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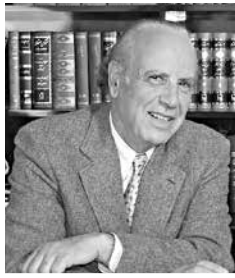
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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Over the past three months there have been rumors circulating regarding a change to the forty-year reign of Iran's present regime. Along with the rumors came several individuals, with different agendas and political views, hoping to return to Iran and be given a leadership position. They have aspirations of returning to a country, rich in human and natural resources, and saving it. These individuals prematurely are celebrating amongst themselves and at gatherings attended by American leaders. They anticipated that within a short period of time Iranians would be holding these same celebrations on Iran's soil, lifting their glasses and toasting the new regime and leadership.

Their actions, aspirations and promises were heard by the people of Iran who are desperate for a legitimate change. The people in Iran also heard many threats being made against Iran, by US leadership and the Secretary of State. None of the threats, however, included a regime change. Soon the bubbles in their celebrating Champaign toasts fizzled along with their dreams.

Demonstrations began throughout the country. During these demonstrations there were lives lost, each one precious, and once again prisons were being filled with "so called" political prisoners. The people of Iran's patience with current regime and its corruption, inflation and broken promises are wearing thin. They are frustrated that once again, their dreams of the world seeing the truth about Iran, a country that throughout history was founded and led by wisdom, is again facing the possibility of becoming a target of war. They are afraid that they and the country they so love will never become part of the modern world. They are saddened that Iran and Iranians are being driven further away from respect by the outside world. They hate that admiration for their achievements is being replaced by hatred. They are troubled that their status in the outside world of being peaceful, intelligent and achievers is being changed to "terrorists." They fear that the arms that use to greet them in friendship and acceptance are now cold, shutting them out. They are sickened by the fact that they and Iran, because of its leadership are being called terrorists and a terrorist supporting nation.

After the Revolution many Iranians were fortunate to save themselves and their families by escaping Iran. Their journey was treacherous taking them over dangerous mountains. They disguised themselves as sheep to avoid being beaten and robbed by thugs and thieves. They made their way across the borders of Turkey and Pakistan thinking they would find a new life. Little did they know that they would be confronted with a different kind of threat; they were met with resentment and animosity. This same story plagued those who continue to leave Iran. Some find themselves in the refugee prisons of Australia, some show up on the shores of Turkey, Greece and England. Some arrive with their mouths sewn to demonstrate the atrocities committed against them. Others drowned because of boating accidents. All of them suffering the journey, the elements, the humiliation to taste a freedom absent from their own country.

Adding to this undeserving plight of the Iranians are the West's new harsh sanctions, in fact the sanctions have been labeled to be the harshest ever to be placed on a country. Everyone knows that these sanctions will not remotely affect the leadership of that country but will continue to devastate its citizens. Poverty, starvation, homelessness and complete despair plagues them. It is the hope of the West and its' allies that by demoralizing and squeezing every ounce of life from the citizens of Iran that they will fight against this regime. What the West has not learned about Iranians is that they are a proud people who love their history and its soil under its feet. Doesn't the West remember that the sanctions and the devastation it caused on the people of Iran during the eight-year war with Iraq, did not weaken the people's loyalty to their soil and country? They will fight to the finish not to have Iran cut up like other nations around them. Does the West not understand that the eight-year war did not weaken the power of the regime but rather strengthened it? When will the West learn that placing sanctions effects only the citizens and results in more suffering for them. Factories and businesses are shutting down and livelihoods eliminated. Out of frustration Iranians are taking to the streets in demonstration of their severe hardships. Instead of being listened to by their own government or that of the West they are being met with the guns and knives of this present regime. They are caught between the rejection of the West and the brutality of their own government. Children are becoming orphans and couples' widowers and widows. Survival is found in prostitution.

Sadly, Mashhad, the holy city in Iran, a symbol of purity and religious value, is now the city with the highest number of prostitutes, unethical and moral behavior. The religious leaders (Mullahs) in the City are using rhetoric to promote purity to sell their virginity and to sell them off as prostitutes. They price their purity and their navelless based on their chastity. They entertain their Iraqi guests and promote the idea that by sleeping with these individuals they are giving back to Islam.

Instead of using all the donations and the Razavi Funds that encompass a large amount of wealth development to fix the infrastructure of the city and contribute to state government taxes, they lock up the boxes of donations and go about their corrupt ways of pimping and prostituting. I wonder Ayatollah Alamolhoda, Mashad's religious leader and Friday prayer bristler (who was the head of this clan and should be prosecuted for his actions), would be willing to sell, to their Iraqi guests, their own daughters, wives, sisters or granddaughters for the good of God and advancement of Islam. Listening to this man speak with his projective voice makes me and should make everyone shiver in disgust. It should make us weep and feel regret and sorrow for these helpless victims. How have Iranians gone from holding degrees and employment selling their personal belongings, their assets and now their bodies and the integrity of their sisters, daughters and granddaughters to put food on the table to survive.

And, if these people can survive the physical will they be able to survive the emotional and disease? It repulses me!!!

I remember many years ago one of my visits to Mashad to visit my family. At that time the economy was not too bad. While there, I went site seeing to places I had not seen for a long time and to see the new sites. I was fascinated by the changes in the infrastructure. As I was enjoying my day a young ten-year-old boy with a very innocent look on his face started pestering me to polish my shoes. To be honest all my life, I have always held a grudge against polishing shoes. Even during my military service some of my room mates would end up polishing my boots because it was always a bother to me. The boy persisted, and I continuously ignored him until I looked at his face. His eyes were filled with tears. I asked him, "what are you doing at this time of night alone on the streets and why are you crying?"

He told me that he had not been able to earn any money all day and if he went home empty handed his mom would punish him. Within seconds my own tears began streaming down my face. All I could do at that moment was to empty my pockets and give him all the money I had on me. After I did this he turned to me with a face filled with pride, "Sir but I did not polish your shoes. Why are you giving me this money? I am not a beggar!" His comments saddened me even more and suddenly I realized that this young boy was stronger, braver, honest and more of a gentleman than me. I then asked him, "If I let you polish my shoes will you take money for it?" He responded, "Of course I will but only for the amount I earned for the work." I could not believe the integrity of this young boy. I was so shaken by his response I begged him to please take the money because it was my wish and it would make me very happy.

To this day I remember his face and that conversation. (Yes, in the end he took the money and in his sweet Mashadi accent thanked me and started to polish my shoes.) I noticed that he was wearing torn up, oversized shoes. Quietly I asked him why his shoes were so much bigger than his actual foot size. He told me that his shoes were his older brothers and that they only had one pair in his house. They had to share the shoes. He got to wear them when he went to work. These statements frazzled me even more. I asked the two people with me to empty their pockets and give me all the money they had on them. I then handed it to the boy and wished him well. He thanked me and said a prayer, then disappeared into the night. This event goes back more than 30 years and as I said remains a vivid memory. In fact, I might have told this story once before in an editorial.

But today, with the crisis taking place in Iran, this story though holds an important message. I thought about what would have become of this little boy, had we not given him this assistance. I thought about what would have happened to him if he didn't have money to bring home that day. I thought about where he was today. I thought about what kind of life has he led. I wondered if he fought in one of the wars outside of Iran or maybe the eight-year war with Iraq. Did he become a martyr? I thought about his mother, did she send her children to work so she did not have to sell herself to put bread on the table. Then I thought maybe there were no Imams (Friday prayer bristlers) at the time, preaching to women to go prostitute themselves for survival.

Thinking these thoughts caused my face to become wrinkled with anger. BUT then I thought, just maybe this boy, with his handsome face, had become an important successful man who could provide for his entire family. That thought made me smile.

My thoughts came back quickly to the corruption taking place in Iran, the mullahs stealing the wealth of the people, draining the banks, stealing from donation boxes and transferring the money to foreign banks overseas. I came across the news story of an Ayatollah's relative, who by taking millions if not trillions of (Trillions) Tumans from the bank caused the institution to become bankrupt. He then changed the money into dollars placed it in a truck and on his way to Turkey he was caught, and the money was seized by the Turks. (No one knows what happened to him.) Unfortunately Turkey profited tremendously by his actions and the actions of the corrupt government in Iran. It is of interest to note that a law that would have resulted in the confiscation of possessions of these corrupt individuals and would have exposed the Mullahs, was never passed in the house.

Another item in the news is Mr. Rouhani, the Iranian president. He appears to be sinking deeper into trouble and losing his credibility and popularity. He is slowly losing his grip with the young Mullahs in Qom. They are putting up posters that threaten to replace him and strip him of his powers; seems to be the same thing they did to Rafsanjani.

These events taking place in Iran today: threats against the presidency, threats against his life, from the West, the warnings from the French government recommending a travel ban on Iran by their citizens, flight restrictions, the cutoff of airlines flying to Iran and the chaos over the treaty on the Caspian Sea are bringing strong reaction by the people. They are comparing Mr. Rouhani's agreement on this treaty with the events during the Qajar dynasty, when half of the Caspian Sea was given to the Russians and then referred to as the Dead Sea. That treaty took place during a time when the people of Iran were vulnerable. The people were taken advantage by the Russians. Today the people are again vulnerable and will be taken advantage of by the Chinese, Russians and others. Only the future holds the answer to the outcome of this treaty and other actions. It is noteworthy to mention the influence the Chinese have in this region especially Kish Island. Rumors are that there is a twenty-five-year lease with the Chinese for this island to use the fishing resources and other natural resources. This should not for one second look to anyone as business as usual. It should be looked as the beginning of a process to sell off Iranian land and water rights to outsiders. Let's not forget the sale of drinking water to Kuwait while Iran's own districts are suffering from water shortages, i.e. Khouzestan, neighboring and southern districts. For Iran and its people, I pray that these rumors do not become realities.

As always, I wish you, Iranians and the soil of Iran for better days ahead filled with peace and tranquility.

Shahrokh Alavi

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WORDS ARE NOT ENOUGH

Dear Editor:

I have been a correspondent and subscriber of your prestigious publication for some years and became a strong advocate of this publication. The varieties of interesting and highly informative articles, and your English section attract Iranians in and out of Iran. It also is interesting for those who have been born in the USA or came here at an early age. In fact, it is interesting for non-Iranians who are connected in some way to Iranians. I also would like to thank you for announcing the name and professions of those Iranian-Americans who became shining stars in American society. The latest of those was my daughter Mrs. Nazakhtar Nikakhtar, Assistant Secretary of Commerce who was benefited by your great publication.

This kind of acknowledgment will certainly encourage other citizens to try harder to reach their future goals.

I would also like to suggest if your publication is financially able to provide some free copies of journals to some well attended and recognized Iranian-Americans or purely American Universities or institution in those some sizable Iranians students are studying. If for any reasons, I have to share part of this financial responsibility I stand eager to do this.

Respectfully yours,
Bijan Nikakhtar

AMAZING COVER

Dear Editor:

When I receive a copy of *Persian Heritage* I am always happy to see the picture of an Iranian, who has done some-

thing outstanding. The spring issue, however, though lacking a human picture, is just amazing. The painting from the 19th Century Qajar Dynasty, represented the distinction of Iranian art and artists with their use of colors. I turned it over to find the beautiful doors of the Tabatabai House in Kashan, Iran ... wow! I only wish your readers could see this and many other magnificent sites of Iran.

Keep up the good work.

KIS, NJ

YOUR EDITORIAL

Dear Editor:

I often wonder how you find the material you use in writing your editorial. This one on Mr. Motiei, like the others chills your soul, makes you think, and certainly makes you reflect about life now and life then. Life is like the seasons, never constant, always changing and secretive in both. I pray, as you do that the season under which Iranians are now living in, sooner rather than later, changes for them. I hope a new season will bring them the freedoms and respect they deserve and that the world deserves. It is unfortunate that the news media seems to dwell more on the negative of Iran rather than the decency of its citizens. Politics, sadly plays a more important role than the needs and the wants of the people. I am not sure this only happens in Iran. I think it is a world wide problem that is fueled by social media.

Please continue to write those thought provoking editorials. Your reflections back are such a beautiful quality in your writing.

HN, CA



Wome's and men's kabaddi teams won two gold medals in Jakarta Asian Games, 2018.



An Iranian Doctor Receives the Highest Award by the Police Benevolent Association (PBA)

THE SILVER LIFE AWARD



Dr. Ali Mazandarani (Dr. Maz) of MedWell Spine, Osteoarthritis & Neuropathy Center in Midland Park, NJ was recently awarded the Silver Life Award. The highest honor bestowed upon a citizen by PBA Local 197. Each year only a few select citizens who have demonstrated their continued support to the law enforcement community are given this prestigious award. By way of example, Paterson Police PBA Local 1 has given one award per decade for the last sixty years.

“The Silver Life Award is highly coveted award,” said John Welsh, President of PBA Local 197. “We go to great lengths to identify only those who truly are a pillar of our community and from those select few the honoree is chosen. Dr. Maz has continually shown his

support for the law enforcement community and for both Bergen and Passaic counties. Awarding him a Silver Life Award is an honor he deserves.”

During an interview with Dr. Maz, we learned that he has been treating law enforcement patients for over 20 years. MedWell is an integrated multi-specialty facility in Midland Park which focuses on non-surgical orthopedic care, testosterone therapy, medical weight loss treatments and providing alternative therapies for patients suffering from chronic ailments. His goal is simple, relieving the patient’s pain as quickly as possible without the intervention of medications or surgery.

As a chiropractic physician, I have spent the majority of my life educating the public and bringing awareness to non-standard medical care. Our office has helped hundreds of patients with chronic bone on bone diagnosis with treatments such as stem cell injections with astounding and continual results. Our team is known to go the extra mile to find the hidden cause of these patient’s chronic symptoms. This includes patients with Diabetes and Thyroid issues. Unfortunately, many, including law enforcement officers live under a tremendous amount of physical, emotional and chemical stress. This in itself is a huge contributor to their symptoms. We don’t test like the rest. We provide complete body scan to find and fix the cause in many.”

“Dr. Maz deserves this award more than anyone else,” said Daniel Del Valle, editor of The Blue Magazine. “I’ve known him for a decade and have watched him consistently support the law enforcement community. He’s full of energy, passion and empathy for others. Dr. Maz is a true example of someone who loves what they do. I remember there was a time that Paterson Police department laid off many officers and as a result these officers lost their insurance for their entire family. When I brought this to Dr. Maz’s attention, he stepped up and offered to treat them and their families, at no cost, until they were able to get their coverage back. This was such a generous and helpful gesture for those families that were affected. You don’t see this type of empathy very often. It’s not every day you find a doctor like Dr. Maz. I am proud to know him, and to see him receive this prestigious award.”

