



Persian Heritage

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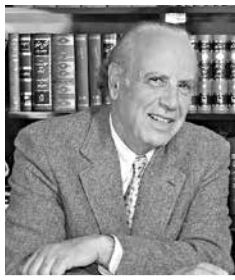
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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Norouz is a symbol of rebirth, joy and the celebration of the arrival of spring. It is the beginning of a new year for Iranians. Instead of being filled with joy and happiness this Norouz finds the people of Iran with more suffering, more worries, more sadness, more anxiety and more agony. Despite this suffering that is visible to those of us outside of Iran and seems to have become part of their daily routine, we still try to engage in celebration. We still extend our best wishes for a healthy, happy and prosperous Norouz to those who celebrate around the world. The arrival of Norouz coincides with the 25th anniversary of *Persian Heritage* magazine. I want to personally thank all those who make *Persian Heritage* a success; our dedicated workforce, our contributors, our subscribers, our readers and our sponsors.

The focus of the first few years of *Persian Heritage's* publication was creating a magazine that concentrated on Persian art and culture and the significance Iran and Iranians have made in the world. We were determined to show the world the history and accomplishments of all who share Iranian/Persian heritage. We focused on a history that goes back thousands of years; one with a proud culture. We encouraged the younger generation Iranians to continue their cultural values and explained the importance of passing their traditions and customs down to their children. We did this through articles and interviews.

THEN CAME THE HOSTAGE CRISIS, and with it the incarceration of political prisoners, executions, political asylum cases and the Diaspora who wandered around the world looking for a country that would take them in; a place they could make a new home and a new life. Some believed and hoped it would be temporary, others realized that Iran's future would be a struggle. Many years have passed since the Revolution. The circumstances in Iran have become more unbearable; conditions have worsened, and the number of political prisoners increased. Currently over two hundred thousand prisoners remain in the dungeon like conditions of the Iranian prison system. Iran became oppressors with the numbers of prisoners and executions compatible with countries such as China, Saudi Arabia and the US. In fact, Iran surpasses these countries in the number of executions. It is ironic and sad to see the country where I grew up, who taught harmony, love, compassion and respect for your neighbor, now professes oppression against the young, old, men and women.

In analyzing the situation, it is easy to see why the young people, willing to sacrifice their freedom and lives to voice their opinions, are being executed by this regime, without remorse! THEIR VOICES CAN ONLY BE HEARD IF THEY ARE NOT MUTED! It is Ironic that this regime, in the name of a religion that preaches truth, morals and values, does nothing but lie to

their people. They sensationalize and create their own events in order to redirect the people's interests from their quest for human rights and other issues of concern. This government's technique started with the horrific war between Iran and Iraq. After three years of fighting, Saddam was willing to end and pay retributions, but the Iranian regime continued the war for another five years. This war, in defense of Iran's borders lasted eight years and cost the lives of thousands of innocent people and trillions of dollars in damages.

Every time Iran got closer to mending its relationship with the West, due to this regime's inability or bad policymaking and in order to divert their citizen's legitimate protest against them, they created another international conflict. They did this through intentional actions and words. They did this with the specific intention to silence the discontent of the Iranian people AND to cover up their own CORRUPT policies and ineptness.

Look at the neighboring countries of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Dubai, Qatar and Turkey. They have provided a stable economy and life for their citizens. These countries have created a future for their youth allowing them to benefit from the fruits of their labor. The regime in Iran has done nothing but create more misery for its people (young and old). It has destabilized the country and thrown it into an economic crisis! They have placed their citizens and the future of the youth in great peril. I fear the strength and the spirit of the people of Iran has been weakened by this regime's rhetoric but pray that their determination has not been broken!

The destabilization of Iran's economy, by this regime, has allowed them more power against their citizens. They have become, like weeds, so deeply rooted in Iran's soil that I fear it is becoming almost impossible, short of a war, to pull them from their grasp of power. The people's voices, in protest to the injustices and suffering placed on them and the women disputing their right to wear or not wear the Hijab, are being quickly silenced. They are being jailed or worse murdered!

In recent months there have been new uprisings in Iran. They have resulted in an estimated four-five thousand deaths committed by the government (contrary to the government's estimate of a few hundred.) Interesting enough there is no way to verify the accuracy of the numbers, but even one death of an innocent person, speaking out for their rights, is unacceptable.

The people of Iran are looking to be heard. They no longer want anything to do with this regime. The inflation and sanctions imposed on them, because of this regime's behavior, has crippled the economy. People are tired of living in these conditions. According to the U.S. Secretary of State Pompeo, Iran has lost over fifty billion dollars because of the sanctions. Despite the U.S.'s position that these sanctions are not affecting food

and medication delivery to Iran, the sanctions are impacting the flow of these goods getting to the people in Iran. These are the effects of the present regime's policies; a regime that is brutal and shows no mercy for its people. A regime that has allowed deaths of thousands and the suffering of millions.

After the shameful announcement by the Ministry of Petroleum of an increase in the price of gasoline, the people of Iran poured into the streets in defiance. This defiance cost many their lives. Parents of the victims were unable to find and recover the bodies of their dead children and family members. Next came the Ukrainian plane crash, a tragic event that resulted in the loss of men, women and children. The world and Iranians were shocked by the television images of the plane being struck by an Iranian missile. So obvious and yet this regime at first denied responsibility. The reason for the downing of this airplane remains unknown. Now the Iranian people are dealing with the *coronavirus*. It is interesting how the *coronavirus* has once again, diverted the people away from finding the truth about the Ukrainian airplane.

The Iranian people have dealt with years of suffering and unspeakable tragedies. With the results of the recent Parliamentary elections in Iran, it appears there will be little relief from that suffering. It is obvious that the choices of the participants in these elections once again shows the lack of credibility this regime holds with its citizens. The people did not show up to the polls! How and why would they, when there were no choices to activate a change in the course of their government or their future. According to a friend in Iran, I was informed that less than forty percent turned out to vote. The people believed that not voting would be a silent protest against the government; a way to demonstrate their disapproval of this regime. It has been stated that after the Revolution seventy-five percent of the public voted **yes** to the electoral candidates. The results of this Parliamentary vote yielded a seventy-five percent vote of **no**. This is evidence of the lack of public support for this regime and its policies; it hopefully demonstrates that this regime is on a downward path and will soon be removed, (BUT WHAT WILL BE THE COST)?

It is this regime that knew of the existence of the *coronavirus* in Iran prior to these elections. Yet there was no public announcement about the dangers of this virus on the people; yet another betrayal by this regime on its people and world citizens living and working in Iran. Their delay in announcing the virus and precautions to be taken is why the spread of the virus in Iran was rapid and unavoidable! How is it possible for the Deputy Minister of Health to stand on the stage and deny the widespread effect of the virus in Iran? In the end, he ultimately contracted the virus.

This complacency, denial and lack of concern for Iranian citizens is another example of this regimes inability or desire to place its citizens first. It is another example of how their own power wealth and wellbeing trumps that of its people. It is another example of how this regime has caused more tragic deaths of Iranians. To date it is reported that the government's numbers of people who have tested positively for the *coronavirus* in Iran, highly differs from the numbers being reported by hospitals and health professionals. Another coverup? For what reason? I do not have an answer, I only know that as of February

28, 2020 an additional two hundred and ten deaths of innocent people in Iran needs to be added to the already thousands of others who have lost their lives at the hands of this regime, be it by execution, starvation, inept leadership, poor diplomatic skills and ineffective policy making.

Why is it that after China, Iran is the second highest infected country in the world and second in the number of deaths? Is it because of the secretive relationship between these two countries? Why, after an original three week ban on air travel to and from China, does Mahan Air continue its flights, bringing the Chinese in and out of China DESPITE the rest of the world ceasing travel in and out of China?

