear his words. He knew that this would be the most important speech of his entire life. He knew that he did not stand before the Academy as one individual. He knew he stood in front of them as a representative of an entire nation. Slowly he took out some papers and began to speak. What others have been unable to accomplish through articles, debates, parades etc. he accomplished in a few short sentences. In his soft, sincere voice he educated the

world on Iran and Iranian people, *"I proudly offer this award to the people of my country, the people who respect all cultures and civilization and despise hostility and resentment."*

As the camera swept through the audience to capture reactions, it was clear that the academy was certain they made the correct choice. Even the competition of the category, which included a film from Israel, Mr. Farhadi's "so called enemy," was proud of his artistic achievement and words.

The "alleged" hatred between the United States, Israel and Iran exists only as a result of those in power. The people of these nations, out of the hands of politics, truly and not rhetorically, know the true bond of friendship that has existed between them. In the case of Israel 2500 years of friendly relations, relations where both sides came to the aide of each other in their darkest hours. Politicians do little to educate the public on the acts of friendship between these nations. Instead, they repeat the same political rhetoric of hatred.

Perhaps these leaders are not aware themselves. How many know that the Iranians were one of the first nations to offer condolences to the U.S. and the victims of September 11, 2001 and have mourned them every anniversary? How many know that Queen Esther was the first Jewish Queen in the world and was the Queen of Persi? How many know that the Prophet Daniel was the Prime Minister of the Persian Empire? How many know that Abdol-Hosseini Sardari (like what the Christian Shindler did in Poland) saved thousands of Jews from extinction by issuing them Iranian passports? How many know that Cyrus the Great helped the Jews return to Israel and that Iran remains the largest home to Jews in the Middle East outside of Israel and Turkey?

We can no longer continue to allow leaders, hoping for reelection, to influence people's values. It is time for all of us to educate ourselves through books and conversations, rather than take for face value what we see and hear in political campaigns and slanted media.

U.S. military ships and personnel rescued Iranian soldiers and vessels from the Persian Gulf. They welcomed and cared for them. Yet, in the future they may be targets of each other's wrath. I FIND THIS CONFUSING. During the time of an earthquake or other deadly act of nature we all rally

around each other, to save those buried under rubble, hungry from starvation or cold from exposure only to perhaps kill them during an act of war. I FIND THIS CONFUSING. And, politicians who wish to deprive people from basic freedoms or implement sanctions all in the name of a vote, I FIND CONFUSING. BUT people choosing peace over war IS NOT CONFUSING. We are the majority and if given the same coverage in the media as the minority who seek war, PEACE could rule the world.

As we enter into the 17th year of the existence of *Persian Heritage* I ask we join together and call for our leaders to stop their madness. Let them know that their terms in office will end, but what they do during that term impact a nation and its people for a very long time. But I fear the foundations are being weakened by the rhetoric of its leaders.

I pray that, before I pass on, I will see peace for Iran, and the people of the world. Over the past 16 years keeping this magazine and its goals alive has not been an easy task. I make a promise to you that I will continue my efforts until no longer possible. I do this out of love for all of you, and the future of our Persian heritage and culture. I hope that the world will be able to share the sweet smell of freedom.

Shahrokh Ahkami

We Wish All of you
a Happy and
Peaceful New Year!
The Persian Heritage staff



Dear Readers:

On the cover I am proud to introduce my grandson, Ryan Whitworth. I was so proud when he asked if he could interview me about my Persian heritage. Because of the importance of keeping our heritage and culture alive I am asking our readers to submit papers by their young children and grandchildren for future publication. I don't know a better way of seeing the world than through the eyes of an innocent child.

Editor, Shahrokh Ahkami

Dear Editor:

As Norouz approaches, I wanted to take this opportunity to discuss the Haft Seen and the role of Goldfish as part of this ceremonial tradition.

As a longtime animal activist, it has always greatly troubled me to see goldfish used as part of the Haft Seen. While I understand the significance of the goldfish as a symbol life, there are better approaches, which can be taken by Iranians which would lessen the suffering of these creatures. After all, how ironic for Iranians to celebrate life while potentially harming the life of their fish.

Goldfish, while “hearty”, are also quite delicate, sensitive and emotional creatures. While a small container can technically house a goldfish, each goldfish ideally needs ten gallons of water to swim in, in order to be healthy. This type of fish excretes a significant amount of waste, and the ammonia in that waste both burns their bodies and suffocates them. Therefore, their water must be changed regularly (about 20% once a week). However, too frequent and significant of a water change can also shock their bodies, and can kill them. Moreover, the water used to house a goldfish should not be straight tap water, unless it has been treated for chlorine (which is also poisonous to fish) and the ideal water would be bottled water for the fish.

Aside from their water conditions, the actual container used for the fish is quite important. While the old-fashioned round fish tank looks nice, this type of housing has been phased out of most stores due to the stress it puts on fish. Not only can the fish not swim around well in this type of container, but the distorted and magnified view it gives the fish is both painful and traumatic to them.

Therefore, the best type of container is a square or rectangle one – or any one that is not “bowl” shaped.

As fish are naturally shy creatures, they should also be housed with some type of comforting accessory. An example of this includes a small plastic (or live) plant. Not only will this plant help the fish tank look prettier, but it will help comfort and relieve much of the stress the fish is enduring.

Other points to consider to help ease the stress and better the health of your fish include: not putting the fish in direct sunlight; feeding the fish scarcely only once a day (which will also reduce the amount of waste they expel); and keeping the tank in a warm place (not

too hot nor too cold.) Note, these fish are also sensitive to sounds – so caution should be enacted when selling or displaying these fish at a Norouz party with loud music playing.

Lastly, I’d like to ask your readers to possibly consider two things. If you must have fish as part of your Haft Seen (and as the wife of an Iranian, I do understand this significance) then I ask you to consider (1) purchasing a “Betta Fish” instead of a “Goldfish”. These fish are much more adapt at surviving in small fish bowls (typically used on the Haft Seen) and are available in a variety of colors. (2) Most pet stores would take back (for free of course) the goldfish after the Norouz holiday. If you cannot transfer your fish to a larger tank for it to live its life, then please consider donating the fish back to the store, I wanted to reach out to your magazine and ask if you could possibly publish this letter before the Norouz holiday, because I know how widely distributed and reputable your publication is. Thank you for your care and understanding in this matter, and I wish you all a wonderful, healthy and happy Norouz!

Sincerely,
J. M. Ghahari, Ph.D.

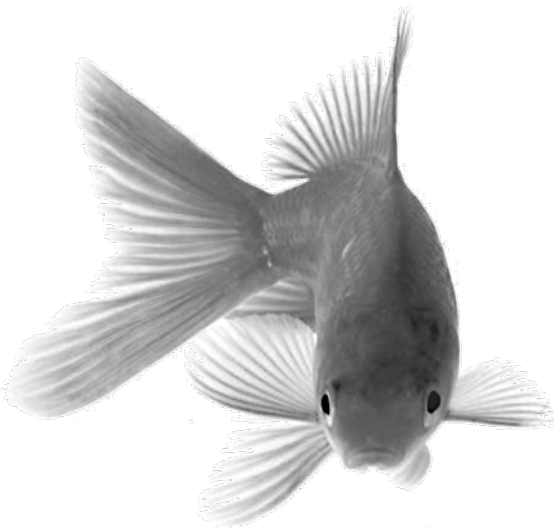
THE GOLDFISH

THE GOLDFISH

THE GOLDFISH

THE GOLDFISH

Jennifer M. Ghahari



MANY THANKS

Dear Editor

Many thanks for working so hard and providing “*Persian Heritage*”, such a prestigious journal.

J. Radmard

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for your support
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**ALERT:
Persepolis Tablets
Threatened By
Senate Sanctions Bill**

February 3, 2012

A Senate committee voted yesterday to make it easier for individuals to seize and auction off priceless ancient Persian antiquities held by American museums and universities in order to collect court judgments against the Iranian government. Already, lawyers are in court trying to seize the Persepolis Tablets – priceless 2,500 year-old artifacts that provide a unique first-hand account of life in the Persian Empire under Darius the Great.

If this proposal becomes law, the Persepolis Tablets are almost certain to be confiscated from the universities and museums and sold to the highest bidders.

The Persepolis Tablets are a part of our rich heritage that should continue to be shared at museums and universities, not auctioned off like cheap items on eBay.

**TAKE ACTION NOW TO
PROTECT OUR HERITAGE!**

This proposal by Senator Menendez (D-NJ) will soon be considered by the full Senate as part of its latest Iran sanctions bill – which builds on the broad Central Bank of Iran sanctions spearheaded by Senator Menendez just last December.

This is perhaps one of the starkest examples yet of how broad sanctions punish ordinary Iranians and Iranian Americans, not the Iranian government.

With the Iranian people facing unprecedented repression at home and economic warfare from abroad, we must stand united against collective punishment and the looting of our very heritage.

The Iranian government has harmed many innocent lives, and its victims should receive just compensation. But we must be able to protect the rights of victims without attacking our Iranian heritage.

Jamal Abdi
NIAC Policy Director

**Leila Heller Gallery
to Participate in
VIP ART FAIR 2.0
Exclusively Online
February 3-8, 2012**

New York, NY – For the second edition of the VIP Art Fair, Leila Heller Gallery will highlight work from both emerging and established artists from the U.S., Middle East, Europe, and Asia. The VIP Art Fair can be viewed exclusively online at www.vipart-fair.com from February 3 – 8, 2012.

The exhibition will feature a number of new works by gallery artists, including Negar Ahkami's *Hyperbolic*, 2011, Ran Hwang's *Two Love Tree*, 2011, and Roya Akhavan's *Entrapped*, 2011. Ayad Alkadhi will be represented by *Spring*, 2011, a large, mixed-media work that will be debuted in conjunction with the artist's first solo exhibition, *Umbilical*, on view at Leila Heller Gallery's Chelsea location from February 2 – 25, 2012.

A monumental bronze sculpture by Rachel Lee Hovnanian, *Body Armor II*, 2010, is a powerful symbol of femininity, embodying the artist's playful take on traditionally masculine and rigid protective gear. Hovnanian's "armor," however, is formed around the soft curves of the female body.

Leila Heller Gallery will also feature works by Shiva Ahmadi, Faig Ahmed, Shoja Azari, Kezban Arca Batibeki, Ghasem Hajizadeh, Khosrow Hassanzadeh, Shahram Karimi, Farideh Lashai, Alexis Laurent, Gayle Mandle, Leila Pazooki, Rolf Sachs, Soody Sharifi, Iké Udé, and Firooz Zahedi.