Dr. Maz resides in Franklin Lakes, New Jersey with his wife Morgan and their three sons, Arya, Amir, and Arman. Although Dr. Maz is a dedicated doctor who insists on being hands on at the office, he is passionate about spending quality time with his family. On any given Sunday you will find him at a family outing, hosting a charitable event or just simply spending a quiet day at home. Whatever his day off brings, you can rest assured that the boys and his wife are by his side.

Ancient Armenian Sites Being Restored In Northwest Iran



Tehran Times—Restoration work has commenced for three Armenian sites that stand adjacent to the UNESCO-registered Monastery of Saint Thaddeus in northwestern Iran. The “Sandoukht mausoleum and temple, as well as the Zakarius church are being renovated,” ISNA quoted Hassan Sepehrfar, a provincial tourism official.

The St. Thaddeus Monastery has always been a place of high spiritual value for Christians and other inhabitants in the region. Every summer it hosts gatherings of pilgrims coming from Iran and Armenia to observe special religious ceremonies such as Holy Communion and baptism. Together with the St. Stepanos Monastery and the Chapel of Dzordzor, St. Thaddeus was placed on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2008 under the title “Armenian Monastic Ensembles of Iran.”

Iran’s Castle and Several Other Buildings on the UNESCO List

The Girl’s castle in Fars province of Iran and several other historical places in Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Kenya and several other countries have been registered on the UNESCO list of legacies.

This remains of the Sassanid era is located in Firoozabad, Fars province. According to the Hamshahri website, the castle is enclosed in three directions on the north, west, south with mountain cliffs with impenetrable height, and on every rock the tall rainforest and watch-towers built on the east side, more than a kilometer away from the castle of a solid stone wall It was drawn to prevent people from entering. The castle is made of coarse stone and its facade rocks are carved.

**IRAN
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An official at the Ministry of Agriculture said that Iran stands at third place in world of walnut production. Shokrollah Hajivand maintained that the average product performance will approach the global average. He noted walnut product performance in Iran on a land area as large as 1.5 to 2.5 tons per hectare and said, “the head branch of walnut trees were pruned last year in order to breed and modernize the walnut gardens.”

He added that native walnut orchards have been planted in the provinces of Khorasan Razavi, Ardebil and Kordestan on a land area as large as one hectare. Planning is underway to rehabilitate and breed walnut orchards in the country on a land area as large as 10,000 hectares this year.

He put the total land area of walnut gardens in the country at 157,000 hectares, which had produced about 260,000 tons of walnut in 2013. Hajivand also put the total land area of walnut gardens in the world at 1.2 million hectares. Iran is ranked second and third in the world in terms of land area in cultivation of walnut and production volume, respectively, China and the US are ranked first and second in walnut production.

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Russian Railways Launches 1.2 Billion Euro Project In Iran

Source: Press TV

Russian Railways has begun the 1.2 billion-euro electrification of the Garmsar-Ince Burun railway line in Iran, which stretches to Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, linking Central Asia to the Persian Gulf and beyond.

Russian Railways CEO Oleg Belozeroz and Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development Abbas Akhoundi attended the start of operations, coming in the wake of the US decision to leave the JCPOA nuclear deal and reimpose sanctions on Tehran.

“This is the biggest sign that the JCPOA is firmly and strongly in force. Despite all pressures and threats by (US President Donald) Trump, a 1.2 billion-euro was launched today,” Akhoundi said.

Construction engineering company RZD International LLC, a subsidiary Russian Railways, is the main contractor in the project. The Russian government has also undertaken to provide 85% of funds for its implementation.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has permitted the remaining 15% of the credit needed in the project to come from the National Development Fund of Iran, Akhoundi said. “This is an important project in terms of economics and upgrade of the rail transport industry. The most important point is that we will witness a technological change in the transportation industry in Iran. We are transforming from diesel locomotives to electric locomotives,” he said.

Belozeroz said the project will double the maximum speed on the link to 120 km per hour and raise its capacity fourfold to 10 million tonnes a year.

“It will also increase safety and reduce emissions into the atmosphere. All this creates conditions for the growth of cargo turnover along the International North-South Transport Corridor and intensification of economic relations in the Caspian region,” Belozeroz said.

The International North-South Transport Corridor is a 7,200-km multimode network of ship, rail, and road route connecting India, Iran, Azerbaijan, and Russia.

The project launched on Monday involves electrifying the 495-km line linking Garmsar near Tehran to Ince Burun on the Turkmenistan border.

The contract covers design, sourcing of materials and equipment and construction of stations and tunnels, traction substations, section pillars, duty posts of the contact station and the power supply administration building.

Iran's rail sector has become a magnet for rail engineering and rolling stock firms from all over the world, but European companies are most likely to lose out to their Russian and Chinese rivals in the wake of Trump's decision to reimpose sanctions on Tehran.

According to Swiss firm Stadler Rail's sales chief Peter Jenelten, “the craziest thing about the story” is that US sanctions should benefit Russia and China in the first place. His remarks came last month as Stadler Rail said it was ditching a \$1.4 billion railway deal in Iran because of Trump's decision on the Islamic Republic.

Russian Railways First Vice-President Alexander Misharin said in April Iran had proposed railway electrification projects worth 3 billion euros to Russia.

The Russians have announced readiness to electrify the 600 km railway route between Tehran and the northwestern city of Tabriz.

In July 2017, Russia's largest manufacturer of locomotives and rail equipment, CJSC Transmashholding, signed a 2.5 billion euro deal with IDRO Group in Tehran for joint production of rolling stock in Iran. ■



Climbers for Peace Trio Bound for Volcanic Peak in Iran

Guy Kovner, the Press Democrat, June 28, 2018



Three Santa Rosa, California men embarked on a mission to climb a world-famous mountain and promote peace in a land many Americans would consider off limits.

Their goal was to stand at the summit of Mount Damavand on July 7. At 18,605 feet, it's the highest volcano in Asia and rated

the 12th most prominent peak in the world.

No technical climbing skills are required, but breathing the thin, cold air at high altitude — where the lungs take in 40 to 50 percent less oxygen than they do at sea level — is the greatest physical challenge.

And then there's the political challenge.

Damavand, a graceful volcanic cone cloaked in snow much of the year, including now, stands about 50 miles from Tehran, the capital of Iran, one of the seven nations on President Donald Trump's travel ban and the one he called in withdrawing from the nuclear deal last month a "murderous regime."

Fred Ptucha, a retired financial advisor, acknowledged at Tuesday's Santa Rosa City Council meeting the venture to Iran is the "most audacious goal in terms of political risk."

But it's the 11th expedition for the Climbers for Peace group, co-founded by Ptucha in 1997, and the mission is about extending an olive branch and perhaps, he told the council, making "another tragic war in the Middle East less likely to happen."

Three Climbers for Peace members from Utah will join Ptucha, 75, and the two other Santa Rosa men — Xavier Polk, 65, and Dave Wahlstrom, 71 — in Iran. They plan to climb with a group of Iranian mountaineers and unfurl the American and Iranian flags at Damavand's peak, which takes in a view of the Caspian Sea 43 miles north on the Iranian coast.

That gesture, filmed by Al Jazeera, "will send a powerful message of cooperation," Ptucha said.

His group calls it "citizen diplomacy," and the concept is simple: Ordinary people from countries whose governments have been at odds train together, "build trust and cooperation and then summit a big mountain."

Previous expeditions have gone up Mount Olympus in Greece, Mount Elbrus in Russia and domestic peaks at Shasta, Rainier and Denali, the tallest mountain in North America.

Iran, also known as Persia and home to one of the world's oldest civilizations, is one of 11 nations the State Department advises travelers to avoid. In Iran's case, the risk is "arbitrary arrest and detention of U.S. citizens" and those who visit are advised to "draft a will."

Ptucha said he feels safe going there on an invitation from the Iranian Mountaineering Federation, which also offered each climber \$650. A professional guide and a group of seven or more Iranian mountaineers will join them on the slopes.

Several friends have been to Iran in recent years and report that Iranians "are very warm," he said.

Ptucha and other group members planned the same trip last year but weren't able to secure visas from the Iranian government.

The expedition's schedule calls for four days of acclimatization, going higher up Damavand each day, followed by a day of rest and then a 10- to 12-hour push to the summit and back, Ptucha said. ■

VACATION TO COACH Katayon Khosrowayar Takes Iran by Storm



Soccer fever plagues the world during the World Cup, but to many it is a sport they play, drink and eat every day of their lives. Such is the case of Iranian-American from Colorado, Katayon Khosrowayar. She grew up in Oklahoma but visited Iran with her family in 2005 when she was in the eleventh grade. She didn't know anything about Iranian culture and spoke no Persian. At the time, I was getting offers to play soccer from university teams in the US. This was what she thought she wanted until her visit. She fell in love with Tehran.

That trip was only to be two weeks. During those two weeks, she had to train for state games and trials for the regional team. She found it interesting to see no women's football in Iran but they had a futsal team, with whom she trained.

All the women were fascinated with her training program and the strength of her body. Just a few days before her return to the States she was approached by the women's football coach. She explained that for the first time in thirty years they were starting a team and wanted her to be part of it. Her response was a quick yes. There were many hurdles to overcome, one being the fact that they were unable to wear the traditional soccer uniform. In fact, in 2012 at the London games they were forced to withdraw because their hijabs were considered to be a choking hazard by FIFA. The rule was overturned in 2013 and that was the time that "Kat" started to consider the possibility of a coaching career. She studied and took courses and eventually became the first Middle Eastern woman to earn a FIFA A-license. She currently is hoping to get a team qualified for the 2022 Olympic games. ■

U.S. IMMIGRATION:

Is It Still an (Inter-)national Asset or a Heartland Liability?
You be the final judge!

Davood N. Rahni

*Give me your tired,
your poor,
your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
the wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless,
tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!*

(New Colossus the sonnet by poet Emma Lazarus in 1883, inscribed at the base of the Statute of Liberty)

Whereas the Americans should periodically debate any policies including immigration in a democratic ambiance so as to enact revised statutes if genuinely meritorious to strengthen the nation as whole, nonetheless, the ever intensifying sloganeering and rhetoric trumpeted by the US administration on “immigration reform,” has adversely impacted the daily lives of tens of millions of Naturalized American families in that they find themselves caught between a rock, *i.e.*, the US their adopted nation, and a hard place, their country of birth.

The western hemisphere-in modern era called *The Americas* - on which the United States was founded 250 years ago, has and continues to be the opportunity bastion and a beacon of hope and prosperity for, and reciprocity by immigrant aspirants worldwide. Human habitation of this richest land with vast natural resources on earth began with the Asiatic peoples, *i.e.*, today’s quasi-perished and near extinct natives, who crossed the Bering Sea 15-20 thousand years ago. The settlement of these first Asian immigrants later named Native Americans, was followed in the first millennium - albeit in small cohorts and for only brief periods- by the arrival of the Africans, even the **Persians** (Scythians/Sakas), and the **Nordic Vikings**.

The **Europeans** in massive droves, triggered by Christopher Columbus’ [mistaken] navigation to the western hemisphere, arrived over the past five hundred years. The resilience of the Puritans, the persecuted and the pioneers at the frontiers, especially when combined with the more educated and affluent south/west Asian immigrants of the past few decades and topped off with an affinity for a just, secular and democratic society, has made the US the utopic Promised Land on earth. In fact, US leadership was reinforced with triumph in WWII, thereby paving the path for its global economic, military, and political post-neo-colonial dominance. So, it does humanity a disservice when a White House resident whose own grandparents were foreign born from Scotland and Germany, and whose wives were also foreign born from Slovenia and the Czech Republic, trumpets up the 39% white populists of the heartland against naturalized and recently arrived immigrants. In so doing, he and his gullible fans not only resort to ludicrous audacity in questioning immigration policies through intimidation



and humiliation of immigrants, but they also question the loyalty of recent immigrants and their equal opportunity rights under the law. His so-called “merit based immigration reforms” has and continues to undermine the daily lives of millions of naturalized Americans including those who arrived from the “travel ban” countries based on the strictest “merit” policy. Consequently, *Trumpism* have regressed the whole Nation one giant step backward, thereby weakening or eradicating the very pillars of US national security: equality and equal opportunity, civil and constitutional rights, and human freedoms and dignity. History will ultimately demonstrate who was more of a risk to our national security: the Iranian grandmother longing to visit her US born American grandchildren for the first time before her life ends, or the current White House occupant walking along a dangerous line of treason and treachery to practically sell off American security and ethical values to a Russian Czar and yield nothing for our nation in return.

According to **Pew Research**, the population of foreign-born Americans has increased fourfold from 10 million in 1960 to an all-time high of 45 million in 2018. When one includes the US born offspring of such naturalized immigrants of the past 60 years, the tally is fast approaching 80 million, *i.e.*, one-fourth of the entire US population. These offspring are often closely aligned with their parents’ family values, perspectives, and political inclinations. For the same sixty year period, the total **US population** has increased from 187 to 327 million. Historians, demographers and policy makers credit the rapid exponential US economic growth and global solo domination to the vibrancy and hard work of migrants, whether they are picking vegetables in the sunburst valleys of California or conceiving, founding and seeding most if not all of our Fortune 500 global corporations. Regardless, year after year data compiled by the government and independent think tanks support the fact that immigrants’ crime rates and social welfare benefits are far below those of non-immigrants, and their education and contributions

toward national GDP are many folds higher. One is, hence, hard pressed to find a single university, corporation, government sectors, R&D centers, etc. where the eminent presence and seminal contributions of immigrants especially those from Japan of the east and Indians and Iranians to the west, cannot be strongly noted.

Ironically in retrospect, had the west-the US as the leader of the pact-along with repressive reactionary regimes, not meddled in the internal affairs of the south-west Asian countries through overt/covert military interventions or sanctions, we neither had such massive brain drains nor did we have the millions of refugees. The melancholic yearning in the region is what exactly happened to the mutual **Iranian-Americans friendship** that has been deeply rooted for 200 years. However, what has become most concerning is the resurgence of conservative, megalomaniacal isolationist rhetoric trumping self-indulging ideologies and demagogueries. There is a fundamental paradigm shift in the predominantly blue collar descendants of European immigrants who arrived through the mid-20th century. Some now feel they are the sole proprietors of this country and its vast resources. This is in contrast to the majority of Latin American and Caribbean Island immigrants, and highly educated and affluent South/West Asians [including a million emigres from Iran] arriving in the past few decades.