For me it is sad to see and hear the painful cries of suffering of the Iranian people; their mourning of unnecessary lives being lost. Where have the days of glorious Iran (Persia) gone? Persians survived and thrived after the invasion of the Arabs and Islam; after the atrocities that were committed in the name of religion. Cyrus the Great led the Persian Empire back into a world of life and brightness. But the ancient suffering for the Iranian people returned a few decades ago. This time the suffering is not by an invasion of outsiders! Sadly, the pain and suffering are being caused from its own government. A government who turns a blind eye to their suffering. A government who turns a blind eye to their people, who should be joyfully celebrating Norouz, going to theaters, parties, conferences, seminars and laughing with family and friends but instead are going to funerals and mourning the lives of their loved ones lost at the hands of this regime, all in the name of freedom!

I thought after celebrating the twenty- fifth year of *Persian Heritage* magazine that I would be writing a joyful editorial about Iran, Iranians and Norouz. UNFORTUNATELY, this will not happen this issue and NOT, this Norouz. JUST MAYBE NEXT!!!!!!!!!!!!!! TIME.

But even in these difficult times for the people of Iran, I HOPE for a better future, I HOPE they will find a moment to share love and joy with their families. I dedicate this poem, not as a journalist, but as an individual whose first twenty years of his life was molded by the warmth and deep-rooted culture of Iran.

In my heart you are the mirthful ray

You are the caring, though my companions they

Happy is the world with the Nowruz and with the Eid

You are both my Eid and my Nowruz today

اندر دل من مها دل افروز تویی
یاران هستند لیک دلسوز تویی
شادند جهانیان به نوروز و به عید
عید من و نوروز من امروز تویی

Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi

Shahrokh Alavi

REZA ARFA

Dear Mr. Ahkami

Concerning Persian Heritage v.24/no.96, the article on p.21:

May I respectfully point out that the Qajar title "Prince" differs from that of "Mirza". "Prince" (pronounced phonetically as in the French "p-r-a-n-s") was accorded to only five people during the Qajar era. The five were all in the foreign service and represented Iran abroad, thus it was thought to give them an elevated rank.

The title was not hereditary and was not used in Iran.

Reza Khan Arfa was one of them. I have written his biography and he himself wrote his autobiography, translated by his grand-daughter's husband - Michael Noël-Clarke - as "Memories of a Bygone Age" (2016).

With best regards, Farhad Diba

AMAZING PUBLICATION

Dear Persian Heritage and Dear Dr. Ahkami,

I have the privilege of reading your publication magazine on a regular basis.

It gives me great joy and honor to read great articles and relevant news regarding our beloved country that is so dear to all of our hearts.

I know how much of your time, dedication and passion is into this amazing publication.

I just wanted to express my gratitude and on behalf of all the Iranian community thank you for all your contributions and hard work.

Respectfully, *Goldokht Mossaded*

SAD LOSSES

So great to see the article on Dr. Etemad and sad to see the loss of several familiar faces. Cheers to you our marathon champion.

Warmest regard, Shahri Estakhry

LIFE LONG SERVICES

Many thanks for sending me the valuable issue of the *Persian Heritage*. I sincerely appreciate your life long services to the culture and history of our country.

Warm regards, Fereydun Vahman

WARM THANKS

Salaam Dr. Jaan

Thanks for sharing the winter issue of the *Persian Heritage* and more thanks for printing my poem ABOUT POETRY

God bless you. All the best for 2020.

Baa behtarin aarezoohaye neek, Majid KAFAI

KIND WORDS

Dear Editor and Distinguished Friends at *Persian Heritage*,

Allow me to extend my deepest thanks to you on behalf of myself and my family for your citation of my late father and your support of our ancient and rich heritage.

Kaveh Farrokh

ADMIRABLE EFFORTS

Your continued effort is truly ADMIRABLE.

Thank you; Jahangir Jon Sedaghatfar

HONORING VICTIMS

Selkirk Man Builds Snow Sculpture in Memory of Iran Plane Crash Victims



Majid Kermani, a Selkirk man, knew three of the victims who died in the mistakenly shot down Ukrainian International Airlines flight, by an Iranian missile. In an effort to honor their lives, Majid, a retired sculptor, made an ice sculpture in an image of the plane.

“After I lost friends and the 176 people in that airplane crash ... I thought, ‘I have to send a message to the world. To the people who make the decision to go to war,’” he said.

“War is not a way of interacting. I believe war is the end of humanity, the end of negotiation,” Kermani said. “We ordinary people don’t want that. We want to live a peaceful life.” He added that the sculpture speaks to you if you listen. He thinks maybe the sculpture can tell the message better than words.

RAISING A WHITE FLAG ACROSS WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN IRAN

As you probably already know, the new decade kicked off with renewed political conflict between the US and Iran, following the assassination of General Qasem Soleimani, an Iranian general. Iran vowed to take ‘severe revenge’, on January 4th 2020, against the United States. President Donald Trump escalated tensions with a tweet that threatened to target 52 Iranian cultural and historical centers.

In response to this tweet, Mohammad Hassan Forouzanfar envisioned ‘peace’. The conceptual project, which follows the architect’s typical style, imagines white flags raised over UNESCO-listed and historic world heritage sites in Iran, highlighting the importance of these irreplaceable buildings and landscapes.

To convey his message, Mohammad Hassan Forouzanfar has adorned images of iconic architectural sites, such as the intricate blue mosque in Tabriz, with white flags that appear to blow in the wind. Making a subtle yet powerful message, the flags highlight how important elements of a country’s history and culture can be caught in the crossfire between conflicting nations. In essence, ‘peace’ aims to express the significance of these sites and spread the message that losing them would be a tragedy not only to Iran, but also to our shared human history.



MAKING A DREAM A REALITY



Jasmin Moghbeli, at age 36, is one step closer to space. In January, she received her Silver Pin at Johnson Space Center, Houston, Texas after successfully completing NASA’s astronaut training program.

Jasmin was born in 1983 in Dad Nauheim, Germany. Her parents Fereshteh and Ramsey fled from Iran in 1979. The three moved to Baldwin, NY where she graduated from Baldwin High School. After graduating from MIT, with a degree in Aerospace Engineering, she continued her education, getting a master’s from the Navel Post Graduate School. Jasmin also attended the US Navy Test Pilot School in Maryland and became a helicopter test pilot. Her hard work and dedication to her dream is to be admired. Even more admirable is her military service to the United States as a member of the armed forces and commissioned officer in the U.S. Marine Corp. Jasmin was deployed three times to Afghanistan and has participated in 150 combat missions. We are all looking forward to witnessing her lift off into space.

IRANIAN FEMALE SPRINTER DREAMS OF REACHING OLYMPICS

Tehran Times: Female sprinter Farzaneh Fasihi, dubbed the Wind Girl, comes close to fulfilling her dream of reaching the Olympic Games. Fasihi has recently secured her place at the 2020 World Athletics Indoor Championships, running 7.29 second time in the 60 meters’ event. She has become the first Iranian woman to participate at the World Athletics Indoor Championships.



The 18th World Athletics Indoor Championships will be held from March 13-15 March 2020 in Nanjing, China. Now, Fasihi, who is a member of Atletski Klub Partizan, wants to win a berth in the 2020 Olympic Games.

“I’m experiencing the new situations in Serbia and I hope I can keep going. I wanted to break Iran’s record and I accomplished that. I also wanted to book a place at the 2020 World Athletics Indoor Championships and I am proud of what I’ve done,” Fasihi said. “It’s every athlete’s dream to compete at an Olympics. I had concentrated on securing a place at the Olympics so far and step by step I’ve been improving. To secure quota place for the 100 meters at the 2020 Olympics is very difficult but I think competing in the prestigious tournament will be good for Iranian women,” she added. “I don’t want to rely on luck to reach the Olympics and I will train hard in Belgrade to improve more. I need support to make history, not only financial support, but also moral support,” Fasihi stated.

IRAN IN REVERSE BRAIN DRAIN AS TOP STUDENTS COME HOME IN RISING NUMBERS

Source: Press TV

A senior Iranian official says the government has managed to reverse a trend of brain drain that has harmed the country’s aspirations for scientific and economic development.