Through innovative technology, VIP 2.0 will connect visitors with the very best in contemporary art, enabling communication and engagement on a global scale, 24 hours a day, throughout the event.

**Dr. Ali Mazandarani
Earns
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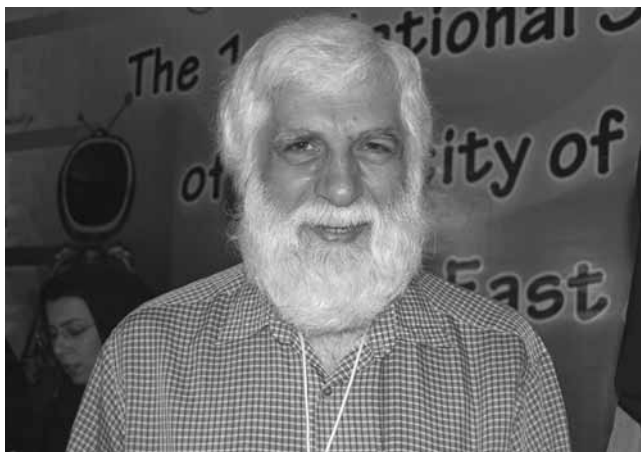
Dec. 19, 2011 – It does not happen very often, but a special state wide organization of police officers have honored a citizen who, like them, has gone above and beyond the call of duty, Dr. Ali Mazandarani, or Dr. Maz as his patients have come to refer to him. Dr. Maz, a practicing doctor at Medwell Spine, Osteoarthritis and Neuropathy center in Midland Park, has joined the ranks of honored citizens recognized by The Honor Legion of the Police Departments of the State of New Jersey (NJHL) for his generous work with police officers and their families. At the NJHL's monthly meeting at the Bethwood in Totowa on Nov. 30, Dr. Maz accepted the award and repeated his pledge to offer free healthcare for police families that have no health insurance.

**THE HOTTEST
PERSIAN HEART
THROB ALIVE!**

Yu... Darvish, full name Yu Darvishsefad, is a 25 year old Japanese – Iranian starting pitcher for the Hokkaido Nippon-Ham Fighters in Japan. Japan's \$52 million dollar athlete heart throb and sex symbol Yu is the proud son Iranian father Farshad Darvishsefad and Japanese mother Ikuyo. He pitched in the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2009 World Baseball Classic as a member of the Japanese national team. At 25 years of age, he is considered, by many, to be the best pitcher in Japanese professional baseball. He was recently offered \$52 million U.S. dollars to join the American League, Texas Rangers baseball team.

CARO LUCAS: Father of Iran's Robotic Science

TEHRAN TIMES, JAN. 1ST, 2012



Caro Lucas (1949 - 2010) was a versatile Iranian- Armenian scientist who is regarded as the father of Iran's robotic science. He was honored as an eternal figure by the Iranian Science and Culture Hall of Fame, which is a distinguishing honor offered to Iranian chancellor scholars.

Born on September 4, 1949 in the historical city of Isfahan, he received his M.Sc. degree in Electrical and Control Engineering from University of Tehran, in 1973 and the PhD. degree from University of California, Berkeley, in 1976.

He had been a pioneer in presenting new multi-disciplinary graduate courses like biologic computing, general systems design, and advanced topics in socio-cognitive systems, where, he has presented courses (and supervised theses) in different disciplines and departments like Electrical and Computer Engineering, Management, Psychology, Fine Arts and Architecture, and Finance and Economics. He was also the founder of the ISRF, Institute for Studies in Theoretical Physics and Mathematics and has assisted in founding several new research organizations and engineering disciplines in Iran.

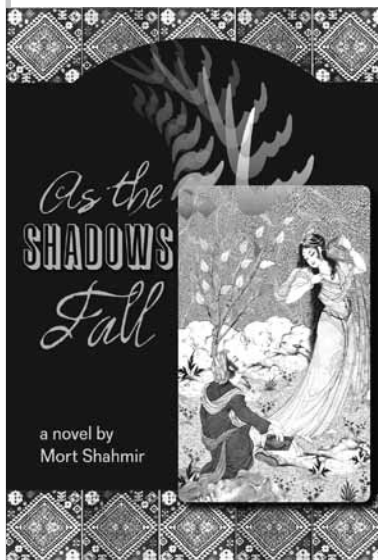
Professor Lucas was also a Visiting Associate Professor at the University of Toronto, Canada (summer, 1989-1990), and University of California, Berkeley (1988-1989).

He served as Managing Editor of the Memories of the Engineering Faculty, University of Tehran (1979-1991), Reviewer of Mathematical Reviewers (since 1987), Associate Editor of the Journal of Intelligent and Fuzzy Systems (1992-1999), and Chairman of the IEEE, Iran Section (1990-1992). He has served as the Chairman of several international conferences.

Professor Lucas was diagnosed with cancer in 2009. After a year he had overcome his cancer, but he died on July 8, 2010 from intestinal infection. He authored/co-authored about 826 conference papers, 332 journal papers and 39 chapters in books, edited 8 book volumes, served as program committee (PC) member for 96 conferences, and presented invited talks (or keynote speeches) in 190 national and international events.

As The SHADOWS Fall

A Novel By: Mort Shahmir



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Please visit: mortshahmir.com

for a review of the synopsis and the excerpt of the book and download instructions to Kindle, Nook, or iBook.

The print version will be available soon.

As The Shadows Fall is the love story of a young man and a young woman of Persian heritage in the US, the friendship of their families, and a brief account of Persian history (past and present), customs, literature, and arts. As the story unravels the reader will learn about the characters' secrets, past traumatic lives, and their undiminished yearning for the beautiful country and the rich culture that they have left behind.

Contact:

mort809@yahoo.com

270 791 9985

PAAIA Releases 2011 National Survey of Iranian Americans

December 7, 2011, Washington, D.C.

The Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans (PAAIA)

PAAIA 2011 SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

In October of 2011, PAAIA commissioned Zogby Research Services (formally known as Zogby International) to conduct a public opinion survey of Iranian Americans to gather accurate attitudinal and demographic information about the Iranian American community. The results of the 2011 PAAIA survey indicate that over the past three years, the importance of ethnic heritage to Iranian Americans remains unchanged, with eighty-three percent (83%) believing that their heritage is either very important or somewhat important to them. Iranian Americans continue to retain close ties to family and friends in Iran, although percentages of respondents who say they have family in Iran has dropped off somewhat. Still six in ten Iranian Americans indicate that they communicate with their family and friends in Iran at least several times a month. Most Iranian Americans (43%) believe that internal developments in Iran and the state of U.S. -Iran relations are at the core of their issues as Iranian Americans. These issues correlate and are at the heart of domestic issues involving Iranian Americans in the United States (e.g., civil rights, discrimination, etc.).

Iranian Americans want the Iranian regime to change. For the above-mentioned self-interested reason, two-thirds of Iranian Americans believe that Iran should be a secular democracy. In contrast, only six percent (6%) believe that any form of an "Islamic Republic" would work well in Iran. The survey indicates that from among a list of six issues relating to U.S. -Iran relations, by far the greatest number of Iranian Americans (63%) cite the promotion of human rights and democracy as the most important, followed by thirty percent (30%) who cite the promotion of regime change.

However, though Iranian Americans want to see a democratic Iran that respects human rights, they differ on how the foregoing aspirations can be achieved. Thirty eight percent (38%) believe that diplomatic negotiations or establishing diplomatic relations (each received 19%) are the best foreign policy approaches vis-à-vis Iran that would also be in the best interests of the United States. In contrast, thirty-two percent (32%) of Iranian Americans believe that the promotion of regime change would be in the best interest of the United States. Only three percent (3%) of Iranian Americans favor a military option against Iran.

PAAIA's surveys are conducted by Zogby Research Service (formally known as Zogby International), a pre-eminent polling firm, based on successful telephone interviews in English with representative sample of respondents.

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IRAN: WHAT'S NEXT?

Freeman Ure, Ph.D.

Unilateral preemptive war of aggression has and continues to be futile not only for the American's long term strategic interest, but also because it devastates the people inflicted with such catastrophe. Therefore, preemptive war must never occur, or be the every last option on the table, and after all other alternatives are exhaustively probed. After the "Arab uprising" of 2011, Iran has once again moved back to the very top of Western/American diplomacy agenda because of Iran's alleged development of nuclear technology. This policy shift is primarily driven by Israel and its staunch lobbying conglomerates in the U.S. and the West. Israel is a young country, most likely possessing no less than 200-300 nuclear bombs while it has remained elusively non-signatory to IAEA non-proliferations and NPT treaties. As antagonistic as Israel and the unpopular Arab governments may seem on the surface as odd bedfellows, they share a united approach in distracting their disgruntled public opinions by diverting attention to Iran. The excruciating fact that the Islamic Republic in Iran (IRI) has persistently violated human rights, democratic principles, and trampled its rich natural and diverse human resources for the past thirty-three years has never been part of the American/Western and Israeli/Arab strategic equations of how to deal with Iran.

The military industrial complex as the late President Dwight Eisenhower [rightly] referred to it, in cooperation with the neoconservatives, the Israeli and the Saudi lobbying infrastructures, are once again orchestrating to wage another war against Iran. In doing so, they hope for a much shorter but heavier war in intensity, with the aim of benefiting from the spoils of such war soon thereafter. As the saber-rattling has ratcheted up, it has already destabilized Iran and the daily lives of its ordinary citizens as evident by the economic bleeding and monetary fluctuations, massive inflations and above all extreme repression of human and constitutional rights under bogus national security policies. Much broader and harsher sanctions, oil embargo, more strict travel restrictions, freezing of assets of the IRI government officials and the banking system outside the country, and the mass mobilizations of the American navy and the armed forces in the Persian Gulf, seem to pave the way for this possible unilateral massive military aggression against Iran.

After having spent trillions of tax payer dollars and enduring the painful loss of several thousand American and allied forces in Afghanistan and Iraq (while the loss of life and capital is a thousand fold larger in those countries), one can only wonder whether these latter counties are better off today, or whether the American's strategic interests are better served now; All indications point to the opposite conclusion.

Undoubtedly, no one can question the merit and the long overdue need for the 80 million Iranians to achieve their aspirations for homegrown modernization and democratization. Freedom, reforms, transparency, security, due process and the rule of law, unity and equality, sovereignty, justice and peace, are yearnings which Iranians, a proud diverse nation several thousand years in the making, have struggled for the past 150 years. The far more urging

question is how such hallmarks of a nation would be impacted if and when the current military threats, followed with military strikes against Iran, materialize.