Whereas the majority of northern European immigrants in the Americas constitute blue collar workers who aspired to provide better educational and socio-economic opportunities for their children, the ones arriving from south/west Asia, fleeing religious imposition or persecution, socio-political repressions, or civil wars, mostly came with college degrees and/or substantial capitals for investment. Two countries, namely Iran and India, stand out with

advanced education for the two million Indians, and education and affluence for the one million Iranians (Persians) who came here. When an adult immigrant arrives from this region, it has cost him or her native country a million dollars to raise, nurture and educate him or her to graduate from college. This is an immediate transfer of capital give-away, i.e., brain drain, a value-added asset for US economic development. Simply put, these immigrants arrive with high aspirations and strong work ethics, many with prior capital and advanced education, thereby fulfilling the American dream for their families, but far more importantly, contributing at an unprecedented rate to generation and expansion of our national GDP. In the case of Indians and Iranians, their expectations of any entitlement from their adopted land is statistically meniscus, if any.

The current travel ban to block Iranians in particular, from visiting their American families here, when complemented by intensified IRI repressive measures against American dual nationals to visit their relatives in Iran, has made it all but impossible for any humanistic exchanges. The same blanket discrimination has not been applied to Saudi Arabians/UAE whose government is the major financial sponsor of Wahhabi/Salafi religious ideology which has led to human casualties in the tens of millions and economic catastrophes in the trillions of dollars, all inflicted by Saudi-led Al-Qaeda, Taliban, Al-Shabbos, and ISIS. The result has wreaked havoc in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen and who knows what's more in the pipeline for the region.

For the US alone, the cited atrocities and the despicable September 11 terrorist acts has thus far cost thousands dead, millions maimed, and trillions of dollars wasted. In fact, if the US and its so-called allies were genuinely interested in slowing down the refu-

gee and immigrant flows, they would for the first time ever, apply blind justice and universal human rights and allow socio-economic and political progress to take shape in such smaller countries so as to allow secular and democratic systems take hold. That in and of itself would take away the need for American support of unpopular and undemocratic puppets, while preventing protracted military interventions like those in Syria, Yemen, Libya, Afghanistan or Iraq. A progressive level of mutually beneficial socio-economic development would also dramatically reduce the refugee flows from Southwest Asia and the North Africa corridor by millions.

Finally, if all the above historical reasons are not yet convincing that a sound and non-divisive comprehensive immigration policy (family reparation, humanitarian, and merit based) should remain at the heart of American ideals of equality, equal opportunity, and competitiveness worldwide, allow me to share my own personal family story, which is not an isolated story but rather mirrors the terms of endearment of millions of other immigrants over the past few decades:

My spouse and I arrived from **Iran** with several advanced university degrees and wealth. We furthered our post-graduate studies and after earning (post-) doctoral degrees became university professors, community servants, and civic leaders. We earned our permanent residencies and subsequent naturalizations to full citizenship through the most rigorous “merit based” scrutiny by the US government labor department to rightly ensure we were not taking opportunities fillable by born Americans. If the same arduous and costly qualification process were to be applied to the US population-at-large so they had to re-earn their citizenship rather than being entitled to it by birth, it might block the majority behind our borders as inadmissible refugees! Our three US-born now adult children have five advanced degrees all together: PHD or MD, plus bachelor’s degrees. None of us has even been cited for more than a driving violation, if even that. This family has and continues to pour various taxes to the Treasury in the amount of nearly a million dollars per year. In addition, we each give *gratis* our services for a few hundred hours per annum to our adopted nation.

Now the government has made it practically impossible for us visit our families in our birthplace nor can our family members be considered to secure visas to visit us here. Put simply, based on what logical or (ir-) rational and reactionary explanation can anyone deny US Citizens their human and constitutional rights of hosting primary family members in their home? And rhetorically speaking, as the process of immigration been politicized and exploited, all of us are subject to being surveilled and profiled far beyond the code and spirit of the law, while our safety, security and equal professional opportunities and career advancement are detrimentally compromised.

As Sa’adi the 13th Century Persian poet wrote, it is our common **Humanity** (-and not divisive racial, ethnic, color, creed, or

orientations-) that bind us as one integrated frame on earth:

*Humans are all members of one frame,
since all at first from the same essence, came.
When by hard fortune one limb is oppressed,
the other members lose their desired rest.
If thou feel’st not for others’ misery,
A human is no name for thee.*

Is it not still the US Government of the people, by the people, and for the people? Hence, the most urgent need and merit for this still great nation to reaffirm our constitutional commitment to the upholding equality for all citizens, is NOW. In fact, it is time for the two-third “shell-shocked” majority in the Nation, especially the 80 million naturalized American families, to move up to the center, so they could as a huge political action and voting bloc, complete mass registration and voting turnouts, while many must run for office at all local, state to national levels. The scrupulous exercise of our civil and constitutional responsibilities at the upcoming and all future elections is now if we still aspire to realign our beloved US with the principles of blind justice and equal opportunity for which it has stood through the test of time.

The author Davood N. Rahni is a naturalized American born, educated and raised in Iran. His professorship stints spanning nearly four decades are in chemistry, environmental science and law, engineering, dermatology and neuro-psycho-pharmacology. Prolifically published across the disciplines, his passion has increasingly focused on learning, sharing and advocating for humanism, justice, equality, and sustainable development. He has since moving to the US four decades ago, remained intertwined between two most beautiful worlds: IRAN and the US of America.■

This chart helps explain Trump’s Muslim ban:

	9-11 Hijackers	Trump Businesses	Immigration Ban
Saudia Arabia	☑	☑	
United Arab Emirates	☑	☑	
Egypt	☑	☑	
Lebanon	☑	☑	
Lybia			☑
Syria			☑
Iraq			☑
Iran			☑
Yemen			☑
Somalia			☑
Sudan			☑



Why Did Maryam Mirzakhani and Kutcher Birkar Emigrate?

GIANFRANCA KASRAEI

a research scientist at the University of Kassel, Germany



(BBC August 2018) On Wednesday, August 1, 2018, during a ceremony held in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, four mathematicians received a Fields Medal for important research in various fields of mathematics.

Among the names of the winners of the Fields Medal, was Kurtcher Birkar, a Persian-born Iranian mathematician born in Marivan, a forty-year-old mathematician from Marivan. He was formerly known as Fereydoon Derakhshani. He was studying for many years at an undergraduate level at Tehran University and currently teaching at the University of Cambridge, UK.

The awarding of this valuable medal to Kutcher Birkar was considered by the media in two directions. First, he was an asylum seeker who came from Iran to Britain, and secondly, the second Iranian to win the Fields Award, before him, Maryam Mirzakhani. She was the only woman winning the Fields Medal, a prominent mathematician, who died three years after receiving the award.

Maryam Mirzakhani and Kutcher Birkar are not the only scholars who have left their home in recent decades and migrated to other countries for various reasons. Why has this elite immigration known as “brain drain” become one of the country’s biggest problems in recent decades?

With the onset of the Islamic Revolution in 1979 and the creation of a climate of oppression and terror especially with the onset of the Cultural Revolution and the closure of universities, there began a great wave of emigration of Iranian elites and students.

The founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Rouhollah Khomeini, had said in those years: “they say the brains escaped! Let them escape. The hell that escaped these brains! They were not the scientific brain. These brains were treacherous brains, and every body fled from his own

country to America?! Escapes from his own country to England and wants to live under the shadow of England? (Sahifeh Nour, Vol. 10, 84)

By the end of the sixties, this wave of migration did not subside. For example, in 2009, about 90 Iranian electoral candidates were emigrating abroad. The 1999 International Monetary Fund (IMF) report showed that Iran with 15 percent of the emigration of the elite to the United States and 25 percent of the elite’s migration to other developed countries, ranked among the countries with the highest rates of brain drain in the world.

Facing the problem of brain drain among officials in the Islamic Republic, however, has not always been the same. Some, such as Kamran Daneshjoo, the Minister of Science of Mahmoud Ahmadi-nadjad, who said that “we have no brain drain in the country,” denied the matter and some sought a remedy.

According to some statistics, the annual output of between 150,000 and 180,000 educated professionals, equivalent to a daily withdrawal of 400 to 500 people from Iran, is causing significant damage to the country. Some of these damages are estimated at \$ 60 billion a year, and some more than \$150 billion annually.

In other words, about 15 percent of Iran’s gross domestic product is the amount of damage that comes to the country from brain drain. Five-year-old remarks by the deputy head of the National Elite Foundation showed that 308 of the Olympiad’s medalists and 350 of the top-ranked exams from 2008 to 2008 emigrated to Iran.

In the Islamic Republic, large budgets are spent on advertising agencies and the cultural priority of the system to promote and impose their lifestyle to society. The elites and the geniuses are also not immune to the damage caused by this policy of the ruling system.

It is enough to remember that the services of the Seminary have more than 708 billion USD in annual budget, for example, the budget of Sharif University of Technology with 13 faculties of science and engineering and 18 research institutes and centers and about 500 faculty members in year 97 had only 170 billion USD set. Hundreds of billions of dollars from the Islamic Propaganda Office of Qom and the Institute for the Regulation and Publication of Works by Imam and Al-Mustafa Al-Alamiyah and dozens of institutions and the religious propaganda organization in the Islamic Republic do not leave any future and guarantee the growth and progress of elites and geniuses.

Let’s not forget that Maryam Mirzakhani, one of the survivors of the collapse of the bus carrying students from Sharif University of Technology on March 26, 1376, where seven students died on their return journey from Ahwaz.

Perhaps Arman Bahramian, Reza Sadeghi, Alireza Sayeban, Ali Heidari, Farid Kaboli, Mojtaba Mehrabadi and Morteza Rezaei, who were saddened by the incident, could have achieved like Maryam the highest scientific positions in the world in the following years. Maryam Mirzakhani, who at the Hong Kong Mathematical Olympiad with 41 points from 42 points in the world gold medal, and the following year at the World Mathematical Olympiad in Canada, scored 42 points out of 42, won the gold medal. Almost in the same years that Kutcher Birkar went to the University of Nottingham in the United Kingdom, from Harvard University in the United States.

Both Maryam Mirzakhani and Kutcher Birkar, while reaching the highest scientific peaks of the world, are also the symbol of the frustration of the elite; elites forced to leave their homeland because of political and social unrest.■

Use of Misleading Terminology for “CONVENIENCE”?

Kaveh Farrokh

In connection with below-linked article Farrokh & Vasseghi (2017) on the 20th century “invented term”—the Middle East—one may refer to a declassified, internal memo by the CIA’s Office of Basic and Geographic Intelligence (OBGI) to Deputy Director for Intelligence dated February 26, 1973 (the “CIA Memo”), in which the author, whose identity is redacted, noted his “strong aversion” to the use of the term “the Middle East.”

In the CIA Memo, the author claimed that the CIA tends to be “alert and responsive to official changes in the names of individual political entities.” However, when it comes to geographic terms, the CIA adheres “to usages that are imprecise, egocentric, and anachronistic.” One of the common ways in which the CIA ignores precise geographical names is by “the use of longitudinal compass directions as nouns” (emphasis in original).

The term “Middle East” was first invented by Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914). Mahan’s invention first appeared in the September 1902 issue of London’s monthly “National review” in an article entitled “The Persian Gulf and International Relations”. Specifically, Mahan wrote: “The Middle East, if I may adopt the term which I have not seen...”. The term – “Middle East” – when examined in cultural, anthropological and cultural terms makes very little sense. Iran and Turkey for example are not Arab countries and in fact share a long-standing Turco-Iranian or Persianate civilization distinct from the Arabo-Islamic dynamic. Instead, the Turks and Iranians have strong ties to the Caucasus and Central Asia.

According to the CIA Memo, terms such as “the Middle East” are, and always were, imprecise and egocentric given they reflect “the world as viewed from London and western Europe.” The author is alarmed at how widespread the usage of these imprecise terms among the intellectual circles were, including as part of titles for respected publications such as The Middle East Journal.

The author of the CIA Memo is concerned with how those in the field of intelligence defend the use of imprecise geographic terms by arguing that everyone knows to what location one is referring when, for example, one says, “the Middle East,” so why worry about it. Further, correcting such terms may cause confusion and inconvenience! The author responded to these officers by reminding them that as responsible leaders in the intelligence community, they “should always strive to be practitioners of precision” in written materials.

Mahan’s invented term “Middle East” was popularized by Sir Ignatius Valentine Chirol (1852-1929), a journalist designated as “a special correspondent from Tehran” by The Times newspaper. Chirol’s seminal article “The Middle Eastern Question” expanded Mahan’s version of the “Middle East” to now include “Persia, Iraq, the east coast of Arabia, Afghanistan, and Tibet”. Surprised? Yes, you read correctly -Tibet! The term Middle East was (and is) a colonial construct used to delineate British (and now West European and US) geopolitical and economic interests. These same interests help promote the usage of terminology such

Below is a recent article of Dr. Sheda Vasseghi (April 29, 2018) posted in Evakdat in which she discusses a document written by a well-informed CIA official (whose name has now been redacted from the original document). As cited by Vasseghi in her article below: “In the CIA Memo, the author claimed that the CIA tends to be “alert and responsive to official changes in the names of individual political entities.”

However, when it comes to Ardeshir Zahedi (Montreux, Switzerland), May 25, 2018, geographic terms, the CIA adheres “to usages that are imprecise, egocentric, and anachronistic“. ... According to the CIA Memo, terms such as “the Middle East” are, and always were, imprecise and egocentric given they reflect “the world as viewed from London and western Europe.” The [CIA] author is alarmed at how widespread the usage of these imprecise terms among the intellectual circles were, including as part of titles for respected publications such as The Middle East Journal.

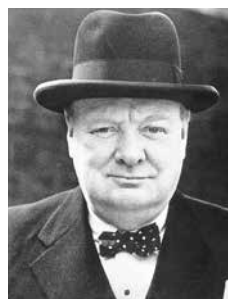
Kindly note that readers are also referred to the article by Dr. Mohammad Ala (Recipient of the 2013 Grand Prix Film Italia Award) entitled:

The “Middle East”: A 20th Century Neologism Or Malapropisms?

as “Islamic arts and architecture” (Image: Ria Press).