Sorena Sattari, Iranian deputy president for science and technology, said that students from top universities around the world were returning home in quite unprecedented numbers, adding that a total of 130 students graduated from 100 top-ranked universities of the world had returned to Iran between late March and late July.

Sattari told the ISNA agency that figures related to reverse brain drain in the four-month period, when number of arrivals are normally poor, showed a significant increase compared to the previous years, adding that such arrivals would exceed 1,000 until March 2020. “We are trying to personally find these individuals and prepare the ground for their return,” said Sattari, adding that Iran’s policy over the past years has been to appoint those graduates to key posts in the economy and industry sector.

The official claimed that Iranian students were no longer enthusiastic about gaining admission to Western universities mainly due to the expansion that has taken place in Iran’s higher education system. The comments come against the backdrop of reports suggesting that Iranian students are facing increasing problems in countries like the United States mainly as a result of sanctions that came last year after Washington withdrew from an international deal on Iran’s nuclear program.

A report by the Reuters agency last year showed that the number of visas granted to Iranian students by the US government had dropped by 23 percent until November when the sanctions on Iran were going to be implemented. Sattari said the number of admissions for Iranian students in the US had decreased significantly last year, adding that a total of 1,400 people had been granted F1 student visas and another 450 people received J1 visas, which is normally given to research scholars and professors.

DEFECTION



Kimia Alizadeh Zonouzi, at the age of eighteen was the first Iranian woman, representing Iran to win an Olympic Medal for her country. It was the bronze medal in the taekwondo 57 kg weight class. This happened at the Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro 2016.

Sadly, this highly regarded and inspirational woman has announced that she was permanently leaving her birthplace, Iran, for Europe. Her reasoning was due to the oppression of women in Iran. In an Instagram post she explained, “she was defecting because of constraints of women in Iran, calling herself “one of the millions of oppressed women in Iran who [Iran’s rulers] have been playing with for years. They took me wherever they wanted. I wore whatever they said. Every sentence they ordered me to say, I repeated. Whenever they saw fit, they exploited me.” Additionally, she did not want to be considered a hypocrite stating that “I didn’t want to sit at the table of hypocrisy, lies, injustice and flattery any longer nor remain complicit with the regime’s cor-

ruption and lies.”

At the present time, Kimia does not intend to compete for the Olympics of 2020 for Iran, however, she is open to representing another country.

IRANIAN CHESS CHAMP TO RENOUNCE HIS CITIZENSHIP

The top-rated Iranian chess champion says he will not play for Iran in an upcoming tournament and is ready to renounce his citizenship because of a ban on competing against Israeli players.



Alireza Firouzja is “currently living in France...and may want to play under the French or U.S. flag” the head of the Iranian chess federation told Tehran’s ISNA news agency, adding that the 16-year-old Alireza “wants to change his nationality.” There has been no reaction from Iran to Alireza’s apparent decision to give up his citizenship. There has also been no word from Alireza’s family.

Iranian authorities announced they were pulling out of the upcoming World Rapid and Blitz tournament in Moscow after two other Iranian players competed against Israelis in an earlier match. But Alireza objected to the Iranian withdrawal. He is Iran’s top-ranked player and the world’s number two ranked junior player. Iranian officials have called on all Iranian athletes to refrain from competing against Israelis.

AHKAMI ROMA Inspiration and Made in Italy

Ahkami, is the emerging brand of streetwear Made in Italy. Strange and out of the box already from the name, it combines the fine Italian tailoring to the aggressive and wild ideas of creative director Andrea Ahkami. The line was born in 2019 in Rome, a splendid setting to enhance the artistic value of Andrea’s creations.

Beyond the concept of best aspiring to perfection, this is the main idea that leads us to create our products by designing and manufacturing them entirely in Italy.



IRANIAN STARTUPS KOMODAA'S SUCCESS STORY IS HEARD FROM SHIRAZ

By Tahereh Khajegiri, Shanbe Magazine

Sana Khalesi, founder of Komodaa, formerly a content writer in the UK and Greece, says of launching komodaa Startup in Shiraz and that she and her team are thinking of a market of 3,600 billion Tomans (about 300 million dollars). Komodaa is the first Eco-friendly and online fashion marketplace in Iran that tackles this issue by making it super simple to buy/sell pre-owned wearables.

The founder of Komodaa is a 29-year-old girl with a world of experience, Sana Khalesi. She holds a BA in English Literature and has worked for 6 years abroad; 3 years in England and 3 years in Greece.

As a copywriter, she works with a foreign company and says she's made money with photography and graphic work.

She spent six months in Oxford for creative writing, returned to Iran and then moved to the United States where she was invited to attend the University of Virginia. But she did not stay in U.S and returned to Iran. These events all occurred between the ages of 22 and 24.

Sana has an important feature; when you see this girl, it looks like the word "can" is in front of you. I can, and I do my best, because I don't want to fail. She has been frustrated many times, but has continued every time for the sake of her faith.

When I ask Sana about her career experiences, she says:

I've been working since I was 18 years old. From teaching in an English language school, that I was not at all interested in, to doing freelance work such as photography and graphic design. I also worked for 3 years in an British company as an art director.

"Because I am a storyteller, I also deal with life in the same way that each step is a story and a new story. So we move from one left to another and each section has its own problems and issues."

She has a considerable literary history. Having studied English language and literature, she has done a great deal in this field. In this case, she says, "I did a lot of literary work from the age of 18 to 22.

My poetry book was published in America, I held a photography exhibition at the University of Zurich. Then I came to a point where I realized that writers had a place in marketing and worked as a copywriter.

Later, I came up with a new story called Starting a Personal Business, Komodaa.



A NEW STAR ON THE HOLLYWOOD WALK



Andy Madadian is the first Iranian musical artist to receive a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame. His journey to America started at age 22, with a visa to play soccer at California State, Los Angeles. There his childhood love of music grew into a career.

He formed a duo group with Kouros Shahmiri, but after two recorded albums they split. He then began to have a working relationship with lyricist Paksima Zakipour and the two were known as the Iranian version of Elton John and Bernie Taupin.

His music reflects his passion for American pop and rock infused with musical feelings of the Spanish guitar and of course a Persian influence. His performances were mostly overseas, but in 2009 he infiltrated the United States. He began to be recognized partly due to a collaboration with Bon Jovi- *Stand By Me* in English and Persian. They collaborated to show support for the Iranian 2009 demonstrators. Bon Jovi is reported to be the first American musician to sing in Persian. This was followed with Madadian also working with Latoya Jackson.

If you have the chance to meander through music and bookstores in Los Angeles, take a moment to listen to Manadian's music and the work of other Iranian artists. The love they have for the music of their new home and birth place clearly allows them to create a sound that is hypnotic.

Mr. Manadian would like the Iranian ban on his music to be lifted. He would also love to see Iran and the United States, once again to be good friends...DON'T WE ALL

The Other Apartment: A UNIQUE and NOTABLE EXHIBIT and PROJECT

Sohrab Kashani and Jon Rubin



The Other Apartment is a collaborative project between Pittsburgh-based artist Jon Rubin and Tehran-based artist Sohrab Kashani that occurs in two sites simultaneously. The work features a dual site-specific space: Kashani's apartment in Tehran, Iran, and an exact replica of that apartment and all of its contents—using a team of fabricators, handmade reproductions, and 3D printing—at the Mattress Factory Museum in Pittsburgh. For the past 11 years, Kashani has used his apartment as a space for exhibiting contemporary art and as an artist residency, one of the first of its kind in the country. When the two apartments are activated in the US and Iran, *The Other Apartment* will house concurrent art ventures, producing exhibitions, programs, and events—in each case, every object, video, and performance that happens in one space is meticulously duplicated for the other keeping both apartments identical across the 6300 miles that separate them.

The Other Apartment functions as a series of theoretical and

practical questions within the sad absurdity of our current political condition: What if there was more than one absolute reality; can you build a space that functions as a loophole around national borders and economic sanctions; and what gets lost and gained in the act of duplication?