If such military action is primarily carried through remote air and navy precision surgical strikes in a narrow window of time of about a month in order to eliminate the political linchpins and key military and sensitive economic infrastructures of the Islamic Republic machinery and pave the way for a sovereign political reform process, it is highly likely that the majority of people of Iran would stand on the sidelines or even some become ecstatic with the prospect of the failed regime fallen into the dust bin of history. However, if such military action is stretched over time, and/or involves physical occupation, or worse yet if the U.S. & its allies strike civilian targets, or attempt to provoke internal ethnic factions to wage a civil war quagmire, this would leave little option for the majority of Iranians but to reluctantly rise and support the current regime in order to ensure the sovereignty of the nation and its regional future in the family of nations is indeed conserved; This was self-evident during the Iran-Iraq [imposed] war that lasted for eight years while up to a million Iranians, many of whom not necessarily pro-regime, perished to ensure the country's sovereignty and its territorial integrity and honor were sustained.

Paradoxically, there is no viable organized political infrastructure and leadership accepted by many Iranians to fill the vacuum and prepare the nation for a homegrown democratic transition. This is due to the elimination of viable political forces through mass executions, tortures and imprisonment by the current and past regimes, involuntary exile of millions of Iranians now in the Diaspora, and the lack of freedom inside the country for intellectual discourse and organizing, ironically, to take root over the past century.

It is understandably regretful to witness the missed past opportunities and the trepidation felt by Israel for not having fully reached a comprehensive security and peace accord with the Palestinian and the Arab nations. This was once quite plausible, but, it has now become improbable if not impossible due to Israeli's endemic intransigence and the Arab uprisings that have yielded unstable and thus indecisively non-committal regimes throughout the Arab world. If Israel is to sustain itself as a sovereign nation, and be respected and accepted by others in the long run, it must not infringe upon the sovereignty and legitimate aspirations of Iranians in particular, a historic nation with whom the Jewish people possess commonalities since antiquity. And, if the Israelis assume that by flexing their military might against Iran that they could leverage their hegemony over this nation or the region, they would be resolutely proven wrong.

The people of Iran poured into the streets with candlelight vigil after the despicable terrorist act of September 11, and despite their government struggling to quench such spontaneous grassroots expression of love for humanity. The Americans should make sure the American interests remain balanced with the long-term sovereignty of Iran and the aspirations of the Iranian people. The U.S. and its allies should warn/dissuade against any unilateral measures or indirect military actions by Israel or the Arab proxies that might once again unite the Iranians against external aggressions. This would bolster the repressive IRI reactions inside the country and the intransigently belligerent rhetoric of regime. The U.S. must carefully assess every policy toward Iran to ensure that history will for the first time record the U.S. on the righteous side of serving justice, sustaining tranquility and peace for Iran and this historically important area of the world. ■

Colonialism and subsequent occupation of land has had a parasitical effect since the dawn of civilization. The effect of a foreign object inside a human body creates the same trauma and has same effect as that of colonialism. The human body, with natural abilities, tries to fight off the foreign object. When it fails, the object become a parasite.

So does the colonial power, a parasite on the land it feeds and thrives on. The ultimate victim is the occupied host land and its people. It dries up, almost like a twig in the hot sun. The human brain, too, denied of its freedom to think and act by the parasitical entity, suffers a long time till the colonial power is eliminated.

In the current situation, Iran sits precariously while the group of six influential countries decides its fate.

The six nations include Russia and China, who have asked for a final report of sorts from the IAEA on Iran's nuclear capabilities. Whether there is any military uranium being processed or not in Iran needs to be determined.

If something goes wrong, Iran can expect a taste of a few 30,000 kilo bombs that are at the disposal of the USAF. In fact, the Yankee dimwit fascists already have their finger on the trigger to launch an onslaught.

If Iran falls, one more territory will come into the fold of the imperial powers. The Zionist entity of Israel will certainly be glad to see the success of the imperialist powers.

At this time, whether it will remain a sovereign state with a modern infrastructure or be reduced, not to the glory of ancient Persia, but the rubble of it, is a matter of concern. Syria escaped by a cat's whisker, thanks to a timely veto by Russia and China, and got saved from certain destruction by

**MODERN
IRAN
OR
ANCIENT
PERSIA**

by Jagdish Keshav

Prepared for publication
by: Lisa Karpova

Pravda.Ru,
November 11, 2011

the Axis of Evil - US, the UK and France, often referred to as FUKUS. But the blood thirsty generals in civilian garb can pull the wool over the eyes of the world and still launch an attack on Syria with some pretext or other. They do not need any approval these days from any internal body to launch an attack or continue with one, it seems. But Russia has warned the imperial powers from any mischief or deviating from the UN veto that has prohibited use of force on Syria.

But in the worst scenario, if the imperialists do break the veto, what can Russia or China do? Go on a hunger strike in front of the UN building in New York City?!

It is better still to save or empower the veto, with these two countries jointly or individually putting a bat-

alion in Syria if a hint comes along the channels that the US may override the veto and attack Syria. But will the two giant neighbors do this? This will be a direct challenge to the imperialist US to get prepared for the start of the 3rd World War!

This type of an incident did take place during the 1971 Indo-Pakistani war that resulted in the creation of a new Bangladesh. During this crisis, Richard 'Tricky-Dick' Nixon the then president of the US warned Indira Gandhi to stop the war on Pakistan or face US bombs! To stick to his threat, he sent the US Navy's 7th Fleet from the Pacific to the Bay of Bengal comprising of an aircraft carrier and some warships.

But right behind came Soviet nuclear-armed submarines sent by Leonid Brezhnev who bluntly told Nixon, "You bomb India and we shall sink your 7th Fleet and get prepared for the beginning of the Third World War!" The 7th Fleet was forced to flee back to its base in the Philippines.

Could a similar scene be played out or repeated if Putin or Wen suddenly decide that enough is enough? Would they then deploy their personnel in Syria or even Iran as a challenge to the hegemonic powers of the West? We have to wait, hope and see!

The expansionist powers of the imperialist west have pocketed Iraq and are trying it on Libya by unleashing their brutal military powers on these hapless nations that resulted in the loss of many thousands of lives that included the elderly, women and children. The light-sweet crude oil produced in abundance in this region has now been transformed into heavy-bloody crude oil since the blood of the innocents has flowed through the sands of Arabia to mix with their na-

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tional asset!

The hands of the imperialist west are soaked in this and it will take an eternity to cleanse them. Now they are trying to make them bloodier by bombarding Iran and possibly Syria.

With the Goebbelian/Murdochian propaganda machine by their side, these imperialists have succeeded in spreading false information on their intended targets in North Africa and the Middle East. Recently there was a video of a purported assassination attempt on an opposition politician in Venezuela. I feel it was doctored, being the start of instigations against Venezuela as a possible target in the name of human rights!

The imperialist bullies are surely trying to turn the heat up on Latin America too. So the bottom line is that anyone who is against the US or its policies will be targeted for assassination, individually or as a country en-masse. Returning to Iran, Russia very recently stated that more nuclear reactors will be built for civilian use. But is this statement enough to dissuade the imperialist marauders from attacking the so-called 'selected targets'?

If some drastic steps are not taken by Russia and China, who have high economic stakes in Iran in the coming days, an attack by imperialist US and UK, as well as Zionist Israel is almost certain to happen. If the trio succeeds in sending Iran back to the very old days of Persia, it will add another bloodied-feather in the cap for them, while the world sits quietly and watches, incapable of doing anything else.

Emboldened, the economically and morally bankrupt imperialist powers will try and encompass both Russia and China militarily along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. The recent deployment of about 3,500 US Marines in Australia is one example.

The hegemonic tendencies of these arrogant powers can still be nipped at this stage. But by whom and when? Putin and Wen, are you listening?■

A SEPARATION

The Completed Circle

I have never been more moved than last night with Mr. Farhadi's win. It was not the greatness of the movie or the actual win that mattered. It was his win giving him the world stage to say his words. I pray they have been heard and that this Oscar will change things for Iran and its people."

The English Editor of "Persian Heritage"



Among the awards **A Separation** received are the Golden Bear for Best Film, the Silver Bears for Best Actress and Best Actor at the 61st Berlin International Film Festival, becoming the first Iranian film to win the Golden Bear. The film also won the 69th Golden Globe Award for Best Foreign Language Film. **Although it was picked for the Oscar from its first showing, on February 26, 2011, we still sat biting our nails, as we listened to the nominations for Best Foreign film being announced.** We hoped the Academy would not shun the film or Mr. Farhadi because of politics and award the film and its director for his pure artistry. Then we heard the words, **"and the winner is... writer-director Asghar Farhadi."** Thank you to the Academy for recognizing the talent and thank you for allowing your decision and this beautiful movie to be a piece of the puzzle towards ending the hostility, now plaguing the people and the nation of Iran.

Asghar Farhadi has taken the world by storm with this movie that looks at relationships in Iran that have been splintered by the present state of affairs in Iran. It is a story that is built around a middle-class family. But for the language and subtitles, this family and its obstacles is similar to that of any middle class in the modern world. The cast Leila Hatami, Peyman Moaadi, Shahab Hosseini, Sareh Bayat and Sarina Farhadi, like the viewers were moved by the win, but even more so by the words of Mr. Farhadi's acceptance speech. In his speech he was not afraid to show the world the pride and love he has for Iran and its people, his words were moving and emotionally sincere,

"At a time of tug of war, intimidation and aggressions exchanged between politicians, the name of their county, Iran, is spoken here through her glorious culture, a rich and ancient culture that has been hidden under the heavy dust of politics. I proudly offer this award to the people of my country, the people who respect all cultures and civilizations and despise hostility and resentment." These are words we must all hope live beyond the frenzy of the win and reach the ears of those in charge.



I AM CYRUS

Fred F. Arzideh

This comment is in reference to the article written in issue#61 about the contents of Mr. Kaveh Farrokh's web site quoting from 33rd president of the U.S. (Harry Truman), that "I am Cyrus". I also visited his web site and find it interesting. I might have some comment for him which I will send it directly to his website.

Speaking of President Truman, I found it necessary to give some information for my Iranian ex-patriots. President Truman the 33rd president of US is ranked fifth between all the past presidents referring to C-span rating. This rating is not based on look nor heredity wealth rather due his ability and decision-making and action on tough times. There are over 50 famous proverbial quotes from this president that never gets cliché nor forgotten in spite of fast moving trend of English language in American society.

When he retired from public work and politics, he was carrying a modest life and, every morning taking 2-3 miles walk among other average people. He was known to be street smart and popular with common sense. One of his early contributions to Iran's security was during the 1946 invasion of Azarbayejan by Russian military forces. He was crucial for defending from Iran's independence and urging the Russian to leave Azarbayejan.