As examples of changing how these officers think and write, the author of the CIA Memo encouraged them to substitute imprecise terms for accurate ones as listed in the chart below:

Imprecise and Improper Terms	Accurate and Refined Terms
the Far East	East Asia the Middle East East deadlock
the Arab-Israeli deadlock industrial West	the non-Communist industrial nations the Near East
the Eastern Mediterranean Middle East	the Persian Gulf states



Mahan and Chirol’s invention (Middle East) provided the geopolitical terminology required to rationally organize the expansion of British political, military and economic interests into the Persian Gulf region. After the First World War, Winston Churchill (1874-1965) became the head of the newly established “Middle East Department”. Churchill’s department redefined Mahan’s original “The Middle East” invention to now include the Suez Canal, the Sinai, the Arabian Peninsula, as well as the newly created states of Iraq, Palestine, and Trans-Jordan. Tibet and Afghanistan were now excluded from London’s Middle East grouping. The decision to include non-Arab Iran as a member of the “Middle East” in 1942 was to rationalize the role of British political and Petroleum interests in the country (Image: Wikipedia).

Drink Russian, Wear Italian, Drive German, Be Persian ...

and the next line should read “Allow Women into the Stadiums!”

Seeing their national team make it into the World Cup was a dream come true for the entire country. Though mixed crowds watched the live streaming of the Iran matches in Azadi stadium, the only way that men and women are able to watch a live game (any sport) together, in a stadium, is to venture out of the country. For the World Cup that is just what many Iranians did, despite difficult journeys and cost. With painted faces, costumes, signs and smiles, too wide to capture, Iranian men and women embraced together the excitement of the events.

They proudly waived their flag, mingled with their challengers and cheered on their team. Outside of Iran, individuals, families, old and young embraced the freedom to see their beloved Iranian team pursue a soccer dream. Their making their way to Moscow brought needed world attention to the violation of women’s rights. The world watched and began to understand Iranian needs. For the women, it includes the simple freedoms of exposing your hair, wearing jeans and makeup and sitting freely next to a male at a stadium, be the male a boyfriend, husband, father, son or friend. Moscow was a place for them to peacefully protest against their government to ease restrictions, to respect them and in return they would be respected. As the world watched Iran pull through their matches they also saw signs asking for the world to support women to attend stadiums. What is interesting is that the world seems to be listening. In the article below Iran may be pressured by other parties to give women access to stadium games.

IRAN: PROGRESS ON BAN FOR WOMEN AT STADIUMS
Source: Human Rights Watch
Opening World Cup Screening, Volleyball Matches Are Steps in Right Direction

(Beirut) - Iranian authorities and the International Federation of Football Associations (FIFA) should ensure that women and girls can freely attend all future men’s sports matches in the country, Human Rights Watch said. On June 20 and 25, 2018, the authorities opened Azadi stadium’s doors to women and men to watch



a live screening of the last two games of Iran’s national football team at the 2018 World Cup.

On June 26, Masoumeh Ebtekar, the vice president for women and family affairs, tweeted a video of women attending the screening and said, “Thousands of Iranian families have watched live broadcasts of WorldCup2018 games in Azadi Stadium in Tehran. Restrictions on women’s entrance have been lifted. This has led to a new era of hope & optimism.” On June 25, Iranian journalists posted a video on Twitter that shows women watching the Iran- Germany volleyball match, during the FIVB Volleyball Nations League 2018, in Azadi stadium. Since June 2017, Iranian authorities had allowed a limited number of pre-vetted women to attend the volleyball matches.

“Iranian authorities have finally taken a long-awaited step of de facto overturning the ban on women attending stadiums in the past two games,” said Sarah Leah Whitson, Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. “This experience shows how shallow the many justifications for keeping women out of the stadiums were, and Iran should ensure that women can freely attend all sporting events across the country from now on.” Iran’s discriminatory ban on women attending men’s football matches dates to 1981. In 2012, authorities extended the ban to volleyball matches. In response, Iranian women have campaigned and lobbied parliament to reverse the ban. They have even disguised themselves as men to avoid these discriminatory restrictions. Over the past few years, Iranian women

and rights organizations have also tried to reverse the policy through direct appeals to FIFA and the international volleyball federation (FIVB).

In March, police arrested about 35 women who gathered in front of Azadi Stadium seeking admission to watch a game between two popular Tehran men’s football teams, Esteghlal and Persepolis, and detained them for several hours. The FIFA president, Gianni Infantino, was inside the stadium while the police arrested the women outside.

Following criticism from rights activists and the Iranian women campaigning to remove the ban, the FIFA chief announced that President Hassan Rouhani had told him that there are plans to allow women to attend football matches in the country “soon.” Over the past few years, several acclaimed athletes, including the captain of Iran’s national football team, Masoud Shojaei, parliament members, and Rouhani have spoken about the need to allow women back into stadiums.

Before Iran’s World Cup games were screened at the stadium, several members of parliament pushed authorities to ensure that women could attend. On June 25, Tayebeh Siavoshi, a member of parliament who attended the Iran-Spain match screening, tweeted that “during the game, several men were coming to us and thanking us for making it possible that they could finally watch the game with their families. Their gratitude was so honest and genuine that I was thinking why we have taken away such simple pleasure from our families.”

Since 2014, Human Rights Watch has repeatedly communicated its concerns to both sports federations in writing and in person at meetings in Lausanne, where the FIVB has its headquarters. In 2015, Human Rights Watch opened the #Watch4Women campaign, to support Iranian women fighting this form of discrimination. Article 3 of FIFA’s statute states that “discrimination of any kind... is strictly prohibited and punishable by suspension or expulsion.”

“International Federations should do their part and use their significant leverage to ensure that Iranian women are never discriminated against at sports matches,” Whitson added. ■

REVIEWS

**THE ARMIES OF ANCIENT PERSIA:
THE SASSANIANS****Kaveh Farrokh**

Pen and Sword Books, Barnsley, U.K., 2017.

Following Alexander's conquest of the Achaemenid empire, rule of the region passed from the Seleucids to two succeeding powers: the Parthians (247 BCE–224 CE) and the Sassanians (224–651). Before Muslim armies ultimately overwhelmed the latter, the Sassanians earned due recognition as the most formidable rival of the Roman–Byzantine empire.

Over more than three centuries the two powers fought a number of major and minor wars, conflicts that weakened both, until the armies of Islam overran the Sassanians. Much of what historians later attributed to Muslim culture in art, architecture, military technology and medicine was mostly Sassanid in origin, spread through the Mediterranean world by the expansion of Islam.

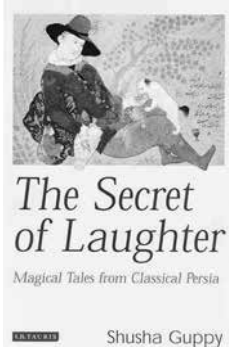
Despite their contribution to Western military history and its technological advances, the armies of ancient Persia have received scant attention from Western military historians. Focusing on the armies of the Sassanians, this book is the first in a three-volume set intended to address that oversight.

Author Kaveh Farrokh is a historian born in Greece who speaks Persian, among several other languages, attributes that enabled him to access source materials inaccessible to most Western scholars.

The book is well researched, edited, organized and written. His 46 pages of footnotes, 15 pages of references and 14 pages of maps place a trove of source materials in the reader's hands, though general readers may find the level of detail somewhat overwhelming. The result is a major work of scholarship that is long overdue.

**SECRET OF LAUGHTER:
MAGICAL TALES FROM CLASSICAL PERSIA****by Shusha Guppy**

Tauris Publishers



This magical collection of stories, gathered from the rich treasury of Persian folk and fairytales, tells of love and longing, fate and human ingenuity, loss and grace. Although sources of these tales have been lost over the ages, their memory runs through the collective psyche of the Iranian people. Handed down through generations, told by professional storytellers in bazaars and gatherings, these tales have been made popular the world over by great poets such as

Rumi and Firdowsi.

At the same time, beneath these charmed narratives, they reflect deep cultural and psychological insights into the atti-

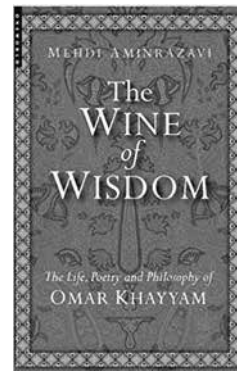
tudes, values and structures which constitute Iranian society. In her own unique voice - with style, charm and humour - Shusha Guppy narrates these timeless fables of princes and princesses; dervishes and miracle-working saints; jinns and giants; flame-breathing dragons and winged horses; sorcerers and magicians.

**THE WINE OF WISDOM: THE LIFE,
POETRY AND PHILOSOPHY OF OMAR KHAYYAM**
Mehdi Aminrazavi

Representative of the exotic and erotic east, enemy of Christianity, prophet of hedonism, champion of free thinkers, Omar Khayyam and his Ruba'iyyat have been the stuff of legend for centuries.

Nourished by an admiration of Khayyam that has been with him since childhood, Aminrazavi's comprehensive new biography reintroduces the figure of Khayyam, and his great achievements, to the Western world. Blending a readable and accessible narrative with scholarly ambition and years of research, Aminrazavi's work covers not only Khayyam's well-known poetry, but also his extraordinary life, his neglected philosophical writings and the impact of his work in the West.

It features a variety of supporting material, including original translations and the full text of Fitzgerald's Rubaiyyat, and will prove an ideal introduction not only for those who want to know more about the poets inspired by Rumi, but also for students on a variety of humanities and Middle-East related courses.



Ava

2017 Iranian film
(From Wikipedia)



Ava is a 2017 internationally co-produced drama film directed and written by Sadaf Foroughi. It was screened in the Discovery section at the 42nd Toronto International Film Festival, where it won the FIPRESCI Discovery Prize and received an Honorable Mention for Best Canadian First Feature Film.

In December, TIFF named the film on its annual year-end list of the ten best Canadian films. The film received eight Canadian Screen Award nominations at the 6th Canadian Screen Awards, including Best Picture, Best Director (Foroughi), Best Actress (Mahour Jabbari) and Best Supporting Actress (Bahar Noohian). It was named as the winner of the Canadian Screen Award for Best First Feature on 31 January 2018.

Ava is a student at an all-girl Iranian high school. She's an excellent student and good musician. But her mother hears a rumor that Ava has been seen with a boy, she overreacts and humiliates Ava. Her father is more supportive, but he often works out of the city. Her school's headmaster talks a lot about protecting her students, but she's clearly more concerned with the reputation of her school than the best interests of the girls in the school, and on several occasions, threatens to expel Ava and other girls, often on the basis of unfounded rumors; she also cajoles students to snitch on each other. ■

Meet Dr. Asghar Chuback, M.D.

Asghar Chuback was born in 1928 in Bushehr, Iran. After completing high-school he matriculated at Shiraz University School of Medicine and graduated as the class valedictorian. In honor of this distinction he was awarded a scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania for one year of post-graduate training in Obstetrics and Gynecology.

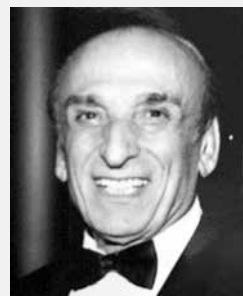
In 1959, Dr. Chuback arrived at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor for six months of intensive English language study. From there, he set off to the University of Pennsylvania for one year of OBGYN training with international students from around the world. It was there that he met several other Iranian students who were also studying various fields of medicine in the United States. They advised Chuback that he should pursue an accredited residency in OBGYN. Taking their advice to heart he first completed a rotating internship at Jersey City Medical Center in New Jersey. It was there that he met his wife Jeanne, a registered nurse. The two would soon marry and move back to Philadelphia where Dr. Chuback would complete a residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Hahnemann University and Jeanne pursued a master's degree in nursing at the University of Pennsylvania. They then started a family with the birth of their first daughter, Soraya. Asghar subsequently completed a fellowship in maternal-fetal medicine at Crozier-Chester Medical Center just outside of Philadelphia.

The family's next stop was back in New Jersey where they have lived ever since. Dr. Chuback built a very successful private practice in Passaic County and earned his Board Certification in OBGYN. He later became Chief of OBGYN at Barnert Hospital and Passaic General Hospital. He also served on the Executive Committee at each of these institutions. Over subsequent years, the Chuback family grew with the addition of two more daughters, Lily and Susan, and lastly a son, John Asghar.

Dr. and Mrs. Chuback became well known for their tremendous hospitality and generosity in the Iranian-American community over the course of the following 50-plus years. Their home was the place of many large parties; they even held wedding celebrations. In addition, they hosted not only relatives from Iran, but also strangers, who lived in their home for years around the time of the revolution. Their door was always open to anyone in need. They gave a home to many young people in the late 1970's and early 1980's, took care of them, and made sure that each received a proper education. Dr. Chuback and his wife were also involved for many years in SUSMA, the Shiraz University School of Medicine Alumni Association and the planning of the yearly Now-Rooz celebration gala.

As for the Chuback children, they have all performed admirably, following the example set by their parents. Soraya became a pediatric dentist, Lily an attorney, Susan a cosmetic dentist and John a cardiovascular surgeon. All 4 children married professionals and all remain happily married. Asghar and Jeanne now have 9 beautiful grandchildren who are the center of their universe. Troy, Kylie, Cameron, Yasaman, Darius, Kayla, Payman, Maya and Zara are all on their way to bright and beautiful futures. The three oldest grandchildren are off to auspicious starts. Troy is a dentist now in his residency in Chicago, Kylie is studying for her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology in Boston and Cameron is in Law School in Miami. They are setting a fine example for their younger siblings and cousins who are all on very similar paths.

The story of Asghar Chuback is yet another wonderful American dream story. Through hard work, discipline, and ambition this man from a small seaside town in Iran came to the United States and created a successful professional career and a beautiful family. He enthusiastically served his community and contributed greatly to the fabric and future of America.



The Sakas

Part six

Michael McClain

Various ancient sources affirm that the Scythians were the inventors of a military tactic which came to be known as “feigned flight”, which consists of pretending to flee and then turn on the enemy. Though the idea is simple enough, said tactic is highly dangerous, as the “feigned flight may all too easily become real. Hence, “feigned flight” is a tactic which requires a great deal of instruction, practice and discipline.