Project Manager: Brittany Reilly

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'PROTEST MIGRATION' OF ATHLETES

Serious Challenge, Iran Olympic Chairman

Radio Farda: The Chairman of Iran's Olympic Committee says "protest migration" of Iranian athletes and elite is "extremely worrying" and a "serious challenge to the country at present and in the future". In a note published on the website of Iran's National Olympic Committee on February 2, Reza Salehi-Amiri said emigration is a "social thermometer" and reveals the inadequacies and constraints of the country and society emigrants leave behind.

Salehi-Amiri dubbed the emigration of Iranian athletes, experts, and elite "escape in protest" and said while emigration is not necessarily an undesirable phenomenon, "escaping in protest" is and can have many negative psychological, political and social consequences for Iran and damage its reputation.

The National Olympics Committee has formed a group and organized a seminar to investigate the dimensions of the problem and offer "a realistic analysis", Amiri-Salehi said.

Since September 2019 several prominent athletes, including Iran's only female Olympic gold medalist Kimia

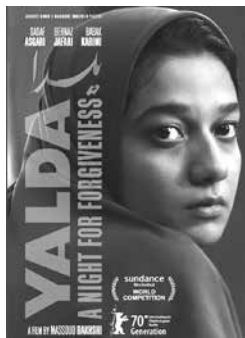
Alizadeh, chess grandmaster Alireza Firouzja and judo champion and gold medalist Saeid Mollaei as well as several female athletes who have defied compulsory hijab have sought asylum abroad.

Several other athletes now refuse to play under the Iranian flag and some including the son of Iran's former Taekwondo boss have joined the national teams of other countries. Iran's Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Masoud Soltanifar, however, on Monday attributed the exodus of Iranian athletes to their "personal problems including issues with the heads of their respective federations, coaches or other personal things" and said it should not be seen as a "political or social crisis".



Iranian chess grandmaster Mitra Hejazipour who has defied the compulsory Islamic dress code says will not go back to Iran. January 28, 2020

Another Sundance Win World Cinema Grand Jury Prize: Dramatic



Maryam is a young woman who has been sentenced to death for murdering her husband, Nasser. Iranian law allows for the victim's family to forgive her and spare her life, so Maryam's fate will be decided by Nasser's daughter, Mona, on the country's most popular televised reality show. In front of millions of viewers during Yalda, the winter solstice celebration, Maryam and Mona discover that forgiveness can be difficult as they relive the past.

Filmmaker Massoud Bahkshi, was born in Iran in 1972. Massoud's experience as a film critic, script writer and producer helped to bring aesthetic energy and dramatic intensity to a story that unfolds over a few hours and almost entirely within the studio. Compelled by the social complexities of contemporary Iran, Bahkshi started as a documentary filmmaker, during which time he met several women who had murdered their husbands. Their stories stayed with him as he developed this powerful exploration of women characters. Although Maryam and Mona are condemned in some way and subject to Iran's profound patriarchy, they find agency, moral authority, and freedom within those confines. *Yalda, a Night for Forgiveness* elucidates Iran's vibrant, modern identity alongside its deeply traditional culture.

Bafta Winner

Maryam Mohajer's *Grandad* was a Romantic won a BAFTA in the category of animated short category. The Iranian-British animator, in this project, allows a young girl to tell the story of her beloved grandparents, reflecting on their love and their marriage. It is a story she based on the passion she saw in her grandparents. In her acceptance speech Maryam presented the award to the Iranian people who she believes deserves better than what they are now experiencing. Her parents were unable to attend the event because of the rejection of her mother's visa application.



Sadaf Asgari & The Sundance Win

Sadaf Asgari, starred in the Iranian short film "Exam" which was directed by Sonia Haddad. The film took home the Short Film Special Jury Award for Acting at the Sundance Film Festival held in Park City, Utah. Not different than other teens around the world this teenage girl's decision to deliver a cocaine pack to someone's client places her in a precarious situation and consequential circumstances. Last November *The Exam* also received the prestigious Grand Jury Award for Live-Action Short at the American Film Institute. They hopefully will do equally as well at the 38th Fajr Film Festival underway in Tehran.

MONEY TRANSFER FROM IRAN Under U.S. Sanctions

By: Zaher Fallahi, Attorney At Law, CPA



OFAC Regulations Regarding Iran

The U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) administers and enforces economic sanctions against countries, groups and individuals. The Iranian Transactions & Sanctions Regulations, Title 31 C.F.R. Part 560 (ITSR), generally prohibit the exportation, re-exportation, sale, or supply of any goods, among others, directly or indirectly, from U.S., by U.S. persons to Iran. U.S. persons refer to U.S. citizens, green card holders or businesses. Conducting transactions in Iran by U.S. persons requires OFAC specific license, unless excepted or authorized by general license.

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) or Iranian Nuclear Deal (BARJAM, in Farsi)

On July 14, 2015, the P5+1 (U.S., China, Russia, Britain, France and Germany) and Iran reached JCPOA, to limit Iran's nuclear program to peaceful purposes. On October 18, 2015, both parties began preparing for implementation of their respective JCPOA commitments. President Obama directed the U.S. agencies to take preparatory measures to ensure the implementation of the U.S. commitments upon Iran's compliance verification by the International Atomic Energy Agency. Numerous steps were

taken on both sides.

U.S. Withdrawal from the JCPOA

On May 8, 2018, President Trump withdrew U.S. from JCPOA, re-imposed sanctions against Iran, and OFAC amended the ITSR accordingly. One important item favorable to our clients was expanding the existing general license to authorize U.S. persons to sell personal property in Iran and transfer the proceeds to the U.S. Previously, this authorization only covered the sale of real property under Title 31 C.F.R. §560.543.

Conducting Prohibited Acts in Iran

Despite the above-referenced prohibitions, U.S. persons may still conduct some prohibited acts under OFAC exceptions, general license or specific license.

Exceptions to ITSR

Examples of exceptions are (1) gifts worth \$100 or less, (2) information and informational materials, (3) household and personal effects of owners arriving in the U. S. and used abroad; and, (4) baggage incident to travel.

General License

OFAC general license authorizes Iran related transactions without requiring OFAC specific license. Some examples are: (1) exportation of U.S.

medicine; (2) exportation of most medical devices; (3) transfer of gift and inheritance money to U.S; (4) sale of inherited property in Iran and property acquired prior to becoming a US person; and, (5) transfer of money by E-2 and EB-5 visa applicants.

Anti-Money Laundering

Notwithstanding the general license provisions, pursuant to heightened due diligence task by the financial institutions under the Bank Secrecy Act (BSA) and Financial Action Task Force (FATF), concerning money transfers from Iran, consultation with attorneys knowledgeable about BSA and ITSR is strongly recommended. Considering that the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) and IRS Criminal Investigation Division (CID), actively pursue anti-money laundering leads with respect to fund transfers nationwide, not just ITSR matters, anyone transferring money should adhere to adequate defensive measures to avoid being dragged into unnecessary financial fraud allegation fray.

Specific License

OFAC specific license is a written document authorizing a person to engage in a particular transaction pursuant to a written request. Examples of Iranian transactions subject to OFAC specific license are: (1) selling property that was purchased after becoming a U.S. person; (2) selling income-producing property; (3) selling commercial property; (4) winding down a business; (5) closing a bank account; (6) purchasing property; and (7) hiring legal counsel to litigate a case not incident to an authorized transaction.

Note. Items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, may require legal and tax advice in entering OFAC Voluntary Self Disclosure (VSD) and IRS-CID Offshore Voluntary Disclosure Program (OVDP) or its progeny such as Streamlined Filing Compliance Procedures. For general information visit zflegal.com.

Taxation of Inheritance and Gift from Iran

Inheritance is an asset received for free from a decedent's estate, and gift is an asset received for free from a live

person. If inheritance or gift is in the form of cash, the beneficiary/donee is required to report it in the U.S. as “receipt of gift or inheritance from a non-resident alien” if the amount exceeds \$100,000 per calendar year. For non-cash inheritance or gifts, the beneficiaries/donees must report their fair market value in their tax returns for amounts exceeding \$100,000 per calendar year. Both items are tax free.