The Russian cunningly claiming that No Russian force is invading Iran. This is the uprising of Iranian people against its government. But people like our family who were living there (Eummieh) saw the Russian tanks in every corners of country. Russian government brought Turkish

books printed in Baku for Iranian school kids and trying to force them to sing Russian hymns in Turkish language. This is now a long time ago and lots of Iranians probably are not aware of this page of Iranian history book.

I mention about another important page of history of Iran where Mr. Truman has a great contribution to it: He was very resolute in his political remarks for defense of government of Dr. Mossadegh and withstand doing anything against his government in spite of British peddling to undermine it. His comment was "it is against the US government policy to interfere in a duly elected Iranian government which is backed by majority of its nation". From existing intelligence document report it was revealed that president Truman was against any kind of direct or clandestine US involvement in toppling legitimate government of Dr. Mossadegh. And who knows what would happen to the history of Iran if he had run for another term for presidency of US.

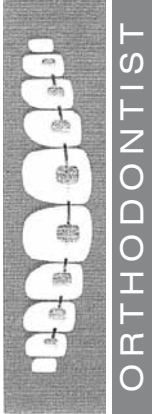
Now my comment for those of my Iranian expatriots who are carrying a framed portrait of late Dr. Mossadegh with Kazerouni jacket at their home and mansion, that is great but, they can also download a photo of 33rd US president and frame it and display it proudly side by side by Mossadegh picture. Other American presidents and dignitaries on the same line and causes with different spectrum are: Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, Ulysses Grant, JFK, Barrack Obama, Bill Clinton, All Gore, Ronald Reagan, Madeleine Albright, Jim Baker, Richard Holbrooke and more. ■

AFTER STEVE JOBS: SINA TAMADDON



06 January 2012

The other non-native member of the team (he's Iranian), and yet another veteran of NeXT, he came to Apple with Jobs' return in September 1997. Although he's held several top positions at Apple -- including vice president and general manager of the Newton Group -- and reports directly to Jobs, Tamaddon probably has a lower profile than anybody else on the executive team. He's the only member without a bio on Apple's official web page, and as this went to press, the question "Where did Sina Tamaddon go to school" had still not elicited any replies on WikiAnswers.



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Parvez Mosharraf, ruled the Pakistan for over 10 years. He was a still in charge when Benazir Butto was assassinated. Although he denies any connection to the acts of terror, he was most likely involved. It was during his reign that OBL, was carefully placed in a safe house in Abbottabad, about 40 miles from the capital, Islamabad. He turned that unholy land into a cesspool". See the diagram" the codename for Seal's primary target, (Osama bin Laden) after he was confronted in his bedroom by four seals, he was instructed to lay down, thus allowing arrest. It's unclear what happened next, but a female reportedly stood in front of him. She was shocked along with OBL. At that moment communication was routed to Langley, which recorded Geronimo project killed in action. Reports state only bin Laden's body was removed and flown in to the carrier USS Carl Vinson and eventually laid to rest in the Muslim tradition - Arabian Sea. Prior to this, various sample of DNA were taken and managed, though this was not really needed to identify OBL. The AQ leader was dropped in the sea because officially no country would take him. However, the truth probably centers on the fact that the CIA did not want his final resting place becoming a shrine for his many followers. An ISI intelligence source said that the seals did take one living resident away, possibly OBL son, though this has not been confirmed.

TASK FORCE 160 NIGHT STALKERS

America's 160th Special operations aviation Regiment-SOAR- joint operation command, sometimes referred to as "task force 160," is believed to have played a role in the deployment of the seals in Pakistan. The special operations unit (Army) has a helicopter element used for daring attack and reconnaissance mission usually performed at night and at speed. Based at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, the 160th (SOAR) special operations aviation Regiment's. Are known in the intel and security world as the night stalkers. It was this element that carried seals in the operation red wing mission over Afghanistan in 200S, when it encountered heavy resistance from al-Qaeda and Taliban terrorists. 860th personnel and eight seals were killed. The 160th, which uses a variety of helicopters including the MH-60 Black Hawks and MH-47 Chinooks has carried a number of special forces troops, including those from the CIA special activities division(SAD), Green Beret, Delta force and the UK'S SAS and SBS.

Night stalker aircraft and personnel also spearheaded the offensive against the AI Qaeda in the Tora Bora mountain complex.

In the raid on bin Laden's compound, at least four helicopters actually followed in low altitude flight path used by Pakistan Air Force planes and helicopters. Their mission started at Bagram airbase in Afghanistan and so for much of the time the aircraft flew at low altitude, they would almost certainly have been on the Pakistan radar. The particular Blackhawks used in the mission have been adapted and fitted with mufflers to lower the sound signature.

COMPARTMENTALIZED AND INTELLIGENCE'S

An often used word in the intelligence world and one that essentially means information is restricted within the body or on the need to know basis. By compartmentalizing intelligence, this basically lowers the risk of what's known as information, seepage, therefore minimizing the chances of an adversary obtaining knowledge of the particular subject matter that is deemed classified, secret, beyond top secret or even a higher.

Compartmentalizing often means withholding intelligence even from colleagues or within an organization. That the CIA seal mission adopted this is assured. It was also purposefully withheld from senior ministers, military officials and even some Intel bodies. This therefore seems to counter Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's comments, saying the mission was assisted by Pakistan. Pakistan officials were informed only at the very last minute operation was taken place on fear

on intelligence leak.

AND ISI SAFE HOUSE?

Much suspicion exists regarding Pakistan's inter-services intelligence agency the so-called ISI and how much protection was afforded to OBL, only an imbecile would believe that they did not have anything to do with it. The compound was carefully guarded secret and known to just a few 151 staffers. It has been suggested he was allowed to live in the compound just as long as he did not leave. However, locals say that house had a constant flow of visitors an 10 was regularly checked. Nevertheless, most were shocked at learning the terror leader had been a resident in their midst for years. The CIA will want to know how long ago OBL has lived in the location and why it was never properly informed. It seems inconceivable that at least one senior 151 official was not aware of just who the primary resident was. ISI officials have since apologized publicly that the compound was not on its radar, but did admit it was raided by counterterrorist police as early as 2003. As

OPERATION GERONIMO

David Yazdan

*You dead man, who did you kill which led to your demise,
Then where will be slayed the one who killed you.*

**ای کشته چرا کشتی تا کشته شوی زار
تا باز کجا کشته شود آن که ترا کشت**

for the CIA's mission, the 151 said it was taken totally by surprise" when invited to explain why the US force was not confronted, an agency official did not respond.

BAGRAM AIRFIELD

This important airport is located near one of the most ancient cities in Afghanistan. Various US Regiment and units occupy the site, which is shared by the Army and Air Force. NATO too has a presence. We understand large part of the Abbottabad mission was planned here including the reconstruction of the site similar to the OBL compound. This was used by the seals to train and determine just how many personnel would require. This in itself is still unconfirmed, with estimated varying from 24 to 40 operatives. However, we are fairly confident that the two seals teams of 12 were on board the aircraft. The rest was composed of aircrew and CIA officers.

INTELLIGENCE AND COMPUTERS

Once the Navy SEALs had eliminated the primary target, the CIA element had but a few minutes to search the house for materials which will undoubtedly help ascertain many facts about bin Laden presence, including how long he has lived there. However, it will be the intelligence gleaned it from our computers, laptops, cell phones, notebooks, diaries and other documentation that is provided stunning inside into the life OBL. We understand only the hard drives were removed. For the CIA and forensic specialists, the data may also turn up some less palatable intel-like whom he was in contact with and who has been these protector for all those years. Nevertheless, with the demise of Osama bin Laden, AI Qaeda central- what's left of it is now vulnerable to the point that it is irrelevant. However, this does not mean for one moment that AI Qaeda itself and those thousands of operative who supported it are less dangerous.

COMMENTARY

The close association of the United States in Pakistan, started a 1980s when Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. Many of our intelligence, money, ordnance, plus billions and billions of money from us and Saudi Arabia went to that godforsaken country. When the Soviet Union left, so did we. This of course was a big mistake because we left Afghanistan in the hands of the Taliban, who turned that country into the center of international terrorism. During all those years and up to the present time the ISI has been protecting and supporting these terrorists. I must say the line between the Taliban or AI Qaeda is quite blurred. It is simply a semantic issue The fact that we are spending close to \$2 bill ion every year to Pakistan and not getting anything in return is simply a travesty. organizations.

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REVIEWS

THE DRAGON IN MEDIEVAL EAST CHRISTIAN AND ISLAMIC ART,

Sara Kuehn (forward by Robert Hillenbrand)
Leiden Press 2011

Though detailed in its descriptions of the art discussed in the book, it remains informative on the subject matter. Without question the author met his goal in the writing as it was to contextualise and chart, the complex iconography of the dragon in the medieval Islamic world.

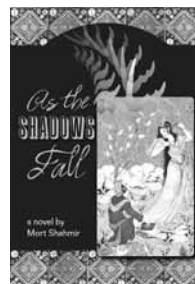
What I found to be lacking from the book were pictures within the text. Examples, instead, are located at the end, following the index. Regardless, it is a very interesting comparison of the use of the dragon in Christian and Islamic art.



AS THE SHADOW FALLS

Mort Shahmir
2011

Epic, is how one should describe this novel, but it is more than just a story of relationships and outcomes. It is a story that educates you on the Persian culture through love, adventure, trial and error. I found it to be an exciting read and easy to follow, holding my attention from start to finish. I fear, however, that the book will not reach the number of readers deserved because of the cover. Unless one is either Iranian or is interested in Iran, the book will be passed over. This would be a shame as it is, in my opinion EPIC, with so much to offer the reader.

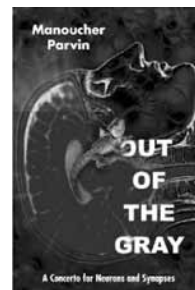


OUT OF THE GREY

Manocher Parvin
Ibex Publishers 2011

A writer needs to be sparked to commence the words that will fill the pages of a book. Often the spark is a personal event. So strong is the event that the writer will not be able to let it go until he writes about it. Such is the case in this book. The author is clearly motivated by a personal acquaintance. The depth of the book reflects his despair in watching a brilliant mind succumb to mental illness... hence out of the grey.

This event led the author to scientifically and spiritually research his own life and depth of his soul. The story is one of love and desperation. You are certain to laugh and certain to cry.





Were the Ancient Sumerians the World's First Brewers?

Author: John Blau

Editor: Cyrus Farivar

Taken from: dw-world.de, January 20, 2012

A newly published German report suggests the evidence of a fermented beverage from present-day Iraq may, in fact, not have been beer, but rather, a very low alcoholic drink. Still, other experts beg to differ.