As the name indicates, the Scythians were fundamentally archers. In contrast the fellow Sakas of the Scythians, the Sarmatians and Alans, used heavy cavalry as their main force, archers being secondary: one may see why many consider the Sarmatians and Alans to be the forerunners of the medieval knights. In spite of their differences from the Scythians in their manner of making war, the Sarmatians and Alans also used the tactic of “feigned retreat”. It was from the Sarmatians and Alans that the Goths learned the tactic of “feigned retreat”: St. Isidore of Seville mentions the tactic of feigned retreat as being used by the Visigoths.

The Franks were originally foot soldiers who specialized in the use of the throwing axe, known in Latin as the “franciscus”, from which comes the name “Frank”. However, from the Goths the Franks learned the use of heavy cavalry.

In the early tenth century, Vikings conquered the Carolingian region of Neustria, led by Rollo or Hrolfr. Neustria became known as “Normannia”, “Land of the Norsemen”.

However, the transplanted Vikings rapidly changed their ways, becoming Christians, speaking French in place of Old Norse, adopting French names and titles, and adopting the Frankish style of war, hence the familiar image of the Norman heavy cavalry; coat of mail, helmet with fixed nose piece, long lance, and a kite-shaped shield.

In England, on January 5, 1066, King Edward the Confessor died without leaving a direct heir. Among the claimants to the throne of England were Harold Godwinson, Harold Hardrada, King of Norway, and Duke William of Normandy.

It was Harold Godwinson who was

crowned King of England after the death of Edward the Confessor, though many did not recognize the validity of said coronation...

Harold Godwinson had feared that William of Normandy would invade England to claim the throne, and kept his forces in the south. However, it was Harold Hardrada who struck first, attacking from the North. Harold Godwinson then moved his forces to the North, and defeated Harold Hardrada at Stamford Bridge. When William of Normandy heard of Harold Hardrada’s landing in the north of England, he commented: “Which Harold am I going to fight?”

William landed in the south of England while Harold Godwinson was occupied in the north. William wished to force Harold Godwinson to an open battle, rather than to take London and allow himself to be cut off from Normandy and besieged in London.

Most unwisely, Harold Godwinson moved to attack William as soon as he had returned to London from the North, thus falling into William’s trap.

Harold Godwinson selected a strong position, the crest of a hill which was steep enough to break the impetus of a cavalry charge, with his men in a position of eight files deep. To the reader familiar with the famous Thin Red Line at Balaklava in the Crimean War, eight files of infantry may seem unnecessary or even excessive. However, meaning no disrespect for the gallantry of the 93rd Highland Scots, at the time of the Crimean War the British and French had recently equipped their forces with the deadly mini rifle, while the Russians were still armed with the old “brown bess” smooth bore musket. So, the Russian cavalry at Balaklava was

facing rifles of whose range and accuracy they had no idea. In 1066, there was no way that an infantry line of only two files could have stopped a charge of heavy cavalry. Remember, Anna Comnena, daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Alexis Comnena, said that a charge of the Norman heavy cavalry could “burst through the great walls of Babylon.”

For some time, the battle around the steep hill of Hastings remained, with both sides taking heavy losses, but undecided.

The influence of the Sakas or Alans on the formation of the Arthurian Cycle in northern Great Britain has long been noted. However, the influence of the Alans in Brittany has, until very recently, gone unnoticed.

For some reason, the Saxons at the battle of Hastings Hill seem to have believed that the Bretons on William’s right flank were less formidable fighters than the Normans and attacked them fiercely. At first the Bretons appeared to take flight, but then, when the Saxons had become disorganized in the pursuit, the Bretons savagely turned on their ancient Saxon enemies, slaughtering them in large numbers. Twice more the Saxons attempted to attack the Bretons, and with the same result as the first time. The above indicates poor generalship on the part of Harold Godwinson, making one think that Stamford Bridge was not a credit for Harold Godwinson, but rather a discredit for Harold Hardrada. It also indicates a lack of discipline among the Saxons, as well as a reason for which the Normans sometimes referred to the Saxons as “rockheads”. Finally, the above demonstrated the mastery of the tactic of “feigned retreat” by the Bretons.

The heavy losses inflicted by the Bretons on the Saxons not only wore the position of the Saxons, but also their morale and unit cohesion. Seeing the weakening of the Saxon position, William ordered his archers to fire their arrows at a high arc so that they would fall on the Saxons from above. Harold Godwinson was killed by an arrow in the eye.

This last finally broke the morale of the Saxons, who now broke and fled, pursued and slaughtered by the Norman and Breton cavalry.

It is generally agreed that Hastings was one of history’s crucial battles. Another very crucial battle was that of the River of Merv. The accounts of said battle differ somewhat, though, of course, all agree that Shaibani Khan, the “Old Fox” was outgeneraled by the very youthful Shah Ismail Safavi, and the savage Uzbeks were outought by the fierce “Redheads” who followed Shah Ismail. Though, the accounts of the battle of the River of Merv vary somewhat, all agree that the tactic of feigned retreat play a key role in the victory of Shah Ismail.

Certainly, the above is no surprise. Shah Ismail was on Iranian ancestry, and early in his life had contact with the Ossetians, an Iranian people of the Caucasus believed to be descendants of the Alans.

So, the military tactic known as “feigned retreat”, invented in ancient times by the Saka people known as the Scythians, continued to be used for many centuries and was crucial in a number of very important battles. ■

If

By Rudyard Kipling

Translated by Azar Arianpour

*If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:*

*If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:*

*If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'*

*If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!*

When You Think About Fashion, Shopping, Culture and Eating in Iran Think Beyond ...

MAHLA ZAMANI

Mahla Zamani is an Iranian fashion designer, journalist and expert on Iranian traditional clothing.

She established the first fashion exhibition after the Iranian revolution (1979) and put significant effort in popularizing Iranian stylish clothing. In her view, Iranians need to revive their past and dress in elegant colorful and traditional styles (instead of black and Arabian dresses). Her efforts in advertising Persian, Qashqai, Kurdish, Turkmen and Baloch dress styles attracted international attention.

She has been attacked by fundamentalist circles and newspapers repeatedly.

After completing her graduation in BBA from Tehran she moved to India in 2004 to pursue her MBA which was followed by a PhD in Marketing from the University of Pune.

In the 10 years of her corporate career at one of India's leading realty developing firms – Panchshil Realty, Dr. Maral Yazarloo has headed the Corporate Communications department for two and a half years and is currently the Head of Retail. She dreamt of setting up an independent fashion label since her childhood. After her PhD in Marketing, she launched her brand in Paris. Maral believes in incorporating subtle styles of yesterday into urban fashions for the present times. The silhouettes are modern and a deep thought process is put into the placement of artwork and embellishments on every piece that is made at Maral Yazarloo.

Owing to her vast knowledge in the field of fashion,

retail and marketing, Mahla is often invited to talk about fashion, marketing and retail. She was one of the panelists at the retail forum in Las Vegas to speak on the Indian market. Apart from this she has also been a part of the LFS (Luxury, Fashion & Style) Conclave organized by FAD international & ADL Milan to give her views on the future of luxury brands in India. Adding to the list, she was recently asked to give a lecture to the students and also judge the final year graduation students at the Virginia Commonwealth University of Qatar and has also given a lecture in Symbiosis on role of women in the corporate world.

In March 2017, she is starting her dream ride called "Ride to be ONE" around the globe, from India to Alaska to South America and Africa and Europe to India (via Iran) along with her fellow rider; wherein she will be the first Iranian rider to ever go on a global ride that will take a span of 15 months of riding on the same bike.

ZAHRA YARAHMADI

Zara Yarahmadi (born 1985) is a contemporary Iranian fashion designer. Her label was established in Tehran in 1998. Zahra Yarahmadi was born in 1985 and grew up in Iran. She is a fashion designer and many of her works have been named as a national art craft. She launched her own brand named *Deja vu* colourful designs in 1998.

SAREH NOURI

Sareh Nouri born July 25, 1979, in Tehran, Iran is a Persian-American fashion designer known for couture

wedding gowns and bridal sashes.

Ms. Nouri immigrated to the United States in 1989 at the age of 10. Her family lived in northern Virginia where she was raised from grammar school age. She graduated from George Mason University in 2004 with a bachelor's degree in Graphic Design. She worked on various commercial and non-profit media ads as a graphic designer.

For her 2009 nuptials, Sareh designed her own wedding dress since she was unable to find the right one. This inspired her bridal line which launched in June 2011 with a collection of sashes and six dresses. Sareh Nouri's line was officially introduced to Buyers and Editors at International Bridal Market Week in October 2012 at The London Hotel in New York City. The line was shown again at International Bridal Market Week in October 2013. The line consists of four collections containing a total of 45 gowns. The gowns are handmade in the USA from silk tulle, silk organza and French lace, specifically lace from French lace house Sophie Hallette.

Today the Sareh Nouri Bridal line is available in stores worldwide. Locations in the United States are California, Alabama, Connecticut, Colorado, Louisiana, Maryland, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Florida, Ohio, Minnesota, Virginia, Georgia, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Kleinfeld's in New York. Her dresses can be found internationally in Ontario, Canada, Tokyo, Japan, Central Hong Kong, China, and Seoul, South Korea, Dubai,



a work by Pegah Anvarian

Lebanon and Australia.

Sareh's gowns have been photographed and featured in publications such as *People Magazine*, *US Weekly Magazine*, *Brides Magazine*, *Engaged Magazine*, *Grace Ormonde Wedding Style Magazine*, *Weddings Unveiled*, and *Contemporary Bride Magazine New Jersey Edition*. She has been interviewed by *The Huffington Post* and *New Jersey Bride Magazine*.

Her work has also been seen on television on TLC's "Brides of Beverly Hills" with celebrity wedding planner Renee Strauss, on a June 2013 episode of TLC's "Cake Boss", and on E! News with Giuliana Rancic. She was interviewed by Ann Nyberg of

WTHN-TV News Channel 8 in New Haven, Connecticut for the online news segment “Nyberg” and interviewed with Voice of America (VOA) in Washington DC.

Sareh Nouri gowns have been worn by former American Idol contestant, Diana DeGarmo at her June 1, 2013 nuptials and Miss America 2010, Caressa Cameron at her December 2, 2012 nuptials.

HAMAN ALIMARDANI

Hamansutra is the fashion label of Haman Alimardani (born 1977 in Tehran). Alimardani is a Persian-German fashion designer, graphic designer and DJ. He lives and works in New York City and Munich.

Haman Alimardani comes from the third generation of a Persian family of chefs, restaurateurs and gourmets. He and his four siblings grew up in Tehran, New York City and Munich. Alimardani speaks fluent German, English and Persian. Music and art played major roles in his youth; he rapidly attained status in both fields in the Munich scene, as a respected graffiti writer and club DJ for soul, house and rap music. In 1993 the art-

ists’ group of which Alimardani was a member received artistic funding from the City of Munich.

After secondary school, Alimardani initially studied graphic design at Blocherer Schule, Munich (graduating in 1998), and took up fashion design studies at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in London in 2004. During his studies Alimardani completed internships as assistant to fashion designer Kostas Murkudis, designer at the Munich armed forces tailoring department and costume designer at the Bavarian State Opera.

In 1996 Alimardani founded his own fashion label “hamansutra”. Even before completing his fashion design studies, he designed “Lingerie For The Year 2000” for German underwear brand Mey. Two years later, working as hamansutra, he completed the costumes for a major project at London Film School. In 2003/04 hamansutra was commissioned by Jung von Matt to create a full body suit known as “Blu Costume” for the Geiz ist geil (Cheap Is Cool) advertising campaign for the consumer electronics chain Saturn. In 2004 hamansutra designed the outfits for the video production of “Another World” by UK singer Sonique. The video received the 2005 iF Communication Design Award. Also in 2005, hamansutra designed menswear prototypes for Porsche Design and contributed a T-shirt design to the T-1 Worldcup project in Japan. This event included a design competition for which international artists created works representing their countries. hamansutra designed a T-shirt collection for the Microsoft Xbox 360 at Christmas 2005. In 2006 hamansutra developed a gold suit for the video “I Can’t Stop My Feet” by Munich musician and singer

AMOS, also known as “Emperor of Pop”. From 2005 to 2008 Haman Alimardani taught at the Munich colleges Blocherer Schule and Akademie für Mode & Design (AMD), and lectured on design at Miami Ad School in Hamburg and FH München the Munich University of Applied Sciences. He relocated to New York in 2008. In 2010 hamansutra joined forces with StudioSeidel on the project “”. The project, set to music by Gomma Records, presented a fashion collection oriented to the World Cup teams and matches and prominently featuring elements of the aesthetics of pornography, as a satire on the predominant interests of our consumption-driven world. hamansutra is currently working on a line of accessories scheduled for launch at the end of 2011.

Haman Alimardani’s work with Jung von Matt in Hamburg gave rise to graphic projects for Benson & Hedges, Audi and Deutsche Bahn in 1998 and 1999. In 2002 Alimardani worked with Nike on the Scorpion K.O. project, realized in partnership with the US media agency Wieden+Kennedy and the Berlin-based creative agency Less Rain. In the same year he was booked by the French fashion house KENZO as a character designer for the “KENZO KIDS” collection.

Alimardani’s affinity with music is constantly reflected in his design. The hamansutra brand presents clothing as art objects, focusing on a holistic view of external changes which in turn necessitate the alignment of designs in keeping. The slogan “A thousand moves in the game of fashion” is intended to express this conceptual approach.

PEGAH ANVARIAN

Pegah Anvarian is an Iranian-American fashion

designer from Dallas, Texas that made her fashion debut in 2005. Her work has shown at Los Angeles Fashion Week and Anvarian currently resides in Los Angeles, where she works as the creative director for Three Dots.

The Iranian-American Pegah Anvarian had learned how to sew at the young age of six years. She then started designing at the age of eight. She began a year tour with the B-52’s as the stylist. This career allowed her to relocate back to New York City, and this is when she decided that she wanted to design her own line. She is best known for her self-taught draping skills and for her jersey tops and dresses. She had no previous experience, but it was her entrepreneurial mindset that allowed her to create her own pieces and designs. It was when she was styling a music video, she had created a cashmere jersey dress that would soon become her signature piece. After her signature piece was known, it was being seen on celebrities such as Cameron Diaz, LeAnn Rimes, and Naomi Watts. She presented her line at Los Angeles Fashion Week for her first collection that debuted in Fall 2003. Since then she has been spotted in many popular publications such as Lucky, The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, W Magazine, and Harper’s Bazaar. She is known to get inspired by her natural surroundings in her home of California. She is also intensely influenced by the music that she hears such as electronica to Hip Hop. In the year of 2007, she debuted for New York Fashion Week. Her collection was derived from the relationship between the Earth and the sky. Her collection included leather jackets and wool skirts that reflected her theme.