Note. If the donors/decedents are U.S. persons, seek advice from OFAC and international tax attorney before the money transfer.

Taxation of Property Sold in Iran

Regardless of whether a property acquired before becoming a U.S person, its sale is subject to the U.S. tax laws. Upon the sale of inherited property or property received as a gift, the beneficiaries/donees are required to include these sales in their U.S tax returns in the year of disposition. The basis for an inheritance is its fair market value at the decedent’s death and the basis for a gift is the donor’s carryover basis, subject to exceptions.

Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts (FBAR), FinCEN 114, and Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA), Form 8938

U.S. taxpayers with bank accounts in Iran, irrespective of whether those accounts were opened before they became U.S. persons, are subject to disclosure in the U.S. Also, they are subject to filing FBARs for cumulative amounts exceeding \$10,000 during the year and filing FATCA Form 8938 for the amounts exceeding \$50,000 and \$100,000 for single and joint filers, respectively. These taxpayers maybe in violation of the U.S. sanctions laws and need to consult OFAC attorneys and international tax attorneys handling OVPD. For general information visit zlegal.com.

Record Keeping for Iranian Transactions

If required by the U.S. Treasury’s OFAC, documents substantiating the character of transactions must be maintained for five years. For potential tax consequences, it is imperative to properly retain these documents for “gifts”,

“inheritance” or “your own property” at least for six years. Transfer of funds from Iran may also be of interest to FinCEN, CID. Seeking competent legal and tax advice is paramount.

Why American Banks may freeze accounts receiving funds from Iran?

The BSA requires U.S. financial institutions to assist the U.S. government in detecting any suspicious money laundering and other financial fraudulent activities. These institutions strive to prevent any illegal fund transfers through them that may have originated in Iran. If they discern any suspicion of financial fraud, banks are required to issue “Suspicious Activity Report (SAR)” and submit to FinCEN, which may subject the account holders to criminal prosecution. From time to time, these institutions may reject the incoming funds, return them to the third country they came from, close the accounts, cancel the owners’ credit cards and cease dealing with such clients. In these situations, consulting with lawyers with BSA expertise is advised. Good luck with transfer of money from Iran.

Thank You for Directing Our Attention To...

A commentary by David Yazdan

Thank you for bringing into light some of the atrocities of Iran’s present regime. As I mentioned in one of my previous “Letters to the Editor” Iran does not have a government, it is an illegitimate regime where no one is truly elected. The “phony” election they set up every four years is a sham and an insult to every human being on Earth.

It is also obvious to me that your Winter 2019 issue was printed before you could include comment on the elimination of Ghasem Soleimani as ordered by President Trump. Soleimani, on his hands, has the blood of thousands of Iranians, hundreds of Americans and one-quarter of million people in Syria, with several million refugees without home and hope. It is surprising to me that the Democratic party showed some “sympathy” toward that bloody beast, by going against this action.

As if these events were not horrible enough, Iran shot down a Ukrainian airplane departing from Iran. Its passengers included Canadians, Ukrainians and Iranians. While the government denied this at first, it was obvious that the plane was hit by missiles coming out of Iran and eventually they had to admit to their mistake. The Iranian government also initially refused to send the “Black Boxes” back to the Ukraine, to the country they belonged. None of these actions were condemned by Russia or China, and there was only a lukewarm mention by the so called European “allies”.

Iranians once again were back on the streets screaming for justice. President Trump directly intervened and warned the government not to shoot the demonstrators. The Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo repeated the warning. Despite the warnings there were some killings and hundreds of arrests of innocent Iranian people, who are being tortured, killed or under severe punishment in their jails. Exactly how long these bloody events under this regime will continue, is anyone’s guess. It is my opinion that we pray that President Trump, the only President who is standing behind the Iranian people, gets re-elected.

Again in my opinion the liberal media in the United States is dishonest and deceitful. It is a shame that when one or two Chinese people get hurt or die, it makes the front page in most of their publications, but when thousands of Iranian get killed, it gets a brief mention. It is the same media who almost glamorized Soleimani, just because it was President Trump who ordered his elimination. It seems to me that the only media publication and network sympathetic to Iranians are the *Wall Street Journal* and *Fox News*.

Again, I must thank you for reporting some of their atrocities and your sympathetic attitude.

In the face of ever-worsening relations between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran, a group of Americans, most of whom lived in Iran as Peace Corps volunteers, is working hard to shape a new narrative. They are members of the Peace Corps Iran Association (PCIA), an organization of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) who served in Iran between 1962 and 1976. During the 14 years Peace Corps was in Iran 1,748 Americans were volunteers as well as 365 American and Iranian staff that supported them. Buoyed by the enormous success of a conference-reunion of Iran volunteers in Portland, Oregon in 2011, PCIA became incorporated in the State of Oregon in 2012. The conference was the brainchild of Portland's Jackie Spurlock who, along with her husband Mike, served in Iran from 1974-76. Jackie served as PCIA's first president. Today, PCIA has over 500 members and an additional 250 people who receive the newsletter. Over 1500 of the former Iran volunteers have been located and counting.

PCIA advocates for peaceful relations with Iran, starting with the initiative and foresight of individual citizens. In keeping with the vision outlined by President Kennedy in 1961 to "bring the world home," they believe their experiences and appreciation of Iran will make a positive contribution to the ongoing debates about U.S. policy regarding Iran and promote a deeper understanding of this important ancient and contemporary culture. This is their way of interpreting the Third Goal of Peace Corps to "help Americans understand the people and cultures of other countries."

PCIA advocates for better understanding of Iran on the part of Americans by documenting and sharing the legacy of Peace Corps in Iran. The organization's biennial conferences, open to the public, blend these two focuses into two-day events that inform and spark engagement on current political issues, the legacy and history of Peace Corps Iran, Persian culture and art, and contributions and concerns of the Iranian diaspora. Having developed personal relationships with the Iranian people, volunteers respect the cultural heritage and traditions of the country. The association's presence has resulted in the reunion of countless volunteers with former Iranian friends and coworkers.

Those who served in the Peace Corps in Iran uniformly express how the experience changed their lives. Once again,

PCIA (Peace Corps Iran Association)

Brian H Appleton
(contributing journalist)

they are called upon to help, by sharing what they know of Iran and its people and by promoting peace and diplomacy as the way forward in relations between the two countries. On January 8, 2020, they released a statement in that effort:

"As a National Peace Corps Association affiliate representing one of the few Peace Corps countries to have been attacked by the United States, Peace Corps Iran Association deplores violence as a means of resolving international conflict and strongly encourages the pursuit of peaceful, diplomatic solutions with Iran. Based on the experiences of members who have traveled to Iran recently and from our knowledge of Iran's culture and history of coexistence with other countries, the Iran Peace Corps community wishes to convey to all Americans a message of goodwill and friendship from the Iranian people. We believe the current escalation of conflict between the United States and Iran to be unnecessary and counterproductive. We encourage all Americans to ask their Congressional leaders to let sober minds and diploma-



cy prevail, and to exercise their rightful role in decisions of war and peace for our country."

On a continuing basis, through its Advocacy Committee, the association promotes peace and understanding through education, outreach, and cultural diplomacy. This work includes a monthly *Advocacy Bulletin*, outreach to elected officials, and a unique project called *Our Man in Tehran*, using the PBS Television special of this name to promote community discussions around the U.S., with Iran RPCVs as facilitators.

In addition to advocacy, preserving Peace Corps Iran's legacy is a priority, and the association is actively searching for all former volunteers. RPCV Genna Stead Wangsness, PCIA's historian, is researching and writing the history based on available documents and volunteer memories. Anthology editor, RPCV John Krauskopf, is compiling stories by volunteers about their experiences in Iran. A list of published works by RPCVs who have written about their service in Iran is available on the association website. To help preserve the history of the Peace Corps in Iran, PCIA is gathering photos and documents, with the association welcoming additional contributions. Contact doug@peacecorpsiran.org for more information on how to submit photos and documents.