For some people, researching the origins of beer is as stimulating as consuming it. Peter Damerow, a historian of science and a cuneiform-writing scholar at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin, was one such person. Damerow, who passed away in November, delved into archaeological findings of ancient beer production and consumption, focusing on ancient Sumerian brewing processes.

In a scholarly paper published in the Cuneiform Digital Library Journal this month, Damerow questioned whether the fermented cereal beverage - so-called Sumerian beer - consumed by the Sumerians, who lived in present-day Iraq, even contained alcohol and should be called beer.

MORE LIKE KVASS?

“In the case of Sumerian beer, it is unlikely that it was really beer that the Sumerians and their successors prepared from grain and consumed presumably in large amounts,” he wrote.

“Given our limited knowledge of the Sumerian brewing process, we do not even know for sure that the resulting product had any alcohol content at

all,” he added. “We really cannot know whether Sumerian beer might, after all, have had a greater similarity with kvass (a fermented grain beverage that originated in Eastern Europe) than, say, with German beer.” These claims fly in the face of what many historians believe – namely that ancient Sumerians in today’s Iraq were among the first to build agriculture-based cities approximately 6,000 years ago and produce a fermented grain-based beverage that came to be known as beer.

According to popular theory, Sumerian brewers crumbled flat bread made from barely or emmer into a mash, called “bappir,” which is Sumerian for “beer bread.”

‘HYMN OF NINKASI’

The problem is, that’s only theory: no one knows for sure, as Damerow points out in great detail. Although many of the more than 4,000-year-old cuneiform texts contain records of deliveries of emmer, barley and malt to breweries, hardly any information exists on details of the production processes, he notes.

Even the “Hymn of Ninkasi,” of the most significant sources on the an-

cient art of brewing, provides no reliable information on the ingredients and the brewing process, Damerow claims. The lyric text from the Old Babylonian period around 1800 B.C. is a mythological poem that glorifies the brewing process.

Franz Meussdoerffer, a professor of food science at the University of Bayreuth and a beer historian, says some of the confusion arises from the definition of beer itself.

“Beer as we know it today is en-



Alulu Beer Recipe – a recipe for “best” beer c. 2050 BC from the Sumerian city of Ur in Ancient Iraq.

tirely different from what was brewed in ancient times,” he told Deutsche Welle. “Today’s beers arose from northern European cultures that didn’t know bread but gruel. Fermented drinks in the Mediterranean area were based on beer-bread, with water added for the fermentation process.”

Meusdoerffer referred to beer-bread brews as “instant beers,” like today’s light beers, which have low alcohol content – but nevertheless contain alcohol. That description of Sumerian beer refutes Damerow’s theory.

NEOLITHIC REVOLUTION

Martin Zarnkow, a brewing historian in the Center of Life and Food Sciences at the Munich Technical University who collaborated with Damerow, also disagrees with Damerow on that point and another. “Sumerians didn’t discover beer, nor did the Egyptians, as some people believe,” Zarnkow told Deutsche Welle. “Theories point to beer being pro-

duced in the Neolithic Revolution more than 11,000 years ago.”

Like Meusdoerffer, he believes that beer-bread beverages contain alcohol and, as such, are rightly called beer.

Zarnkow was involved in the Tall Bazi brewing experiment that attempted to reconstruct the ancient brewing processes. Using cold mashing, the team produced a brew of barley and emmer and adjusted the alcohol level by changing the percentage of water. Damerow remained unconvinced by the results.

Most beer scholars, however, agree with Damerow’s general conclusion.

“I, too, am skeptical concerning how much we can securely say about the nature of ancient beer -whether from Sumeria or from Egypt, or Europe for that matter - apart possibly from the type of cereal used to make it and some generalities about how it tasted,” Max Nelson, professor of languages and literature at the University of Windsor in Canada, wrote in an e-mail to Deutsche Welle.

“We have no good way of determining what the average alcoholic strength of any ancient beer (or other beverage) was, and it is quite plausible that some fermented drinks, which were made to be drunk quickly, were low in alcohol, like modern kvass.”

Another issue, Nelson added, is that “we do not know what kind of yeast was used in the making of ancient beers, and this determines to a great extent how high in alcohol a fermented drink can be.” Since the 16th century, German brewers have notably gone one step further in their description of beer: they list exactly what ingredients can be used under the country’s unique “Rheinheitsgebot,” or “Purity Law.”

In his paper, Damerow defined beer as “an alcoholic beverage produced from cereals by enzymatic conversion of starch into fermentable sugar followed by a fermenting process.”

Few in the global brewing industry would disagree with that description.■

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When Iran Was Ruled By The Tennis-Loving Shah!

(www.NewChapterMedia.com)

Since the 1979 Islamic revolution, the republic of Iran has been one of the most volatile and controversial regimes on the global stage. It has been a flashpoint for global geopolitics with controversial statements from its leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as well as the construction of a potential nuclear bomb, the storming of embassies, most recently the British Embassy in Tehran, and the capture of U.S. drones and U.S. hikers.

Prior to the 1979 revolution, the nation was ruled by the Shah of Iran – Mohammad Reza Shāh Pahlavi –, who, before his 1979 exile, formed a strong friendship with Wimbledon champion and International Tennis Hall of Fame member Sidney Wood. Wood writes of their friendship in the chapter called “The Shah and I” in his post-humously published memoir *THE WIMBLEDON FINAL THAT NEVER WAS*.

This concerns a rare ex-

perience in which a shared belief in something much out of the ordinary welded a special bond between me and the Shah of Iran.

In November of 1952, my office switchboard announced a call from a “secretary of His Imperial Majesty, Shah of Iran.” I had partnered the Shah in a State Department-arranged doubles game at New York’s River Club two days before, and I took the call prepared to deal with some waggish friend who had heard about it. But a formally accented lady’s voice asked if I were Mr. Sidney B. Wood, Jr., to which I may have replied, “No, this is Tutankhamen.” However, there was enough note of concern in the clipped British accent on the other end to make the call reasonably credible. So I apologized and was more than surprised to hear myself invited to join my potentate partner for Thanksgiving dinner at the Waldorf and to be told that there would be

just four of us. In the interest of maintaining our nation’s public relations posture, such an invite should not be regretted. I then told the secretary that, literally minutes before, I had dictated a note to the Shah telling him what a pleasant experience it had been playing with him and what a surprisingly able and unstuffy partner he had been.

In the locker room, before going out on the court for the encounter, I had been earnestly briefed by a U.S. protocol gentleman as to how I was to address my exalted sidekick. To those who play a bit of doubles, you know that it could be a cumbersome exercise if you must precede such split-second injunctions as “yours” and “mine” by shouting, “Your Imperial Majesty.” But almost instantly on meeting my partner, this was clearly not to be a problem. I said, “I am, of course, Sidney. What do you prefer to be called?” He said, with a wide smile, “I

am, of course, Reza.”

I had a torn shoulder tendon, so Reza had to serve for me, but we combined well enough to perform credibly against Stanley Rumbough and Henry Breck – two much better than club type players – who didn’t hesitate to boom His Majesty whenever they got him in their sights.

At the Thanksgiving dinner, Reza’s other guests were two dazzling daughters of the Brazilian ambassador and Grover Whalen, Manhattan’s perennial host to visiting notables, who arrived during dessert. We then proceeded to the limousines for our trip to a performance of the smash musical *South Pacific*. And what a trip! For the entire distance from Lexington to Eighth Avenue the 42nd Street traffic was held at bay while our siren-screaming entourage swept by – all the way on the wrong side of the two-way street. Soon after we were seated, a buddy of mine, Henry Cole,

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waved and started toward me along our row to say hello. To his astonishment and mine, a burly Secret Service lady arose at least five seats away and blocked him off. My evening was made.

After the show, we returned to Reza's Waldorf Towers apartment where a number of the show's cast members and a few dozen other guests had assembled before going downstairs to a midnight supper party. Reza was being lionized, but, after some moments, I saw him beckoning from across the room for me to follow him into a sitting room where he locked the door against intruders. Then ensued a remarkable conversation, which I shall repeat as faithfully as can be recalled. He asked whether I had really written that note just before his secretary called. When I emphatically replied, "Yes," he said, "I felt at that instant you were trying to get in touch with me." He continued, "You know we Iranians have strong faith in such perceptions." He asked me if I, by chance, shared these convictions, and I told him that not only did I believe in such phenomena but that I had undergone a number of dramatically convincing experiences of this nature in my own life. We talked briefly about this and other things, and as we shook hands he asked if I would later fly to Teheran for a visit. Being involved at home with a number of demanding matters I failed to follow up what would surely have been an enviable and lifetime rewarding experience, and this is something I have always regretted.

We proceeded to sup-

per in the Waldorf's Peacock Alley Room at a single long table. Mary Martin, the superb star of South Pacific, was on Reza's right and I, surprisingly, was seated on his left. Reza, whose interest in tennis verged on intense, asked a number of questions of the same variety I often receive. At one point, I was describing a comical incident during a French mixed doubles championship final with the incomparable Helen Wills Moody as my partner at Stade Roland Garros in Paris (with two double Courvoisiers under my belt). Reza and Mary Martin were listening closely, but all at once, I realized the entire table of some 30 guests had stopped their conversation and, in deference to the Shah, had become my audience. There was no retreat, but fortunately, the punchline went across well enough to earn a favorable score on the laugh meter.

The image of the Shah of Iran as portrayed in the news media of later years bears little resemblance to the qualities I found in him. Media? That should evoke thoughts of land where the Medes and the Persians roamed. To me, Reza was completely unpretentious, impulsively warm and an amusing companion who could be as serious or lighthearted as the occasion warranted.

On the tennis court, where one's character is often laid bare, he proved to be a partner who needed no indulgence, followed directions with appreciation and attention, who played with zest and was the epitome of sportsmanship. In short, if you hadn't a clue that Reza Shah Pahlevi was indeed

master of the fates of some 35 million Persian souls, you would much look forward to having him for a friend.

The Shah's abdication from power and shameful abandonment by the pusillanimous Carter administration recalls David Frost's sober reminder following Jack Kennedy's tragic murder. "No matter how high the throne upon which we sit, our tails still touch the ground."

Reza is gone – could it have been Allah's merciful purpose to shield him from helplessly witnessing the yet continuing degradation of his beloved nation? Some years later, entirely by coincidence,



Reza's nephew rented what we call our "big house" in Southampton for the summer, and even at that point there was some shadowy concern about Khomeini's assassins learning of his whereabouts. In 1995, we became friends with Reza's brother and his wife who wintered in Palm Beach. The chemistry was ready-made. ■



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THE 'IRANIAN SCHINDLER' WHO SAVED JEWS FROM THE NAZIS

By Brian Wheeler BBC News, Washington

Thousands of Iranian Jews and their descendants owe their lives to a Muslim diplomat in wartime Paris, according to a new book. In *The Lion's Shadow* tells how Abdol-Hossein Sardari risked everything to help fellow Iranians escape the Nazis.