Her work has been relatively well received, with the Washington Post giving a



a work by Naghmeh Kiumarsi

mixed review of one of her runway showings. Her tops are about \$100 and her leather jackets are about \$1200. Her stores can be found in the following areas:

AND THERE IS MORE....

In an article written by Anahita Behrooz, published in Culture trip October 5, 2016, “The Iranian Fashion Designers Changing The Status Quo, she writes

Iranhe Islamic dress code in Iran largely limits what people, especially women, are free to wear, and for many years, the designs emerging from Iran were uncreative and drab, with people turning to Western brands for stylish alternatives. Today, however, the tide is turning. The Culture Trip examines the fashion designers who are making a name for themselves in Iran and throughout the rest of the world and then lists the newer addition of Iranian designers to the world of fashion world.

ANAR DESIGN

Anar, which translates to ‘pomegranate’ in Persian, is the fashion brand started by Anousheh Assefi in 2006, and focuses on updating traditional Iranian fashion for a young and contemporary market. The brand specializes in lines of scarves and manteaus—a type of fashionable overcoat that is widely worn by women throughout Iran. Assefi successfully competes with foreign and international brands by showing a deep understanding of women’s fashion needs and requirements in Iran: while some manteaus can be heavy, shapeless, or limited to drab colors, Assefi uses a variety of vibrant and patterned fabrics, and pays great attention to the line and fit of all of her products, making them hugely attractive to her young and chic audience. Although women’s clothing can be greatly monitored and

restricted under the policies of the Iranian government, Assefi does not allow this to prevent her emphasis on style, modernity and beauty. Anar Design is currently an unregistered brand, and primarily uses social media promote its new lines and products.

AREFEH MANSOURI

Arefeh Mansouri was born in Iran, and immigrated to Canada at the age of 16, where she pursued Fashion Studies at Montreal’s LaSalle College. Mansouri’s work is mainly representative of high couture fashion, and she is best known for her range of unique, avant-garde wedding gowns and evening wear, which have been featured on the runways at New York Fashion Week. Mansouri does not limit herself to a signature style, however her designs include a range of sophisticated prêt-à-porter pieces, featuring elegant lines, muted colors and soft draping, vastly different yet as equally striking as her couture line. In recent years, Mansouri has expanded her oeuvre into costume design, heading wardrobe design for a number of films and TV movies. She is also a member of The Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, and of the Costume Designers Guild.

NAGHMEH KIUMARSI

Naghmeh Kiumarsi is considered one of the leaders of modern fashion in Iran today, and began designing and creating from a young age. Kiumarsi’s aesthetic beautifully blends Iranian tradition with contemporary design, seeking to reflect Iran’s heritage and culture through clothes that appeal to modern, fashionable women. Intricate embroidery, which recalls Iranian calligraphy and poetry, and patterns reflecting traditional geometric design all feature in her numerous pieces. Ki-

umarsi’s work mainly targets an Iranian audience; however, her work is gaining recognition worldwide, and she has recently launched her brand in the UAE, and selected as a designer for the fashion show at the Edinburgh Iranian Festival.

NIMA BEHNOUD

Nima Behnoud’s interest in fashion began in his teenage years, when he and his friends would customize their clothes with slogans, spray paint, and accessories and crash underground parties in Tehran to show off their work. Behnoud left Iran in 1994 for the United States, where he continued his interest in fashion, attending the prestigious Fashion Institute of Technology and setting about to perfect the style of his youth. Behnoud began to source secondhand and vintage items, altering and restitching them to create new and contemporary styles, on which he silkscreened Persian typography and poetry. This has led to Behnoud’s signature style; he uses Persian calligraphy, playing with its proportions and layering quotes on top of each other, in order to create unique, graphic patterns. Behnoud’s bold approach to Persian culture and fashion has made him a hugely popular designer, and his works have been featured in Vogue and The Washington Times.

POOSH

Poosh, or Pooshema, is the wildly popular clothing brand launched by designer Farnaz Abdoli. A student of graphic design, Abdoli was frustrated by the limited options when it came to women’s street wear in Iran. She decided to address the problem herself, with the intention to design a line of women’s fashion that would have all the elements of contemporary fashion, and still adhere to the Islamic dress code. The result is Poosh, a brand that makes

global fashion trends accessible to Iranian women. Unlike many other brands, Poosh is a registered brand, meaning its products are approved by the authorities and the Ministry of Culture.

RADAA

Launched by Maryam Vahidzadeh in 2012, Radaa’s fashion aesthetic appeals to the quirky youth of Iran, with a mixture of playful prints, colorblock tights and dramatic accessories. Vahidzadeh prides herself on making wearable fashion, steering clear of fussy garments and uncomfortable cuts. Her brand has become registered in recent months, but Vahidzadeh continues to run a great deal of her business through her Facebook page, promoting new lines and communicating with clients. Through her work, Vahidzadeh – like many other designers – is encouraging creativity and expression through fashion in Iran itself, and encouraging Iranians to seek out their own form of fashion, rather than automatically turning to Western brands.



a work by Poosh

Meet The Woman Behind Sofreh, NYC's Most Exciting Persian Restaurant

Sai Mokhtari
gothamist.com



Every Persian restaurant I've ever been to has been a copy of the previous one. White tablecloths, heavy wooden chairs, photographs of Persian ruins or Iranian architectural marvels, and the exact same menu every time. When Iranians in the States get together, we sometimes wonder who among us will break the mold and offer a fresh take on Persian cuisine in a sleek and contemporary environment. Enter Nasim Alikhani. Born in Isfahan and a graduate of Tehran University, she moved to America right after the revolution, and has now opened up her first restaurant, *Sofreh*, in Prospect Heights. This is not your grandparents' Persian restaurant.

In Farsi, *sofreh* is literally a fabric on which food is served, either on the ground or a table. Family meals are placed on the *sofreh* and this is where everyone gathers to eat—but its meaning and significance extend far beyond that. Each Iranian holiday or milestone has its own traditional *sofreh*. There's a *sofreh* for the New Year, one for weddings and then there's the *Sofreh Nazr*—a female tradition—which was Nasim's inspiration for the name. A *Sofreh Nazr* is a spread made for friends, family and even strangers when a wish or prayer has been fulfilled. It's very common in Iranian and Islamic culture to make a vow to cook a *Sofreh Nazri* for others to help a wish come true. This idea of food as karmic or emotional currency is part of Iranian culture and very present in Alikhani's outlook on life.

Nasim grew up learning to cook from the women in her family, most notably her mother, her aunts and her grandmother. Amongst these women, food and cooking were expressions of love, care and duty that gave meaning to life. Alikhani tells me her mother would wake at up at 5 a.m. every day to make the family food before going to work as a teacher. And her grandmother, who had a limp due to polio, insisted on cooking for her family every day, despite their protests—she even cooked a meal the morning of the day she died. And Nasim recalls a time when she herself had pneumonia, but made two days worth of food for her children before checking herself into the hospital.

"I love hard labor" says Alikhani, "I define myself and my role in life through work." She

describes cooking as "a way to feel good about my existence. An artist creates. I cook."

Food was always a way of life for her, but it was unthinkable to pursue cooking as a career. Instead she studied law, worked as a nanny, and later opened a print shop. Nasim later sold her printing business and began looking at spaces to finally open her first restaurant just as she found out she was pregnant with twins. Her plans for her restaurant were put on hold as she immersed herself in caring for her children and expressing her love for them through food, just as the women who raised her. As her children grew, Nasim poured more of her time into food, now cooking for local charities, homeless shelters and friends' weddings. Cooking was her way of feeling useful she said, "it makes me feel good. I need to cook. When there is no one to feed...you might as well feed a homeless shelter."

By the time her children were teenagers, Nasim realized it was time to turn her attention back to her dream of starting her own restaurant. "30 years in the making," *Sofreh* is Nasim Alikhani's first restaurant but it's more like her third child. She began traveling extensively throughout Iran, visiting different regions and collecting recipes from around the country. She spoke about the different ways the same dish would change as she travelled from the ethnically Turkish areas to Kurdish areas and so on, and how these travels expanded her idea of Persian cuisine beyond the food typically found in the big cities.

When her children entered high school, she began looking for her restaurant space in Brooklyn. Driving around the neighborhoods she loved, she found this particular space on St. Marks Ave. and Flatbush about 7 years ago. It took around a year before it was theirs, and she thought she would be able to open for business a year or two later. It took six.

The process became complicated due to Landmark Laws, as the building sits on the edge of historic Prospect Heights. During the six years it took to prepare the building, Nasim started a test kitchen at home and began fine tuning her own recipes. She went to culinary school and interned in the kitchens of a few chef friends, working as a line cook and a prep

cook. Speaking about her experiences during this time, she notes that more than anything, she learned what she didn't want to do. "I did not want a high-stress kitchen...a kitchen that runs like a business. I wanted a kitchen where everybody feels like a family."

Atmosphere is a big part of what sets *Sofreh* apart from every other Iranian restaurant. It's an airy space with minimal decor and high ceilings that might feel cold and sterile if it wasn't so well loved. The arches above the bar are inspired by her grandmother's home in Isfahan and the door knobs mimic the ancient door knockers found outside the gates of the oldest homes in Iran. It's clear that the space has been meticulously put together. It is sleek and modern, but distinctly Iranian in its details.

"We always wanted a minimal approach, but we didn't want to end up with a space that feels Scandanavian." She describes a very intense and collaborative effort between herself, her husband Theodore Petroulas, and her art director Rozhia Tabnak. Her husband did much of the interior concrete work and even made the concrete tables himself and together, they carved the Persian calligraphy into the concrete wall that reads SOFREH. Rozhia made the bathroom her personal obsession—plastering all four walls and the ceiling of the upstairs bathroom with posters from pulpy Iranian movies from the '70. This bit of cheekiness was important to them, as they wanted to breathe a bit of humor into an otherwise austere space. They even have a projector in the downstairs bathroom that plays these retro movies on the wall across the toilet.

The space is unlike any other Persian restaurant I've ever seen but the most surprising thing about *Sofreh* is the menu. Absent are many of the greatest hits that have been on repeat at all other Persian restaurants. Though you may still start with a traditional cheese and herb plate, or Ash (soup), from there the menu diverges into new and rewarding territory. *Sofreh* offers fresh spins on well-known dishes along with more obscure flavors from different regions around Iran. My personal favorite is the Spicy White Fish,

served with a flavorful herb and tamarind sauce. The Persian Plum Chicken is another favorite, and feels like a fresh mix of a few well known dishes I've grown up with. I also suggest ordering anything eggplant. The eggplant appetizer is fantastic and the smoked eggplant is intensely flavorful and great for sharing.

The cocktail menu is also impressive, seamlessly blending uniquely Iranian flavors to create truly impressive drinks. The Saffron Vesper offers the most classically Persian flavor profile, as its mix of saffron and rose water remind me of every Persian desert I've ever had, minus the sugar. The Zereshk Sour is also a lot of fun, a nod to the uniquely Iranian zereshk or barberry, made with housemade zereshk syrup and garnished with a sprinkle of these iconic and precious berries.

Alikhani and her team have created a beautiful and welcoming space to present an exciting array of uniquely Persian dishes. Especially now, she says, "as Iranian Americans we need to claim our space. Yes, I owe a lot to this country but I have given back a lot to this country. It's been a beautiful back and forth, and now I want to claim my space as an Iranian woman through food...to me this is a holy grail."

This is an important restaurant in the history of Persian cuisine and a pilgrimage all Iranians (and non-Iranians!) should make. It's taken a lifetime, namely hers, for Nasim to bring *Sofreh* into existence. She recounts the women in her family who planted this seed in her and taught her that life is about hard work, and that love is about food and food is about love. The stories of these incredible women, some who passed away before she was even born, live on through the recipes passed down to her. These women, she says, "never reached their maximum potential," and that is something she is determined not to repeat.

Nasim has photos of these women framed in the corner of the private dining area downstairs, as they are an important part of *Sofreh's* story. And for the women who never had a photograph of themselves, Nasim has written their names. Above this humble mural, she has hung a colander that once belonged to her aunt's grandmother as a light fixture to illuminate this small but important corner of her restaurant. She points to a tiny candle that has been sitting on the downstairs table beside us. "This is a candle I light every day for all the women in my family." She started this tradition on the very first day she cooked in her kitchen at *Sofreh*. "I sit down here with them every morning...I salute all seven of them. They all mean so much in my life...and I thank them for who I am. And then I start my work."



In Tribute to a Great Scientist and an August Personality

Marzie Nejad

On April of this year, Iranian community and scientific world of Physical Chemistry lost one of its prominent members, Dr. Reza Oboodi, an accomplished researcher and inventor. He had an immensely fruitful life up to the last days of his life, despite being thrown into the scene of a fierce and eventually losing battle ground, fighting against the mighty colon cancer for the last 14 years of his life. During this time, he worked, studied, learnt and produced while undergoing harsh diagnostic and surgical procedures, interminable chemotherapy courses and dealt with the drastic disease complications. Despite all of these, his passing was quite unexpected for everybody due to his ever-lively presence with his free-spirited attitude, and his most pleasant mood that all amazingly remained unchanged till the last moments of his consciousness. His loss, not only was a shocking stroke to his close-nit family and his scientific family, it was truly a very painful experience for many many people who knew him. But what makes this public announcement and tribute necessary is his great scientific achievements, marked by an extreme humility, as he never spoke of any of them to anybody. As his works deserve adulation, and his life deserves celebration, this commemorative announcement is shedding light on a hidden source of pride for all of us Iranians, all those who didn't know him and even all those who knew him closely. As this notification has an additional relevancy at the times that our nation has been coerced to stand in such a beleaguered and alienated status in our world, by making it pertinent for us more than ever to recognize with pride the jewels of our nation. Be this notice spreads just in our rather closed community or goes beyond, it acts as a psychological uplift and gratification for us all knowing about this one of a kind countryman of ours who paid noticeable contributions in making this world a better place for all.