Association membership is open to and free of charge to all who are interested in PCIA's mission and work. To become a member, complete and mail in the application available on PCIA's website, www.peacecorpsiran.org. Because they don't charge dues, donations are always welcome. Membership includes a subscription to the association's newsletter, *KhabarNameh*, published electronically three times yearly, the *Advocacy Bulletin*, containing information relating to Iran-U.S. relations, and the monthly board newsletter, *From the Field*, with information on current PCIA events. Members have access to PCIA's closed Facebook group and their book discussion group, *Dooreh-ye Ketaab*.

This past year the PCIA won the Lorett Ruppe Award for Outstanding Community Service from the National Peace Corps Association. Information on the award details is on their website.

Jackie Spurlock was founder and first president of PCIA and she went with Code Pink on a tour of Iran recently. This is a nice street shot of her in Esfahan.

The relevance of the information given immediately below to the central topic of this essay will shortly become obvious. St. Dennis, or, in French, St. Denis, the “Apostle of Gaul, said: “Cut down the sacred groves of the Druids and use the wood to build churches.”

The above indicates the traditional attitude of the Church: “if it be usable in the Christian tradition, make use of it; if it be harmless but of no use, ignore it; if it be incompatible with the Christian Tradition, prohibit it.”

The holly plant was sacred to the Druids because it was the only broad-leaved tree to retain its leaves all year round, and was thus a symbol of immortality. The Church retained the original Druidic symbolism of the holly, but added much more, as is illustrated by the Christmas song “The Holly and the Ivy”:

*The holly and the ivy,
When they are both full grown,
Of all the trees that are in the wood,
The holly wears the crown.*

*The rising of the sun
And the running of the deer,
The playing of the happy organ,
Sweet singing in the choir:*

*The holly bears a blossom,
As white as the lily flower;
And Merry bore sweet Jesus Christ
To be our sweet savior
(Refrain)*

*The holly bears a berry,
As red as any blood,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
To do poor sinners good.
(Refrain)*

*The holly bears a prickle,
As sharp as any thorn,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
On Christmas Day in the morn.
(Refrain)*

*The holly bears a bark
As bitter as any gall,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
For to redeem us all.
(Refrain)*

What a perfect example of “using the wood of the sacred groves of the Druids to build churches!

The mistletoe was sacred to the Druids because it grows without apparent material support. The Church found this harm-

The Sakas

part eleven

Michael McClain

less, and tolerated it, but giving it no holy symbolism. Since the above deals with Christmas, we will use this opportunity to make something clear.

The Gospels give no date for the birth of Jesus. Some claim that December 25 was chosen as the date of Christmas because this was the date of the “Saturnalia”, a festival in honor of the Roman god Saturn, and celebrated with drunkenness and licentious revelry. This is, however, a pure invention, with no basis in fact, propagated by secularists and Protestants (as usual with Protestants faithfully supporting secularists).

The truth is that December 25 as the birthdate of Jesus has nothing to do with the Roman god Saturn, but rather is derived from Mithraism.

December 21 is the Winter Solstice, the shortest day of the year, when the sun reaches its slowest point on the horizon. By December 25, the days are obviously becoming longer, and the sun has begun to rise again on the horizon. Hence, in Mithraism December 25 became a holy day known as “The Rebirth of the Unconquered Sun”. The Usefulness of this as a Christian symbol or metaphor is obvious enough. Very soon the Church added to the above, as illustrated in the beautiful medieval carol:

*Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming
From tender stem has sprung!
Of Jesse's
(father of King David) lineage coming
As men of old have sung
It came, a flower let bright,
Amid the cold of winter.
When half spent was the night.
(The Prophet) Isaiah 't was foretold it,
The Rose I have in mind,
With Mary we behold it,
The Virgin Mother kind.
To show God's love aright,
She bore to men a Savior
When half spent was the night.*

Some Buddhist influences may be found in early Christianity. Said influences include the halo, and that which is called “rosary in Catholicism, “prayer rope” in

Eastern Orthodoxy, and “*tasbih*” in Islamic terms. Also of Buddhist origin is the legend of St. Josaphat. Said legend is a close paraphrase of the “*Buddhacarita*” one of the earliest biographies of Buddha, while the name “Josaphat” is, by way of various translations eventually passed from Buddhist Sanskrit to Greek and Latin, in the process changing from “*Bohisattva*” to “*Josaphat*”. Thanks to the Legend of St. Josaphat, some say that “*Buddha* is a Christian saint”.

Other elements passed from Hinduism to early Christianity/ The resemblance between Hindu Yoga and Catholic and Eastern Orthodox “*hesychasm*”, also known as “*The Jesus 1/4rayer*” and “*The Prayer of the Heart*”, which dates from the 4th century AD, is so close that no one can seriously doubt that the Christian *Hesychasm* is derived from the Hindu Yoga.

The eight musical modes used in Catholic and Eastern Orthodox liturgical chant (called (*Oktoechos*) in Greek and “*Ikhadias*” in Syriac) were composed in the early 6th century AD by Severus, Patriarch of Antioch. All eight of the modes of Severus of

Antioch are identical to ancient Hindu musical modes. Now, the number of heptatonic (seven tone) musical modes which is theoretically possible is vast, so, the fact that each and every one of the musical modes which form the “*oktoechos*” or “*Ikhadias*” of Patriarch Severus of Antioch leaves no possible doubt that said eight musical modes are of Hindu origin.

There are other Hindu elements to be found in early Christianity, mainly derived from Yoga and Vedanta, but we lack the space to deal with this here. Whether Druidic, Mithraic, Buddhist or Hindu, all the above-mentioned elements would be denounced by Protestants as “*Pagan*” and rejected. This is, of course, not the Christian tradition; I am inclined to see its origin as Manichaeic, but there is no space here to deal with such a large and complex topic. The Catholic traditionalist Charles Coulombe was speaking to an audience which included Protestants, some of whom began screaming “*Pagan, Pagan*”, to which Mr. Coulombe replied: “*Pagans: bileb reathe don't they? Then you should stop breathing.*”

In Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) we used to say: A Protestant is someone who believes that the Bible dropped straight down from Heaven in the King James Translation in a leather binding with a zipper”. Having rejected

nearly the whole Christian tradition, the Protestants were left with nothing but the Bible. One of said “Bible thumpers” cited a quatrain by Omar Khayyam as translated by Fitzgerald and said: “It’s in the Bible.” On another occasion, I noted that Jesus spoke Aramaic. Some “Bible thumper” replied. “Non, Jesus spoke English. “You are an idiot”, I answered. The “Bible thumper” found a copy of the New Testament, opened to one of the Gospels, and said: “See, here is Jesus speaking English.”

Many Protestants forget that intellectual and spiritual laziness is one of the Seven Deadly Sins.

Many people have noted that the phrase “Light of Light, True God of True God”, which is found in the Nicene Creed, sounds very Zoroastrian. There is an undoubted relationship between Christianity and Zoroastrianism which even a Protestant cannot deny or scream “Pagan” because it is found in the Bible, in the Gospel According to St. Matthew,

Chapter 2.; I refer to “The Adoration of the Magi”. “magi” is derived from the Avestan and Old Persian “Magav”, which in Modern Persian is “Majus” or “Magh”, and in Greek is “Magoi”. In English the Magi are called “Wise Men”, while in Spanish they are call “Los Reyes Magos”, i.e. “The Magian Kings.”

The earliest sources identify the Magi of the Gospel According to St. Matthew as Persians and Zoroastrians. These sources include very early apocryphal accounts of the childhood of Jesus, which are considered authoritative and reliable, but are not included in the New Testament Canon because, dealing only with the childhood of Jesus, had little theological importance it is from these extra canonical accounts that it is known that the parents of the Virgin Mary were St. Joachim (Qur’anic 11 Imran” and Ste. Anne).

These very early accounts leave no doubt as to the Persian and Zoroastrian identity of the Magi. It should be noted that nowhere are the Magi given names, nor is it said that they were three in number.