Eliane Senahi Cohanim was seven years old when she fled France with her family. She remembers clutching her favorite doll and lying as still as she could, pretending to be asleep, whenever their train came to a halt at a Nazi checkpoint. "I remember everywhere, when we were running away, they would ask for our passports, and I remember my father would hand them the passports and they would look at them. And then they would look at us. It was scary. It was very, very scary."

Mrs. Cohanim and her family were part of a small, close-knit community of Iranian Jews living in and around Paris. Her father, George Senahi, was a prosperous textile merchant and the family lived in a large, comfortable house in Montmorency, about 25km (15.5 miles) north of the French capital.

'TREMBLING'

When the Nazis invaded, the Senahis attempted to escape to Tehran, hiding for a while in the French countryside, before being forced to return to Paris, now in the full grip of the Gestapo. "I remember their attitude. The way they would walk with their black boots. Just looking at them at that time was scary for a child, I think," recalls Mrs. Cohanim, speaking from her home in California.

Like others in the Iranian Jewish community, Mr. Senahi turned for help to the young head of Iran's diplomatic mis-

sion in Paris.

Abdol-Hossein Sardari was able to provide the Senahi family with the passports and travel documents they needed for safe-passage through Nazi-occupied Europe, a month-long journey that was still fraught with danger. "At the borders, my father was always really trembling," recalls Mrs. Cohanim but, she adds, he was a "strong man" who had given the family "great confidence that everything would be OK."

UNLIKELY HERO

The 78-year-old grandmother has lived for the past 30 years in California with her husband Nasser Cohanim, a successful banker. Mrs. Cohanim has no doubt to whom she and her younger brother Claude owe their lives. "I remember my father always telling that it was thanks to Mr. Sardari that we could come out.

ABDOL-HOSSEIN SARDARI 1895 - 1981

1925: Qajar Royal Family, of which Sardari is a member, loses control of Iran

1936: Sardari gains law degree from Geneva university

1940: Takes over Iran's diplomatic mission in Paris from brother-in-law following Nazi invasion

1941: Saves thousands of Iranian Jews and others from persecution and death by gaining exemptions from Nazi race laws and helping them escape France

1948: Seeks permission to marry long-term lover Tchin-Tchin, a Chinese opera singer, but she disappears in her country's revolution

1952: Recalled to Tehran to face charges of misconduct and



embezzlement relating to wartime issuing of passports

1955: Clears name and resumes diplomatic career, eventually retiring to London

1978: Loses pension and property in Iranian revolution

1981: Dies unrecognized in South London but is posthumously honored by Jewish organizations

“My uncles and aunts and grandparents lived there in Paris. It was thanks to him they weren’t hurt. The ones that didn’t have him, they took them and you never heard about them again.” Of Mr. Sardari, she says: “I think he was like Schindler, at that time, helping the Jews in Paris.”

Like Oskar Schindler, the German industrialist who saved more than 1,000 Jews during the Holocaust by employing them in his factories, Sardari was an unlikely hero.

NAZI PROPAGANDA

In his book *In the Lion’s Shadow*, author Fariborz Mokhtari paints a picture of a bachelor and bon viveur who suddenly found himself head of Iran’s legation house, or diplomatic mission, at the start of World War II.

Although officially neutral, Iran was keen to maintain its strong trading relationship with Germany. This arrangement suited Hitler. The Nazi propaganda machine declared Iranians an Aryan nation and racially akin to the Germans.

Iranian Jews in Paris still faced harassment and persecution and were often identified to the authorities by informers.

In some cases, the Gestapo was alerted when newborn Jewish boys were circumcised at the hospital. Their terrified mothers were ordered to report to the Office of Jewish Affairs to be issued with the yellow patches Jews were forced to wear on their clothes and to have their documents stamped with their racial identity. But Sardari used his influence and German contacts to gain exemptions from Nazi race laws for more than 2,000 Iranian Jews, and possibly others, arguing that they did not have blood ties to European Jewry.

He was also able to help many Iranians, including members of Jewish community, return to Tehran by issuing them with the new-style Iranian passports they needed to travel across Europe. A change of regime in Iran, in 1925, had led to the introduction of a new passport and identity card. Many Iranians living in Europe did not have this document, while others, who had married non-Iranians, had not bothered to get Iranian passports for their spouses or children.

When Britain and Russia invaded Iran in September 1941, Sardari’s humanitarian task become more perilous.

Iran signed a treaty with the Allies and Sardari was ordered by Tehran to return home as soon as possible.

RACIAL PURITY

But despite being stripped of his diplomatic immunity and status, Sardari resolved to remain in France and carry on helping the Iranian Jews, at considerable risk to his own safety, using money from his inheritance to keep his office going.

The story he spun to the Nazis, in a series of letters and reports, was that the Persian Emperor Cyrus had freed Jewish exiles in Babylon in 538 BC and they had returned to their homes.

START QUOTE

“Here you have a Muslim Iranian who goes out of his way, risks his life, certainly risks his career and property and everything else, to save fellow Iranians.” End Quote Fariborz Mokhtari Author, *In The Lion’s Shadow*. However, he told the Nazis, at some later point a small number of Iranians began to find the teachings of the Prophet Moses attractive – and these Mousaique, or Iranian Followers of Moses, which he dubbed “Djuguten,” were not part of the Jewish race.

Using all of his lawyer’s skill, he exploited the internal contradictions and idiocies of the Nazis’ ideology to gain special treatment for the “Djuguten”, as the archive material published in Mr. Mokhtari’s new book shows. High-level investigations were launched in Berlin, with “experts” on racial purity drafted in to give an opinion on whether this Iranian sect - which the book suggests may well have been Sardari’s own invention - were Jewish or not. The experts were non-committal and suggested that more funding was needed for research.

LONELY DEATH

By December 1942, Sardari’s pleas had reached Adolf Eichmann, the senior Nazi in charge of Jewish affairs, who dismissed them, in a letter published in Mr. Mokhtari’s book, as “the usual Jewish tricks and attempts at camouflage”.

But Sardari somehow managed to carry on helping families escape from Paris, at a time when an estimated 100,000 Jews were deported from France to death camps. The number of blank passports in Sardari’s safe is estimated to have been between 500 and 1,000. In his book, Mr. Mokhtari suggests that if each was issued for an average of two to three people “this could have saved over 2,000 individuals”.

Sardari never sought recognition for his work during his lifetime, insisting he had only been doing his duty. He died a lonely death in a bedsit in Croydon, south London, in 1981, after losing his ambassador’s pension and Tehran properties in the Iranian revolution. He was posthumously recognised for his humanitarian work in 2004 at a ceremony at the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Los Angeles.

Mr. Mokhtari hopes that by telling his story, through the testimony of survivors, including Mrs. Cohanim, he will bring it to a wider audience but also shatter “popular misconceptions” about Iran and the Iranians.

“There is no distinction ‘I am Muslim, he is Jew’ or whatever.”

He believes the story illustrates the “general cultural propensity of Iranians to be tolerant” which is often overlooked in the current political climate. ■

The People of Iran are among the most ancient and diverse people of the world. Until the revolution of 1979, their continuous presence of government, absolute monarchy for the most part, goes back over 2,500 years; it was reigned by Cyrus the Great of Achaemenian Dynasty and only preceded by the Elamite (3200-539 BCE) headed by Shutruk-Nakhkhunte, in southwestern Iran. More importantly, Iran's archeological artifacts showcased in renowned museums worldwide and on historic sites in Iran, date back well over 10,000 years. In fact, and despite the Persian language as a distinct member of the Indo-European linguistic family, the latest genetic discoveries support the majority of Iranians and the neighboring inhabitants not to be of Aryan race, but belonging to earlier indigenous people in southwestern Iran since Neolithic era. Human activity in one form or the other on the Iranian Plateau stretching from the Caucasus Mountains and the Caspian Sea and the Aral Lake to the north, and the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean to the south, has flourished over millennia. The multitudinous contributions of the people of Iran to civilization in arts and architecture, science and mathematics, technology and medicine, religion, culture and literature toward the advancement of life and humanity, is historically recorded. Iran is the only country in the South/southwest Asia still using the solar-based calendar and celebrating the New Year at *vernal equinox* for millennia.

Today's Iranians are descendents of indigenous and a few Aryan tribes who arrived later on the Iranian plateau from central Asia and the Caucasus regions 3,500 years ago, mixed with the earlier Indo-European brethren (the Medes, the Parthians, the Sakas, and other indigenous inhabitants). They have interacted with, been invaded and occupied, exchanged cultural traits and a way of life with their neighbors in the vast Asiatic region. Iranian language, culture, norms, and lifelong aspirations have been markedly influenced by interactions with the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Phoenicians, In-

dians, Greeks, Mongols, Chinese, Arabs, Egyptians, Zanzibaris, Romans, and lastly, with the Russian-British-Americans and other Europeans during the last two hundred years. Thus, their ethnicity and culture are highly diverse due to such intermingling with so many others over time. Many people from the Iranian plateau have immigrated to other adjacent regions because of religious persecutions, to support military and political expansionism of their central government, or simply for better opportunities for survival. In fact, many Afghans, Albanians, Armenians, Croatians, People from the central Caucasus and central Asia like Ossetians of Georgia and the Chechnyans, the Tajiks, the Uyghurs from the northwest Chinese province of Xinxiang, the Kashmiris of the Himalayan foothills, people of Jewish descent,

ers to look and act more like Iranians rather than the other way around!

As almost all people of the world have tribal or clan identities, albeit lost or preserved, so do the Iranians. Iranians are diverse including Persian, **Guilaki, Mazandarani, Taleshi, Kurdish, Luri, Azari, Khorasani, Kermani, Shirazi, Belucchi, Kashani, Esfahani, Bandari, Turkmen,** and **Khuzestani** ethnicities. Iranians of the past and the present have co-founded and/or practiced diverse religions and beliefs as Sol invictism, Mazdakism, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, Islam, Mithraism, Christianity, Judaism, Gnosticism, Agnosticism, Mysticism, Atheism, and Baha'ism. In fact, Cyrus the Great of the Achaemenian Dynasty, circa 550 BCE, is credited as having enacted the First Declaration of Human Rights. Each of these clans of Iranian stocks, are

comprised of major family units, have their own Indo-European and other languages and dialects, foods and beverages, medicine, cultures and rituals. They all are, nonetheless, united as Iranian tribes and by the practice of a set of social activities and cultural norms, and cultural ritual commonalities that transcend their tribal or regional identities and provide a common uniting basis

for Iran as a whole nation. Iranian philosophers, scholars and poets of the past one thousand years as Omer Khayyam, Rumi, Ferdowsi, Hafez, Sa'adi, Avicenna, and Razes among others are renowned worldwide.