Reza Oboodi was born in 1952, in Shooshtar, a rather small city in the south of Iran. After receiving his elementary education there, BS from Ahvaz U. and master's degree in chemistry from Shiraz U., he migrated to the US in 1978 for higher education and got his PHD in Physical Chemistry from Syracuse and post doctorate from New York university. Subsequently, he joined Allied Signal; "American Aerospace, Automotive and Engineering Allied Companies" that later on bought Honeywell company and changed its name to that. Dr. Oboodi while working as a physical chemistry researcher there, studied and received his MBA in technology and became the executive director of his group/lab called:

"Honeywell Aerospace Material and process Group". In simple language, the function of his field; Physical Chemistry science is formulation and synthesis of new chemical substances with specific physical properties like materials that are used in outer space, or engines for their resistance against extremely high or low temperature or pressure and so on.

One of Dr. Oboodi's first and very important invention was metallic based ceramic that has many applications in promoting modern technology. But this was the beginning of the show of his ingenuity. He was able to built multiple different sensors, each one is used in highly sophisticated technology and also has the potential to be used as an essential piece of new inventions by himself or others. He got seven patents only for his sensor series. This was such a great scientific success for Honeywell technology, that to honor him, his position sensor was marketed under his name; Reza Beam This is a piece used in Airbus plane, assuring the plane's safety, mentioned as an example here. In 2018, before his unexpected death, Honeywell decided on close out of its large 1000 employee facilities in NJ. From all the sections, only Dr. Oboodi's group was saved in recognition of its productiveness and efficiency under Reza's management. Many of his inventions remain unfinished unfortunately or are in the process of receiving patents.

Dr. Oboodi's ingenuity was not limited to his scientific mind and his amazing work ethics that enabled him to work to the last days of his life with practically non-functioning lungs. His other personal qualities were at the highest level of human values. His free spirit, sociabilities, and his talent in pleasant satire and sense of humor, made his presence highly noticeable in every gathering. His tremendous love of literature and poetry made him an irreplaceable member of these societies. He was talented in and loved singing Persian classic singing. To edify that, with his life-long fondness for learning, he started studying music seriously a couple of years ago. This newly-attained knowledge enabled him to deliver beautiful and correct rendition of songs while sharing them with friends. Sad to say that suddenly his voice and the joy of singing were taken away from him in the last year of his life by cancer invasion or one might say by the cruel nature, yet he continued by his other love, skillful and newfangled cooking!

Shining life like this never lose its luster, men like this never die.

Historic and Cultural Interactions Between Islam and Judaism, Muslims and Jews

part one

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ABSTRACT

There is a public perception that the Muslims and the Jews have an eternal animosity and have been in conflict through out their histories. However, Islam recognizes Judaism and Christianity as legitimate monotheistic faiths, and the Jews and the Christians as People of the Book who have received divine guidance. Moreover, in contrast to the Christians, Muslims did not consider the Jews as killers of God or God's son. Thus, there was no inherent theological conflict between the Muslims and the Jews. The early conflicts between the Muslims and the Jews in Medina were political in nature, between the new rising power of the Islamic community (Ummah) and the older established power centers by the Jewish tribes. During the Golden Age of Islamic Civilization, 9th-12th centuries CE, both the Muslim and the Jewish civilizations flourished in the Islamic centers of higher learning in Baghdad and al-Andalusia-Spain, and the Muslim territories was safe heaven for the Jewry of the world. Also, when Spain fell under the Spanish Catholic rule in 1492 and the Jews where being persecuted, it was the Ottoman Empire that send ships to rescue the Jews from Spain into the Muslim territories. The current conflicts between some of the Muslim countries and Israel is also of political and not ideological in nature.

Judaism and Islam are both true monotheistic Abrahamic religions that originated in the Middle East. The prophet Moses founded Judaism among the ancient Hebrews over 3,500 years ago (1500BCE = Before Common Era = Before Christ). The prophet Moses was a descendent of the prophet Abraham through his wife Sarah, their son Isaac, and their grandson Jacob (also known as Israel). The Torah (the Hebrew Bible = the Christian Old Testament = the first five books of the Bible [Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy]) is the foundational text of Judaism that encompasses the religion, philosophy and culture of the Jewish people. It is believed by the Jews that God gave the Tanakh (the written Torah [the Five Books

of Moses], Nevi'im ["Prophets"], and Ketuvim ["Writings"]) to the prophet Moses. The books of the Tanakh were passed on generations accompanied by the oral Torah (the Talmud: Mishnah & Gemara) that contains compiled rabbinic opinions and teachings from before the Common Era (BCE = BC) to the fifth century Common Era (CE = AD = After Death of Christ) on Jewish law & ethics, customs, history and philosophy.

The prophet Mohammad (570-632CE or AD) founded Islam in the 7th century (610CE) (1,400 years ago). The prophet Mohammad was a descendant of the prophet Abraham through Abraham's second wife Hagar, and Abraham's first-born son by Hagar, Ishmael. The primary sacred scripture of Islam is the Quran, which is considered by Muslims as the verbatim word of God. Other important Islamic sources are the teachings and normative example of the prophet Mohammad, which is called the Sunnah, composed of accounts called the Hadith. The books of Hadith that are considered most authentic in the Sunni Sect of Islam are called the Sihah Sittah (the six authentic books): Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Sunan Abu Dawood, Jamia Tirmizi, Sunan Nasai, Sunan Ibn Majah. The books of Hadith that are considered most authentic in the Shia Sect of Islam are called al-Kutub al-Arbaa'h (the four books): Kitab al-Kafi, Man la yahduruhu al-Fagih, Tahdhib al-Ahkam, and al-Istibsar.

In a short interval of 622 to 732CE (within a 110 years) Islam entered into the international stage, and became an important player in vast territories stretching from Iran to Spain, Morocco, northern Syria, and the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. Thus, Muslims from the beginning of their history (migration from Mecca to Medina, 622CE) have been in close contact with people of the Jewish and Christian faith.

There are many shared aspects between Islam and Judaism: both are strictly monotheistic and non-compromising in a transcendent, eternal and incorporeal God who is just and merciful, who guides

mankind through prophets, who prescribes laws of conduct for all daily matters from birth to death, and whom can be reached by way of prayer that should be directed to God and not to others with no need for intermediaries or clergy; a God who is aware of the thoughts and deeds of man, and who rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked justly. Both faiths believe that there is life after death, and both are messianic, believing in the coming of a savior at the end of days. Both faiths are very action-oriented, with religious acts and rituals mandated by God that should be performed routinely and correctly. Christianity, on the other hand, is more about faith and feeling in the heart. Both faiths (Judaism & Islam) describe in detail how a righteous life should be conducted on a daily basis from the time of birth to one's death, in accordance with God's mandates. While Jesus himself was born into a Jewish household and Jewish tradition and followed these rules, the Christians led by Saint Paul abandoned these rules claiming that the coming of Jesus meant loss of validity of the Jewish laws. The very elaborate and intricate system of laws and jurisprudence is called "Halakha" in Judaism and "Sharia" in Islam. Both are paths for a believer to reaffirm his/her covenant with the creator. For both faiths, the letter of the law is as important as its spirit. Both legal systems go into detail of how one should conduct his/her daily living matters at a personal and community level, and in relation to God. There are permissible (Kosher or Halal) and impermissible foods, specific ways to sacrifice animals for human consumption, prescribed daily prayers and rules on washing before prayers, rules about place of prayer, prescribed fasting at specific times, rules on spousal relationship, laws on inheritance, marriage, divorce, child custody, adultery, financial conflicts, stealing, treason, rituals after birth, circumcision of male offspring, and rituals at burial of the dead.

Scholars of both faiths spend tremendous time extracting these legal codes from the sacred text (the Torah and the Quran)

and the oral commentaries (the Talmud and the Hadith books), and pass judicial treatises. In both faiths, learning about religious and divine laws is a form of prayer and worship, and a fulltime occupation for religious scholars and leaders (rabbis and ulema). These religious scholars act as interpreters of the law for their communities in religious matters and do not have any liturgical role, as in the case of Christian priests, since in both Judaism and Islam, the believers directly pray to God, with no need for intermediaries. They also served as judges and arbitrators in community conflicts. In both faiths there has been emphasis on memorization of the sacred text in early childhood. Over time, the synagogues and the mosques that used to serve as the community centers, courts of law and centers of higher education, became devoted exclusively to the study of religious legal matters to an extreme extent, and focused more on the past commentaries and oral traditions than their original sacred texts, i.e. the Torah and the Quran.

Islam considers the Christians and the Jews as legitimate communities of believers in God. They are referred to in the Quran and the Hadith as “people of the Book” (Ahl al-Kitab), who have received divine guidance through two highly revered prophets, i.e., the prophet Moses and the prophet Jesus. The prophet Moses is mentioned 136 times and the Children of Israel (Banu Israel = children of Jacob) 43 times in the Quran. There are five major chapters in the Quran that are devoted significantly to the story of the prophet Moses and Banu Israel, namely the second chapter (Al-Baqara - The Cow), chapter 20 (Ta-Ha), chapter 26 (Ash-Shu'ara - The Poets), chapter 27 (An-Naml - The Ants), and chapter 28 (Al-Qasas - The Stories). And, over 16 verses in the Quran emphasize that the Quran has come to affirm the truth in the Bible and the Torah, and not to reject them, emphasizing their role in human guidance (Quran 5:46, 66, 68).¹

The early interactions between Muslims and Jews were very positive. Mohammad considered them to be his natural allies and admired them as true monotheists. The earliest verses of the Quran were very sympathetic to the Jews. Unlike the Christians, Muslims did not view the Jews as deicides (killers of “God”) (the Quran claims that the Jews did not kill Jesus; Quran 4:157)² and did not attribute evil to the Jews. The Quran did not present itself as the fulfillment of the Hebrew bible, but rather as a restoration of its original message. The

Quran praises the prophet Moses, depicts Israelites as the recipients of divine favors, and in many of its verses glorifies the Hebrew prophets (Quran 6:85),³ and mentions God’s favors to the Children of Israel that made them excel among the nations of their time (Quran 2:47, 122).⁴

On the 11th year of Mohammad’s prophet hood (622CE), because of the heightened persecutions against the Muslims and an attempt to assassinate the prophet Mohammad in Mecca, and after repeated invitations from people of Yathrib (later named Medina), the prophet Mohammad, along with some 200 immigrants from Mecca (called the “Muhajerun”) fled to Yathrib (Medina). The event hallmarks the beginning of the Islamic calendar, al-Hijra. This was at the invitation of the people of Medina, who were comprised of 2 prominent rival Arab tribes (Aus & Khazraj), which had been in a seemingly never-ending perpetual fight for centuries. The prophet Mohammad was appointed as the governor, judge and arbitrator of this city. In Medina, along with the Muslim immigrants from Mecca (the “Muhajerun” = the emigrants) were the newly converts of Medina (the “Ansar” = the helpers), some remaining idol worshipers, some Christians, and 3 powerful Jewish tribes. In the very beginning, the prophet Mohammad drew a “social contract” known as the “Constitution of Medina” or “Medina Charter”, a kind of alliance or federation among the prevailing communities in Medina. It upheld a peaceful coexistence between the Muslims, Christians, Jews and other city dwellers in a new, inclusive concept of Umma (community of the citizens), granting them freedom of religious thought and practices.

It was a formal agreement guaranteeing interfaith, multicultural coexistence, including articles emphasizing strategic cooperation in the defense of the city, and prohibiting any alliance with the outside enemies. It also declared that disputes would be referred to the prophet Mohammad for arbitration. It was acknowledged in the contract “the Jews will profess their religion, and the Muslims theirs,” or “to the Jews, their own expenses, and to the Muslims, theirs. They shall help one another in the event of any attack on the people covered by this document. There shall be sincere friendship and exchange of goods, good counsel, fair conduct and no act of treason between them.”

The prophet Mohammad expected the Jews of Medina to be his natural allies and

accept his prophet hood, since his message was in alliance with their long-standing tradition of monotheism, confirming the truth that had been revealed to them from God in the Torah. However, as the conversion of the perpetually fighting pagan tribes of Medina to Islam united them in a Muslim Umma (community of the faithful) and the Muslims gained more power, tribal politics led the Jewish tribes of Medina to worry about this newly rising power. They refused to accept Mohammad’s prophet hood, and in the subsequent years that was happened between the Meccan pagans (Quraysh tribes) and the Muslims of Medina the Jewish tribes secretly sided with the offending pagans. Moreover, on religious grounds the Jews were skeptical of a non-Hebrew prophet. While the prophet Mohammad had no prejudice against the Jews and considered his message as substantially the same as theirs, this initially peaceful coexistence soon ended. Around 2 years after Hijra (immigration of Muslims to Medina) the direction of prayer (qibla) of Muslims changed from Jerusalem to Mecca (624CE = 2AH), further emphasizing the identity of the new faith (Islam) as distinct from Judaism.

The 3 powerful Jewish tribes in Medina were the Banu Qaynuqa, the Banu Nadir, and the Banu Qurayza. The Banu Qaynuqa were expelled from Medina after the Battle of Badr (624CE; 2AH), wherein the first armed confrontation Muslims decisively defeated the pagan forces of Mecca (Quraysh tribe). According to Ibn Ishaq (85-151AH),⁵ shortly after this victory, a Muslim woman was disrespected by a Jewish merchant in the Jewish quarter of goldsmiths, by stripping off her dress and head-cover. A Muslim man who came upon the resulting commotion killed the Jewish merchant. A Jewish mob of the Qaynuqa tribe killed the Muslim man in retaliation. This led to a great turmoil in the city. The prophet Mohammad gathered the Jews of the Banu Qaynuqa in the bazaar, warning them to stop escalating hostilities or they would face the same fate of the Meccan pagans in the Battle of Badr. He also asked the Jews to accept him as a prophet of God. The prophet Mohammad was mocked over his victory over the Meccan pagans, and the Battle of Badr was ridiculed and claimed as insignificant. He was further told that the Muslims would not dare to confront the Jews. The event led to a siege of the Qaynuqa Jewish fortresses and their expulsion from Medina.

to be continued

The First Iranian-American to be inducted in the USA Martial Arts Hall of Fame

On Saturday, May 19th, actress Vida Ghaffari and many celebrities and luminaries in the martial arts were to be inducted into the prestigious USA Martial Arts Hall of Fame at their gala at the Doubletree Hilton in Los Angeles. Ghaffari was bestowed with the Trailblazer Award. She is the first person of Iranian descent to be inducted.