Three number three is derived from the number of gifts which they brought to the infant Jesus, i.e., gold, frankincense and myrrh. Indeed, the Syrian and Armenian traditions affirm that the Magi were twelve in number. The Armenian tradition is particularly significant in this respect, because Armenia was always under strong Persian cultural influence. The Arsacid dynasty which long ruled Armenia was of Parthian origin, and for a long time there were many

Zoroastrians in Armenia.

The First Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus Christ is certainly of great antiquity, as the earliest references to it so far discovered are from the early 2nd century AD. Various Church Fathers accepted the reliability of this Gospel, including St. Athanasius and St. John Chrysostom. Here is what this Gospel has to say concerning the Magi:

“And it came to pass, when Lord Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a city of Judea, in the time of Herod the King, that wise men came from the East to Jerusalem, according to the prophecy of Zoroaster, and brought with them offerings, namely, gold, frankincense and myrrh, and worshipped him, and offered him their gifts. ... And having, according to the custom of their country, (having) made a fire, they worshipped it.”

According to legend, no doubt of Zoroastrian origin, the island of *Kuh-i-Khwaja* in Lake Helmand in Eastern Iran, called “*Daryacheh-ye Sistan*, is the site of the castle which was which was the home of the Magi.

The Christian Tradition has always portrayed the Magi in Persian garb. So, the Christian Tradition has always affirmed that Jesus was heir to Zoroaster as well as to the Old Testament prophets. Obviously, in Iran much is made of this by Christians, Zoroastrians and Muslims. Remember, according to Islam, Muhammad was the last in a line of prophets, which very much includes Jesus. So, if Jesus was heir to Zoroaster as well as to the Old Testament prophets, then, by extension, so was Muhammad.

Among Muslims, Shi’as make much more of this than do Sunnis, in part because Imam Hussein was married to *Shahrbanu*, a Persian princess born a Zoroastrian, this as well as the fact that Shi’as revere Jesus and

the Virgin Miss Mary even more than do Sunnis. Obviously, *Shahrbanu* was female ancestor on nine of the twelve Imams. In Iran, Zoroastrians call Imam Hussein “son-in-law, which is *damad* in Persian, or *damade-mahbub*, “beloved son-in-law”. Since *damad* simply means “in-law” or “relative by marriage”, a more formal way of saying it would be: *mard ke shauhar-e-doktar-e-man mahbub ast*, i.e., “The man who is the beloved husband of our daughter”.

The implications of Jesus being the heir of Zoroaster as well as of the Old Testament prophets are enormous, and it is strange that, outside Iran, not much has been made of it. The above certainly affects the whole concept of the “Chosen People” and the idea that “salvation is (exclusively) from the Jews.” Iranians are not only not Jewish, they are not even Semites, being Indo-Europeans or Aryans. Note that the name “Iran” comes from the same Indo-European or Sanskrit root as “Arya” or “Aryan”, and the Old Gaelic “Erinn”, Modern Gaelic “Erin”, the native Celtic name of Ireland.

There is a very ancient group called the “Brotherhood of the Lamb”, which claims that Jesus was not of Jewish ancestry, but was Iranian or Aryan, who descended from Persians who came to Palestine when Cyrus the Great allowed the Jews to return from their Babylonian Captivity. Sad Brotherhood notes the Magi who visited the newborn Jesus, asking why they should have cares about the birth of a Jew, even one of the blood of King David/ They also note that Jesus’ physical type, very tall for that time and place, strongly built but not corpulent, with dark reddish hair, is more Iranian than Semitic, being particularly common among Kurds (it has been said that “Kurds look like Irishmen”). However, while said physical type is by no means unknown among Semitic peoples, particularly in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine.

In summary, the arguments of the Brotherhood of the Lamb are supported only by enough facts to be interesting and to make one think. The Brotherhood’s argument concerning the Magi, while not conclusive, is not negligible either, but their argument concerning Jesus’ physical type is worthless. Certainly, the arguments in favor of their theory are much weaker than the arguments against it. However, this does not negate the fact that both the traditional Christian and Iranian traditions affirm that Jesus was heir to Zoroaster as well as to the Old Testament prophets, with all the possible implications of this fact.



2020: Millennium of Ferdowsi

Rasoul Sorkhabi



Anniversaries are important; they celebrate legacies and signify presence and continuity. This year, 2020, marks the 1000th anniversary of Ferdowsi's death. This renowned Persian poet died at age 81 in 1020, more than five centuries before Shakespeare was born. Ferdowsi has not only endured for a thousand years but has also defined the very identity and language of his own country – Iran. This is, indeed, a great achievement for a poet or for any person, for that matter.

Ferdowsi literally means “belonging to Paradise.” The word “ferdows” (meaning “a walled garden”) is an Arabic variation of the Persian word “paradis,” from which the English “paradise” has derived. Ferdowsi was the pen-name of the poet. He was born near the town of Tus in northeast Iran in 940 AD. He came from an educated landlord class, but as he devoted his life to composing his masterpiece the *Shahnameh* or *Shahnama* (“The Persian Book of Kings”) he spent all his wealth, and died in poverty and poor health.

AN EPIC MASTERPIECE

The *Shahnameh* is a massive work: With about 50,000 rhyming couplets, it is the largest book of poetry ever composed by a single poet in the same style and field. It is a compendium of myths, legends, and

historical events of the ancient (pre-Islamic) Iran. The *Shahnameh* is one of the greatest epic works in world literature, similar to the Greek *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and the Indian *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. However, unlike these works which revolve around a particular war or a hero, the *Shahnameh*'s scope is quite vast, both in terms of geography (spanning from China to Yemen) and chronology (from the creation of the first human to the collapse of the Sassanid dynasty by the Arab invasion of Iran in the seventh century.)

The English writer E.M. Forster once remarked that Tolstoy was the greatest novelist in the world because in his monumental works such as *War and Peace*, Tolstoy described a large number of characters, lives, events, and psychological experiences. In the same vein, Ferdowsi is one of the world's greatest poets because of the enormous variety of characters, scenes, and moods he has described in the *Shahnameh*.

ETHOS OF THE SHAHNAMEH

Despite the enormous length of the *Shahnameh*, there are certain ethos, moral principles, and mottoes that run throughout the epic. Indeed, Ferdowsi's message, beliefs, and teachings can be summarized in sev-

eral key concepts. First, his unflinching faith in one God who is beyond words and imagination, and is yet the source of our existence, life, and consciousness. Second, the essential role that wisdom and knowledge play in both individual and social development. Third, justice should form foundation of governments in order for them to survive, serve, and prosper. Fourth, in the historical struggle between good and evil, we should strive to be on the side of good and righteousness. Ferdowsi believes that although everything changes in the flux of time, only by being good we can help goodness triumph. Fifth, qualities such as bravery, courage, hard work, and effort are essential for success and accomplishment. Sixth, humans are created with dignity and freedom, and should live as such; slavery is not acceptable. Moreover, human freedom, according to Ferdowsi, also means being free from egoism and materialism.

These ideals were obviously influenced by Zoroastrian teachings, according to which humans with “good thought, good speech, and good deeds” are on the side of the forces of goodness and light in the historical struggle against the forces of evil and darkness. Ferdowsi, however, crystallized these noble qualities in the person of Rostam and several other heroes in the *Shahnameh*. In a sense, Ferdowsi

was a great humanist and promoted an age of enlightenment based on knowledge, courage, justice, and goodness long before the terms “humanism” and “enlightenment” were coined.

Rostam, undoubtedly the most prominent hero in the Persian legends and whom Ferdowsi praises so dearly, is not merely a powerful warrior or (even worse) a pawn at the service of kings but a noble human being who is intelligent, brave, compassionate, and good-hearted. He cares for the lives of the common people; he honors justice and righteousness, and he is critical of the wrongdoings of the kings he serves. These are indeed high moral standards that Ferdowsi expects of all of his heroes and heroines in the *Shahnameh*, and by extension, of all men and women. Ferdowsi’s Persian heroes and heroines are patriots; they love their country and want to serve and prosper their people. But they have no ill wishes for other peoples, races, religions, cultures or languages; they are not invaders but defenders, and they prefer a just peace over bloody wars. That is why, the heroic and humanistic legends of the *Shahnameh* have influenced the chivalry class and the sports of wrestling and weightlifting in Iran and surrounding countries.