Many contemporary Iranians have certain positive qualities and behaviors in common. Some are universal, and some unique to them alone. They are conscious of three commandments in life, namely **good thoughts, good words and good deeds**, that can be traced back to Zoroastrianism of the first millennium BCE. If they themselves are the actual practitioners of these three mottos, or, if they expect others to abide by them, is a different story, however. Their Persian language and their manner of narrating stories, reciting poetry passed on heart to heart, or describing a phenomenon are

IRAN'S FUNDAMENTAL CULTURAL REFORMATIONS

PART ONE

DAVOOD N. RAHNI,
DECEMBER 2011, NEW YORK

the Kurds and most Shiites in Iraq, Kuwait, the UAE, and those along the southern edge of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, are of partial if not total Iranian descent or from the same ancestral stock. In addition, there are currently up to three million Iranians in the western diaspora, one million in the U.S. alone, who have mostly emigrated after the 1979 revolution and are recognized among the most educated and highly affluent citizens in their adopted countries. Some historians have concluded that the main reason why Iranians were not entirely dissolved into the numerous invaders' cultures as the Egyptians did, and somehow conserved their Persian language and pre-Islamic culture and heritage, is due to their sense of accommodation or even because they appealed to invading enemies and in so doing, they have transformed the intrud-

poetic and intertwined with metaphors, exaggerated fables, and figurative statements. They are particularly hospitable to strangers, and will share their own sustenance or even endanger their security to appease, please and protect non-Iranians or non-family members. Iranians rank very high among the ancient non-violent nations who live and let live. As if they partake in popularity contest, and when in particular dealing with a new acquaintance, they portray humbleness, but wish to receive praises and trust instantaneously. They tackle this by patronizing acts and complimentary remarks (*Taarofaat*)! And if such efforts do not work out in their favor, you would be blacklisted to them for life. They may love their own family members, although they rarely express it, and have a high expectation of perfectionism from others, especially from family members. Throughout life, Iranians think and strategize of saving not for themselves per se, but for their children, since their children's education and secure future, is extremely important, and, given top priority.

Iranians nostalgically revere and in fact carry many of their pre-Islamic culture; they still exhilaratingly commemorate vernal equinox *Norouz*, bonfire jumping, *Sizdah Bedar Picnic*, respect for sun, fire and water, *Mehregan*, *Tirgan*'s and *Yalda*'s summer and winter solstices, *Sadeh*, and ancient poetry, songs, dances and melodies, and as this sets a stark contrast to the observance of more somber Islamic conformities. Religious or not, most Iranians are spiritual nostalgically speaking,

reminiscing about their glorious past but with a shallow and somewhat superficial knowledge of history, and the direction of the future. They are poetically literate, and are informed and opinionated about current domestic and international affairs. Iranians are generally tolerant of the religion and beliefs of other than their own families or clans.

Throughout its history, Iran has for the most part and with isolated exceptions, not suffered, or imposed any state wide systematic racism against racial or religious minorities. However, a certain degree of caste system, based on piety, zealotness, wealth, tribal or family name or education, but not as regressive entrenched as the social caste hierarchy in India, remains pervasive. White haired seniors achieve a special stature in families or social circles. The above notwithstanding, there is no Iranian, despite his or her ethnic or religious affiliation, who does not carry almost the same genomic profile as every other Iranian in Iran, and, this even applies to the immediate regional neighbors from eastern Mediterranean Sea to the Ganji River and northern India on the East.

Notwithstanding, like any other nation on earth, there are a myriad of other not so positive behavioral or psychological traits that are attributed to Iranians, which need much reforming, both at the individual as well as societal levels, if Iran is to move itself out of a feudal, medieval mindset and into a progressive 21st century forward.

Iranians in general, are spiritual and

introspective in their approach to daily life routines and their purpose now and in the afterlife. Religious or not, they are mostly superstitious, especially during such desperate moments as when victimized, sickness, family death, divorce and marriage, and financial crisis. While they perceive what the future will bring with a degree of cautious cynical skepticism and thus noncommittally remain on the sidelines, they constantly reminisce about the "glorious" past with nostalgia, be it personal or the nation as a whole. Most Iranians, especially men, expect perfection from others, especially from siblings, children, spouses, families or even friends; nonetheless, they hold themselves at a higher alter from such prophetic high expectations. With the entry of new ideas or paradigm shifts in life, Iranians anxiously look to the arrival of a "savior" to sort things out and to establish the just "Kingdom of God!"

For those with religious convictions, this takes the form of expecting "hidden" Mehdi, the 12th Shiite Imam and Mohammad's tenth generation grandson, to return (he is said to have mysteriously disappeared and will return from occultation on the Day of Judgment). For Westernophiles this takes the form of expecting the British or the Americans to arrive and bring them "justice", freedom and fortune. And for nationalists, they yearn for a national warrior of magnanimous proportion, a Rostam, Kaveh, Arash or Syavash as majestically revered in *Shah-nameh*, to re-appear and save the nation.

to be continued

Two scenes of a street theater in Tehran



Photo : Saeed Karimi nejad

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Photo : Saeed Karimi nejad

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NOROUZ

In the Islamic Era

The article below on Norouz by the late Professor Shapur Shahbazi (1942-2006) first appeared in the Encyclopedia Iranica on November 15, 2009. Because of space constraints the article has been shortened. We recommend that you seek out the article in its entirety.

INTRODUCTION

The Islamic conquest altered many Iranian traditions specifically associated with national ideology, imperial institutions, and Zoroastrian rituals.

Although Norouz was an established symbol of these three aspects, it did survive while less significant festivals were eclipsed by their Islamic rivals and gradually became abandoned by indifferent Mongol and Turkish rulers or hostile clerical authorities during Safavid and Qajar periods.

Norouz survived because it was so profoundly engrained in Iranian traditions, history, and cultural memory that Iranian identity and Norouz mutually buttressed each other, and the emergence of a distinctly Persian Muslim society—and later the emergence of a nation state with the advent of the Safavids—legitimized the ancient national festival and allowed it to flourish with slight modifications or elaborations.

Indeed, as will be set out in subsequent sections, the incremental expansion of Norouz ceremonies from the Safavids, through the Qajars, to the Pahlavi period enabled the court to parade its power and strengthened its attempts at forming a stronger central authority.

Besides, it explains the establishment of increasingly sophisticated and protocol-ridden royal audiences with all the pomp and ceremony they could muster. Like all rituals, therefore, it both manifested a belief or ideology and reinforced it through an annual recital.

It was precisely because Norouz was associated from the outset with cultural memories of the splendor and divinely bestowed power of the royal courts of pre-Islamic Persia that it was attractive to rulers, from the Abbasid caliphs to the Pahlavis. Along with its many ceremonies, and most notably that of gift exchange, it provided the rulers with an alternative source of affirming and enhancing their power and prestige through a strictly non-Islamic channel; for unlike religious festivals, they could appear and be celebrated as the focal point and the peerless heroes of the occasion.

While most of the traditions now associated with Norouz have been inherited from the past usages, no comprehensive history of Norouz in the Islamic period has been written. Such an account must be pieced together from occasional notices in general and local histories, brief records by geographers, and scattered references in works of poets and storytellers. Only for recent times do we have detailed information in the form

of eyewitness reports by travelers and, more importantly, studies of contemporary practices throughout Persia and countries affected by Persian culture. But even these are problematic, as the former category mainly describes court usages and the latter usually gives uncritical narratives embellished with rhetorical and, frequently, fanciful interpretations.

HISTORY UP TO THE SAFAVID PERIOD

The Arabs captured the capital of the Sasanian Empire on a Norouz day, taking the celebrating inhabitants by surprise. Henceforth, the early Arab governors forcefully levied heavy Norouz and Mehragān taxes on the conquered people. The Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs retained this onerous burden of taxation on their conquered subjects, but, at the same time, they also celebrated both Norouz and Mehragān with considerable relish and pomp, thereby helping to keep alive Norouz and its many traditions.

The Norouz festivities were by no means restricted to the royal courts. It was “a solemn feast through all of Persia, ... observed not only in the great cities, but celebrated with extraordinary rejoicings in every little town, village, and hamlet”

Good omens appearing before Norouz included fires and light glowing on the western bank of the Tigris. Tasting honey thrice in the morning of Norouz and lighting three candles before speaking were thought to ward off diseases. People exchanged presents (notably sugar), kindled fire (to consume all corruptions), bathed in the streams and sprinkled water on each other.

A detailed account of Norouz celebration in the 10th-century Isfahan is given by Ebn Ḥawqal: “During the Norouz festival, people gather for seven days in the bazaar of Karina, a suburb of Isfahan, engaged in merriment; they enjoy various food and go around visiting decorated shops. The inhabitants and those coming from other places to participate in this festival, spend a good deal of money, wear beautiful clothes, and take part in gatherings for plays and merrymaking. Skillful singers, both male and female, take their places side by side on the riverside along the palaces.

The whole atmosphere is filled with joy and happiness. Many assemble on rooftops and in the markets, engage in festivities, drinking, eating, and consuming sweets, not letting an idle moment to pass by. ... No one disturbs them, for their rulers have allowed this festival, and it is a well-established

tradition. It is said that besides the abundance of fruits, drinks, and food brought in and sold for a meager price, the expenses of the night of the spring equinox amount to 200,000 dirhams. As for the prices, 2,000-dirham weight of finest grapes costs a mere five dirhams” (see also the eyewitness description by Māfarro and the testimony of Nasafi.

RELIGIOUS VIEWS ON NOROUZ

Opposition to ancient Iranian observances was natural in a strictly Muslim society, and a few attempts at restricting Norouz rites have already been noted. Some claimed that the Prophet had told those who celebrated Norouz and Mehragān that God had given them two superior feasts, namely, al-Fer (end of fasting month) and al-Nar (the Feast of Sacrifice; al-Ālusi. Others asserted that ‘Ali b. Abi āleb had said “for me a feast day is that on which I do not sin.” Nāer-e osrow expressed “shame” (’ār) when hearing about the auspiciousness of Norouz:

“although throughout the world Norouz is dear and pleasant to the ignorant (gar če be jahān ’aziz-ast o oš zi nādān), to me it verily appears as unsavory and demeaning (nāoš o k’ār).”