This renowned Hall of Fame was founded by Grandmaster Jim Thomas, Ph.D./D.Sc./Ma.Dsc. Dr. Thomas is a 10th degree grand master and is recognized as one of 20 worldwide. He has been active in the martial arts for over half a century. In addition to serving as the head coach for Team USA, he was inducted into 6 various martial arts 'Hall of Fame' institutions and listed in 'Who's - Who' in the world of Martial Arts. Grandmaster Thomas has won over 200 awards and trophies and served in the U.S. Air Force for 7 years during the Vietnam Evacuation Era. He was a former athlete for the USA World Class Competition Team and has appeared in over 8 Martial Arts Motions pictures.

The U.S.A. Martial Arts 'Hall of Fame' "Hall of Heroes" was originally created in 1976 by Grand Master Robert Trias, the first man to open a martial arts school in the U.S. In its beginning it was very small in nature and was done spontaneously at various Martial Arts functions. Grandmaster Thomas and Mike Day were called upon to orchestrate this function into what it is today. Even with the passing of Grandmaster Trias and Day, Thomas has kept this event alive himself and includes new exciting things each and every year!

Ghaffari has been active on the Tinsel town scene as an award-



winning actress and voiceover artist. This comedic powerhouse is best known for her appearances on the television comedies, Mind of Mencia on Comedy Central, Jimmy Kimmel Live on ABC and The Mindy Project formerly on FOX. These projects cap off a number of successes for the versatile starlet. She just wrapped a supporting role in Nation's Fire, which will be distributed by Universal opposite two-time Oscar nominee Bruce Dern, Emmy winner Gil Bellows, Laurene Landon and UFC Champion Chuck Liddell. Her other film, the much buzzed about Holy Terror opposite Mel Novak (Bruce Lee's Game of Death, Black Belt Jones) and Kristine DeBell (Meatballs, The

Big Brawl). Holy Terror is climbing up the charts and is #11 on Amazon Prime UK. She's gotten local, national and international press from this project and was billed as the Persian Linda Blair from her work in this role. Vida also just shot Hybristophilia with Quinton Aaron (The Blind Side with Sandra Bullock). She has a recurring role in the 3 time Peabody Award nominated Suspense Show on XM satellite radio. She has been bestowed awards by The City of Los Angeles, The West Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, the World Networks, the Los Angeles Nollywood Film Association, The Universe Multicultural Film Festival, The WIND International Film Festival, and the Lucky Strike Film Festival among others. Ever the fashionista, Vida recently graced the cover of noted fashion magazine FVM Global Magazine twice as well as Shine On Hollywood Magazine and 1st Class Magazine and was quoted about her knowledge of red carpet fashion for the Oscars by US News and World Report. Ghaffari has also studied kickboxing.

HOWARD C. BASKERVILLE

H. Guilak, M.D.

Who was Howard Conklin Baskerville? What was he doing in Iran? How did he get there? Probably most Iranians don't have the slightest idea of who he was? The story goes back over a century, and to be exact in the third decade of the nineteenth century.

In 1828-29 the first Americans were sent to Iran. They were missionaries from the Presbyterian Church, destined for the city of Urumiyeh in the state of Azerbaijan, on the northwestern corner of Iran. The goal of the mission was helping the Assyrian refugees. These escapees sought refuge in Iran because of the cruelty and brutality of the Russians and the Turks. The first missionaries were Dr. Timothy Dwight and Reverend Eli Smith, who settled in the city of Urumiyeh.

The scope of the operation widened as the time went on. In 1834 Reverend Justin Perkins and his wife were sent to Tabriz, Azerbaijan and a year later Dr. Asahel Grant and his wife joined the group.

The group was able to open the first evangelical mission in Urumiyeh in 1835. In 1839, Reverend Perkins received a decree from Mohammad Shah Ghajar (1808-1848/King 1834-1848) permitting him to open a school for teaching mathematics, physics, geometry, and science. In 1840, the mission received a portable printing machine, which they used to facilitate the teaching process as well as their communications. In 1880, the Persian fonts were added to the printer, giving missionaries a freer hand to reach the public.

With the Persian font, they were able to print pamphlets for the Iranian freedom fighters. The mission in 1848, began publishing a periodical called "The ray of Light," regularly printed until the start of the WWI. The mission grew larger and broadened its scope of function from education to health, it opened hospitals and clinics in several areas of the country and gave the native the benefit of much-advanced medical practice.

Fast forward to the twentieth century, and toward the end of the first decade, the era that we will be dealing with, "the epoch of Howard C. Baskerville." I feel it will be appropriate to begin the subject by the first impression of one of his students, Dr. R. S. Shafagh.

"I was one of the part-time students

of the American Memorial School founded by the Presbyterian Board in Tabriz, my native city. I was about fifteen.... It was in the schoolyard; I believe that we were introduced to a handsome young man with bright blue eyes, smiling through his glasses, "This is the new teacher", we were told, "His name is Baskerville."

Dr. R. S. Shafagh

HOWARD CONKLIN BASKERVILLE:

He was born on April 10, 1885, in North Platte, Nebraska, and graduated from Princeton University, School of Theology in 1907. Following his graduation, he signed a three-year contract with the Presbyterian Mission Board and sent to Tabriz for teaching science and English at the American Memorial School.

As a Youngman of exceptional quality, he soon made many friends, not only among the Americans but amid the Iranians, mainly his students. One of his colleagues, Dr. E. M. Dodd, described him: "I remember him as eager, earnest, determined and hard working. He always seemed busy and going somewhere. He had high ideals and was deeply religious..."

Shortly after his arrival, he befriended an Iranian patriot and nationalist, Hossein Sharifzadeh, and was influenced by the thinking of this newly found acquaintance. The assassination of Sharafzadeh by the Iranian government left an extremely bitter taste with the young American teacher. The incident brought him closer to his students, in particular with one; S. R. Shafagh (later Dr. Shafagh, Professor of Persian Literatures at Tehran University).

Dr. Shafagh recounts an incident that Baskerville called him into his office, sometime in 1908 and asked him about the upheaval that was going on in the city of Tabriz. Shafagh stated that he told him what he knew of, which was not very much. Shafagh goes on and declares that Baskerville reciprocated by giving him a short chronicle of the American War of Independence.

Early 1900 was a turbulent time in the history of Iran. The nationalist and patriots were gathering their power to fight the corrupt kings of the Ghajar Dynasty. In 1907 Mohammad Ali Shah was crowned



as the King. He was against the democracy and the democratic rules and imprisoned many of the freedom seekers and killed a number of them. He dissolved the Parliament (Majles) which in his view as a menace to his reign.

Mohammad Ali Shah's action caused severe upheaval throughout the nation. Riots started, almost all over the country. In Tabriz (Azerbaijan) the nationalists gathered under the leadership of Sattar Khan fighting against the nefarious Shah. The city was under siege by the central government force for months, and the people were in the verge of starvation.

Baskerville followed the incident closely and hurt deeply of what he witnessed: starvation, pain, and disease were rampant. Children were suffering the most. The young teacher, emotionally, could not tolerate viewing the sceneries around the town. Sara McDowell, daughter of Dr. Wright (missionary), wrote: "... While he was (Baskerville) in Tabriz the city was in the siege, and the people starving. I remember vividly, the children with a distended stomach as a result of eating grass.... These conditions worked much on the sensitive spirit of Mr. Baskerville...."

Baskerville familiarized himself with the history of his host nation. He became an ardent critic of the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Gray, who conspired with Russians to divide the country in 1907, into three spheres of influence. He joined his students and formed a militia group and began giving them military training. Their only firearms were the

Short German Rifles obtained from the city's army.

Members of the School were not enchanted about this undertaking. He defied Dr. Samuel Graham Wilson's (The headmaster) request to not interfere with the internal affairs of the host country. The Reverend's wife, Annie Wilson, who was born in Iran, wrote to Baskerville's family of her concerns for him, and also telling him, "You know, you are not your own...." To which he responded, "No, I am Persia's."

Baskerville and his militia force joined Sattar Khan's militia. However, the Iranian leader did wish for the American to engage in his teaching duties and let the Iranians fight for their difficulties. Baskerville's mind was made up, he wanted to be part of the people that he came to love and that they loved him.

On April 9, 1909, Sattar Khan gathered all his men for a final decision. On that day, the American Consul in Tabriz, William F. Doty, pays him a visit. He was visibly uncomfortable with Baskerville's decision. Sattar Khan asked Shafagh to be the interpreter. He explained his position well, of not wanting for the American to engage in any activities outside of his assigned duties.

The Consul, turning to Baskerville, addressed him, "As an official representative of the United States of America, I am compelled to remind you that as an American citizen you have no right to interfere with the internal politics of this country.... You are here to act as a teacher not as revolutionary.... I advise you to give up this idea and join the school,"

Baskerville's response was, "I thank you for your kindness, but I cannot remain calm and watch indifferently the suffering of a people fighting for their rights. I am an American citizen and proud of it, but I am also a human being.... I assure you I am not afraid of any fatal consequence, and I am determined to serve the national cause of Persia."

IRAN UNVEILS FIRST DOMESTIC FIGHTER JET

Iran has unveiled its first domestically designed and manufactured fighter jet named "Kowsar" during a defense show in Tehran. The aircraft conducted its first public display flight during the ceremony in the presence of President Hassan Rouhani, Defense Minister Brigadier and other senior military officials.



Mehr News August 21, 2018

On that fatal day of April 19, 1909, Baskerville with his militia was confronting the Iranian government's troop. There was no real officer in charge, the highest was a Sargent. He advised the American not to stand up and not to attack until all forces are ready and the sign is given. Unfortunately, Baskerville stood up and commence the attack, it did not take long that he fell by a bullet. Shafagh wrote that "Someone screamed, the American is hit." The nationalists ordered to a collective attack, they were looking for time to recover the wounded.

"The students were the first to reach their teacher, and with the help of several others, we brought him back to safety. I held his head over my chest and noticed the blood was gushing from beneath his necktie. In a few moments, he gave out his last breath." Shafagh wrote.

His death shook the nation. The editorials of almost every newspapers in the country were about the sacrifice of that young American. On November 15, 1909, in the second session of the National Assembly, his contribution to the nation was recognized. He was given the title of "The American Lafayette." Taghi Zadeh gave a great speech at that session of Majles. Books were written about him by most famous writers in the nation, i.e., Kasravi, Senator Malek Zadeh, etc.

A group of Tabriz's businessmen commissioned the artists to make a carpet on his image. In 1950, a metal tablet prepared and with the approval of the American Ambassador in Tehran was placed on his tomb. The tablet engraved with a poem from the Iranian revolutionary poet, Aref, regarding Baskerville:

*"Oh, thou, the revered defender of the freedom of men,
Brave leader and supporter of the justice and equity.
Thou hast given thy life for the felicity of Iran,
O, may thy name be eternal, may thy soul be blessed."*

Open-Air Museum of Ancient Watermills



Some 50 kilometers north of Yazd, central Iran, lies the sprawling mud-brick city of Meybod, whose tourism officials are planning to internationally promote it as the "city of watermills". Meybod seeks UNESCO status for long being a cradle of watermills and for its cultural evolution of water supply through the millennia, ISNA reported.

Meybod Governor Hossein Fallah said that the city embraces 22 historical watermills some of which have been or are to be restored while some are forgotten in the course of time. "Three of its watermills including the "double stone watermill of Mohammad-Abad" have been prioritized to be fully restored in close collaboration with the private sector in a bid to become tourist destinations," the official explained.

Iran is situated in an arid and semi-arid region where, due to inequitable distribution of surface water, its people have been enduring extreme hardship to meet water demands for millennia. Construction of dams, qanats (underground aqueducts), cisterns and *yakhchals* (ice houses) date back to the ancient times in Iran with the aim of countering fluctuation of yearly seasonal streams and ensuring to have better conditions for utilization of water. An initiative pursued by ancient Iranians was to tap into water's concealed powers to rotate the stones of watermills. Watermills were typically constructed in accordance with the then design requirements for instance they featured dome-shaped roofs with high-enough vestibules to allow camels or other livestock to move back and forth with ease in order to convey grains or flour. The watermills as their names implies were connected to river flows, springs, qanats or other water sources usually through man-made ditched canals. Meybod's double stone watermill of Mohammad-Abad is an amazing hydraulic structure created at a depth of 40 meter on a qanat corridor. It used to supply all flour requirements of the neighboring villages. The mill nears a village of the same name, some 50 km away from Yazd.

Afshin Majlesi , Tehran Times, 08.16.2018

Farewell to Legendary Iranian Actor EZZATOLLAH ENTEZAMI



Friends and fans joined Ezzatollah Entezami's family in the courtyard of Tehran's Vahdat Hall on Saturday to attend the funeral of the legendary actor who died on Friday at the age of 94.

Entezami was one of Iran's golden generation of actors such as Davud Rashidi, Mohammad-Ali Keshavarz, Ali Nasirian and Jamshid Mashyekhi, who began his career in acting with traditional Iranian performances.

Actor Parviz Parastui, who served as the host of the funeral ceremony, said that no one can replace Entezami in Iranian cinema and added, "He embraced a world of acting secrets and mysteries within himself."

Entezami's old friend Ali Nasirian was called on stage next to tell of his good moments with Entezami.

He expressed his thanks to the people who gathered to bid farewell with their national actor.

"He belonged to the people. He breathed life into the roles he played from within his own soul and spirit. He visualized the roles with all his heart and then played them. That is why they have all been carved in our hearts and turned out to be eternal.

"He is not dead, he is still alive with all the works he has done throughout the years," he said.

Fatemeh Motamed-Arya who co-starred with Entezami in Rakhshan Bani-Etemad's 1995 acclaimed drama "The Blue-Veiled" next appeared on stage to say goodbye to the master.

"We are all here to say goodbye to the individual who taught us hope and discipline. There is no reason to cry. When someone is registered on the history of Iran forever, there is no need to cry for him. He was always energetic, decent and disciplined," she said.

"Do not cry for the national history of Iran and learn to live like the one who always lived with respect and dignity," she noted.

"I cry in my heart for him but I know that artists enjoy a high position, and they are eternal. I wish that all artists would live with dignity and respect like him," she concluded.

Culture Minister Seyyed Abbas Salehi also delivered a short speech at the ceremony.

"His dignity and morals made him an everlasting actor. He was rooted in the culture of this land. He lived with art, and knew the value of this gem. He was careful in choosing his roles and breathed life into the roles he played. He is not gone, he is still with us," he noted.

Entezami's son, Majid, called his father a gem that he could not keep and save forever. He also thanked all the organizations who helped him hold the funeral ceremony in the best way possible.

Entezami was taken to Behesht Zahra Cemetery and buried in the Artists Section of the cemetery.

Manijeh Rezapoor, Tehran Times