Abu āmed Mohammad Gazāli (1058-1111) declared that all festive acts must be abandoned and one should fast on such days and not even mention the name of Norouz and Sada so that these “Zoroastrian observances” become “degraded and turned into perfectly ordinary days and no name or trace of them shall remain.”

In contrast, many legitimized Norouz as an Islamic Iranian feast. A tradition attributed to the Prophet (hadith) describes him accepting a bowl of sweets as the Norouz gift and blessing the day as the occasion of renovation of life with its special custom of sprinkling water on each other as the symbol of divine rainfall.

LATER HISTORY

The festive celebration of Norouz during the Safavid period is well attested. In preparation to it, commanders, ministers, favored officials, rich merchants, and guild leaders were given pieces of land in the vast park of Bā-e Naqš-e Jahān of Isfahan to decorate and illuminate. Each group set up tents with canopies of silk and brocade, and erected booths variously embellished; servants offered drinks and sweets to large crowds for several days. In the royal palace, a large table cloth (sofra) was spread on the floor of the Hall of Mirrors (tālār-e ā’ina), and on it were placed large bowls of water and plates of various fruits, greeneries, sweets, and colored eggs.

Nāder Shah Afshar (r. 1736-47) always celebrated Norouz by holding a feast and distributing gifts and robes of honor, as did Karim Khan Zand (r. 1751-79) and his successors (see bibliography). In the Qajar period (1779-1925), the public practices were similar to the contemporary observances, but the official celebration (salām, lit. ‘greeting’) underwent elaborations. Generally, the shah received guests consisting of kinsmen, military and civil official, leading religious figures, tribal chiefs, poets, heads of various guilds, and, increasingly, foreign notables.

The table of haft sin was prepared in front of the Peacock Throne in the Museum Hall (tālār-e muza), and dignitaries gathered around it: military officials headed by the crown prince on the one side, civil officials headed by the chief finance minister (mostowfi-al-mamālek) on the other side;

the leading clergy, Qajar princes carrying royal arms and insignia, and cabinet ministers headed by the prime minister (adr-e a’ am) flanked the throne.

The Master of Ceremonies announced the arrival of the shah, who appeared bedecked in jewelry and proceeded, among the bowing of the silent audience, to the throne and took his seat.

The court orator (aib-al-mamālek) would read a sermon in praise of the Prophet and the first Imam until the court astronomer announced the turning of the year. The shah offered his felicitations first to the ulama and then to the officials, recited some verses of the Qor’ān, drank a sip of water, and presented gifts (coins inside small red-silk bags) to the clergymen, who took their leave forthwith. Then the music band played cheerful tunes, and the shah distributed gifts to the audience and left for the inner quarter of the palace (andarun).

On the second day, a general audience was held in the Marble Palace (salām-e āmm-e tat-e marmar). The shah and senior Qajar princes carrying royal regalia assembled, together with civil and military officials, received foreign envoys and presented them with gifts, paying particular attention to the Ottoman ambassador.

Then the shah sat on a bejeweled chair placed upon the Marble Throne, and his aid announced the start of the public (āmma) audience, whereupon music bands played, cannons roared, drums beat, and trumpets sounded. The poet laureate recited a poem in honor of Norouz and in praise of the shah, and the official orator closed the ceremony with a flamboyantly eulogistic address.

On the third day, the salām-e sar-e dar, a truly jovial public occasion, was held in the Marble Palace. The shah appeared on a balcony accompanied by officials as well as favorite womenfolk and attendants, and the public participated in the festivities. In recent times, the official celebrations were condensed into one day of public audience, broadcast since the 1940s by the radio and since the 1960s by the television. These media have tended to standardize the Norouz ceremonies and, consequently, a great deal of regional variations is fast disappearing.

IN CONTEMPORARY PERSIA

Norouz remains the single most important national fes-



tival of the Iranians who celebrate it with considerable zeal and pomp (Zoroastrian practices are treated separately). In the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution of 1979, attempts were made by some influential clerical authorities to dampen public enthusiasm for Norouz, and there was a discernible tension between the various factions on the amount of freedom and scope allowed for the display of public jubilation and display of nationalistic sentiments during the Norouz period.

But this somewhat austere and puritanical approach was soon toned down: partly because of the Iran-Iraq war and the sentiments that it aroused, and partly because of the overall policy of the leaders of the Islamic Republic in the post-Khomeyni period to depict the regime as both religious and culturally proud of its ancient heritage.

In this way, the fate of this festival is akin to the reception of that other 'Iranian' symbol, the Shāh-nāma, which also suffered only a brief and partial eclipse. Moreover, as has already been stated, the present-day religious authorities have a veritable arsenal of literature at hand in the voluminous corpus of religious discourse from the Safavids onwards that incorporate Norouz into Shi'ite lore and popular anecdotal literature.

Nowadays in cities, especially Tehran, hāji Firuz performs the Norouz-khāni. In rural areas, many people still greet Norouz by collecting rainwater for their Norouz sofra, and by kindling bonfires on rooftops, in alleys or in courtyards. In towns this has become an elaborate ceremony on the evening of the last Wednesday of the year to kindle seven or nine fires and to jump over them while chanting a verse.

Until recently, a few days before Norouz wooden arches

were erected at street junctions, bazaars, and shops, and they were lavishly decorated with variegated carpets, tapestry, pictures, mirrors, flowers, and greenery. At present, fruits, sweets, and colored eggs are placed in containers together with pitchers of rose water and pure water.

On the eve of Norouz special kinds of bread are baked, and a meal (usually fish with rice pilaf mixed with herbs) is consumed. Lights from bonfires illuminate many a rural house and village, and candles burn on graves, often accompanied by dishes of sweets, again as offerings to the dead. Meanwhile festive bands go around singing, dancing, and playing music, usually receiving gifts from neighborhood families.

The exact moment of the "turning of the year" is announced in advance. In anticipation, families gather around the haft-sin table, many reciting prayers intended to impart good will to all. As soon as the year "turns," children and in-laws get up and kiss the hands of the father and mother (or other elders if present), and offer their greetings.

They themselves are in return kissed on the cheek (males) or forehead (female), and given their gifts (usually new banknote, occasionally gold or silver coins), and then the junior members of the family go through the same procedure with their elder siblings or in-laws. Children specially love Norouz. They do not need to work, go to school, or be restricted in play; they wear new clothes, receive gifts, and play various games, particularly the "egg-cracking" and tipcat similar to baseball and played with wooden sticks. The following days are spent in visiting friends, going on picnics, and, increasingly, traveling to other cities and countries. ■

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Through A Child's Eyes

MY HERITAGE



Ryan Whitworth

My heritage is from very different cultures. My father's ancestors are from England, Ireland, and Sweden. My father's ancestors all moved to this country many years ago. All of my mother's ancestors are from Iran. I have decided to write about my Persian heritage and interview my grandfather about Iran because he is an immigrant.

MY GRANDFATHER'S LIFE IN IRAN

My grandfather was born in a small town called Ghuchan. It is in the northeast part of Iran. He grew up in a larger city called Mashad. He had a very nice childhood. He had a big family with a lot of siblings and cousins around him. He enjoyed studying and acting in plays. He graduated from medical school in Tehran in 1964 at Tehran University. He met my grandmother around that time and they got married in 1966. They left Iran for England one month after they got

married in August 1966.

LIFE IN ENGLAND

My grandfather moved to England because he wanted a better medical education. He began his training as a doctor in a hospital outside of London. He didn't speak very good English at that time so it made his job harder. Papa said that his English got better as the months went by.

My grandparents were very homesick in England and missed their families very much. They became much happier when my mother was born 2 years later. My grandparents decided at that time that they could have better opportunity in the United States. In February 1969 my grandparents and mother immigrated to the United States. So that makes my mother an immigrant too!

LIFE IN THE USA

My grandfather finished his medical training in Baltimore, Maryland and then moved to New Jersey in 1971.

My grandparents loved the U.S. because of all of their freedoms. They especially loved that they had free speech. In Iran there wasn't free speech. If anybody said anything bad about the government, they would go to jail or worse.

My grandfather has now lived in this country for over 40 years and is proud to be an American. He is also very proud of his Persian heritage.

He keeps in touch with his culture by speaking Persian, eating Persian foods, and spending time with his Persian friends. He also publishes a magazine called *Persian Heritage*. It is a magazine that teaches younger generations about their Persian culture. It also educates Americans about Iran.

My grandparents and mother used to travel to Iran a lot to visit their large family. Unfortunately it has been many years since they have been there because the government is unfriendly. My grandparent's hope is to be able to go back to Iran one day because it is a beautiful country.

IRAN

Iran is located in the southern and western part of Asia called the Middle East. Iran is the 18th largest country in the world. It is bordered by many countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkey and water such as the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf.

The land is very diverse. Iran is one of the most mountainous countries in the world. The highest mountain peak is over 18,000 feet. There are also deserts and rain forests. Iran has many natural resources but the main resource is oil.

The capital of Iran is Tehran and the population is 78 million people.

The official language is Persian. The main religion is Islam but other religions are followed such as Christianity, Judaism, and Zoroastrians.

The government used to be ruled by the king or Shah. In

1979 there was a revolution and the Shah was overthrown and replaced by a religious government. Many people are unhappy with this government and feel they treat people unfairly, but the citizens are afraid to speak up.

Iran was originally called Persia and ruled by many great kings such as Cyrus the Great. Persia was a huge and powerful empire, which covered a large area including countries like Afghanistan and even Egypt. The great center of Persia was Persepolis. The kings lived there and built many great buildings. Many of those ancient buildings are still present today.

Eventually, the empire began to get smaller after being defeated by the Greeks and Romans. The Persian Empire was known for many great inventions in architecture, poetry, music, science and art.

The original religion in Persia was Zoroastrian. It is an ancient religion that believes in God. When the Arabs invaded Persia, they forced the Persians to convert to Islam. Zoroastrians are still in Iran today but there are not many of them.

PERSIAN CUSTOMS

Persians celebrate a wonderful holiday called *Norouz*. It is the most important holiday of the year. It is the Persian New Year. *Norouz* is celebrated on the first day of spring, which is usually around March 21st.

Norouz means “new day”. Families get together around a



special table called the *Haft Seen*. The table has grass, sweets, coins, flowers and many other things, which symbolize good luck and new life in the new year.

Grownups give children money and they eat a special dinner of herb rice and fish.

There is another celebration called *Charshambe Suri*. This is celebrated on the last Wednesday before the new-year. Everyone jumps over fire to get rid of bad luck and have a big party afterwards.

I have learned so much more about my Persian ancestry and heritage from my grandfather. I hope to visit Iran one day. I also hope to visit all my ancestors’ countries one day. ■