ENDURING LEGACY

Ferdowsi is regarded as one of the top five Persian poets of all time, but he probably had the greatest impact on Persian culture and literature. For one thing, because Ferdowsi helped revive the Persian language in the aftermath of the Arab invasion, all other Persian poets after him, from Omar Khayyam and Nezami through Attar, Rumi and Sadi to Hafez and Jami, all stand on Ferdowsi’s shoulder.

Ferdowsi was not the first person to compose the *Shahnameh* of pre-Islamic Iran. We know at least of four other efforts – two in poetry and two in prose – to compile the *Shahnameh* before Ferdowsi. However, none of these works has survived today on its own, but they have survived through Ferdowsi, who utilized some of these books in creating his *Shahnameh*.

It is easier to memorize a charming poem than philosophical or political writings. That is why, in the former days, when the majority of

people were illiterate, generations of *Shahnameh* reciters in tea houses, bazaars, and royal courts were able to transmit the poems, symbols, and legends of ancient Iran to the general public. Indeed, the *Shahnameh* proved so popular that scribes, whether commissioned or as freelancers, wrote and distributed thousands of copies of the book at a time when the printing industry did not exist. In this way, Ferdowsi’s masterpiece found its way to numerous schools, libraries, and households of the wealthy or educated classes. The stories of the *Shahnameh* have also provided fascinating motifs for Persian miniature, and this book, more than any other classic Persian book, has helped develop the art of Persian painting. One notable example is the *Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp*, a beautiful manuscript in 759 pages with 258 miniatures, which was commissioned by the Safavid king Shah Tahmasp I and was gifted to Ottoman Sultan Selim II in 1568. Parts of this work are kept at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the remaining pages are held by various collectors. (In 2011, a page from this manuscript from the collection of the scholar Stuart Cary Welch was sold for 7.4 million pounds.)

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

The first English translation of the *Shahnameh*, entitled *The Poems of Ferdosi*, by Joseph Champion was published in 1785 in Calcutta, India. Although only the first volume of this work was published, interestingly it predated the first printing of the *Shahnameh* in Persian, which was also published in Calcutta by Turner Macan in 1829 in four volumes. (Recall that Persian was the court language during the reign of the Mughal or Gurkani Dynasty in India from the mid-16th to the mid-19th centuries.) James Atkinson, a British scholar in India, published an abridged translation of the *Shahnameh* in 1832, which has been printed numerous times. The first complete translation of the *Shahnameh* in verse was published by the brothers Arthur and Edmond Warner in London from 1905-1925 in nine volumes. The first complete prose translation was done

by Bahman Sohrabji Surti, an Indian Zoroastrian scholar, from 1986-1988 in seven volumes.

None of the above works are, however, easily accessible. For those interested in reading the *Shahnameh*, three recent translations, all in prose, are suggested. *The Epic of the Kings*, translated and abridged by Reuben Levy, a former professor of Persian literature at Cambridge, was first published in 1967 and has been reprinted by Mazda Publishers in California in 1996. *Shahnameh: The Persian Book of the Kings* by Dick Davis (Penguin Classics, 2006) is more detailed and also based on more recent Persian editions of the book. Finally, *Shahnameh: The Epic of the Persian Kings*, translated and adapted by Ahmad Sadr, and with fabulous illustrations by Hamid Rahmanian (Quantuck Land Press, New York, 2013) is itself a work of art worth the collection. The stories of the *Shahnameh* have always fascinated the Persian-speaking children. Elizabeth Laid has adapted a selection of these stories in English for children with illustrations by Shirin Adl: *Shahnameh: The Persian Book of Kings* (Lincoln Children’s Books, 2012).

FERDOWSI LIVES ON

Ferdowsi was well aware of the immense value of his work. At the end of the *Shahnameh* he wrote:
**For thirty years I labored hard;
 I revived the Iranian nation
 through this Persian work.
 I shall not die; I will live forever;
 For I have broadcast the seeds of
 the Persian verse.**

It has been reported that when Ferdowsi died, a fanatic Muslim authority did not permit him to be buried in the Muslim cemetery in Tus on account that Ferdowsi was not a real Muslim. Ferdowsi was thus buried in his own garden (“ferdows”). In 1934, during the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi, a monument was built over Ferdowsi’s resting place, and an international conference was held in Tehran to commemorate his legacy. This ushered in the modern period of research and studies on Ferdowsi and the *Shahnameh*. Another milestone was the millennium of the *Shahnameh* in 1990 (according to

the Islamic lunar calendar) and 2010 (according to the Western calendar) with conferences in Iran and abroad sponsored by UNESCO. Ferdowsi completed the *Shahnameh* in 1010, ten years before his death.

Ferdowsi is revered not only in Iran but also in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and in other lands and communities with a Persian literary heritage. Just as Rabindranath Tagore is a national poet in two countries – India and Bangladesh, Ferdowsi should also be considered as a national poet in Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan, and also a unifying force for these three sister countries in Asia.

Reading through the *Shahnameh*, the reader becomes engaged in fabulous colorful stories, but in the spirit of a great epic, the reader also feels the struggle of a people, through many generations, to preserve their land, heritage, honor, freedom, culture, and lifestyle. The story of Iran and other Persian-speaking peoples even after Ferdowsi has been the same, and these peoples are still facing the same challenges and struggles. This is why, Ferdowsi is not a dead poet of the past; he is respected as a sage (*hakim*) who still offers a moral support and a foundation of wisdom, goodness, justice, and bravery for his people and readers.

Although there are numerous books on Ferdowsi and several prints of the *Shahnameh* in Persian edited by scholars over the past two centuries, one particular area that has immense potential for benefiting from the *Shahnameh* is the film industry – producing both documentary films and movies. Indeed, the *Shahnameh* can be a rich source of interesting stories of life, psychological dilemmas, war, peace, morality, mortality, humanity, and ancient history.

It is the dream of every politician to have a defining impact on the history and life of his or her country, but Ferdowsi offers a case in which a people's poet, rather than a power-seeking politician, could define the history and integrity of his people and culture. The year 2020 is a good occasion to remember Ferdowsi, and perhaps the best way to honor him is to read his literary masterpiece, the *Shahnameh*.

Winner of the Farhang Foundation's 2020 Nowruz Banner Design Competition: SETAREH FEYLIZADEH

LOS ANGELES, January 21, 2020 - With great anticipation, Farhang Foundation is preparing for its 12th Annual Celebration of Nowruz (the Iranian New Year) at UCLA's Royce Hall and Dickson Court, taking place on **Sunday, March 8, 2020**. It is with much elation that we announce the winning design for this year's Nowruz Street Banner Competition as well as the headlining performing artist for this year's concert at Royce Hall.

"For nine years now, the Farhang Nowruz Street Banner Competition has become a tradition in Los Angeles. Each year we are met with overwhelming enthusiasm from artists from all over the world with design submissions. Once again this year's competition broke all past submission records and was one of the strongest we have ever had, and the winning design truly captures the spirit of Nowruz," said Hormoz Ameri, Chairman of Farhang Foundation.

Farhang Foundation's annual Nowruz Banner Competition began in 2011, and it has quickly become a tradition that preludes Farhang's signature event, returning to UCLA for the fourth year in a row on March 8, 2020.

Each year, Farhang, through its Nowruz Banner Competition, reaches out to the global community of artists, illustrators, and graphic designers, enlisting their talents to create and submit original designs that capture the essence of Nowruz. Starting on February 1, and throughout the month of March, the winning design is featured on hundreds of large pole banners throughout the streets of Los Angeles announcing the arrival of spring and the largest celebration of Nowruz in the world!

This year's winning design was awarded to Iranian artist **Setareh Feylizadeh** from Paris, France. "Participating in a competition such as this, especially one which connects us to our roots, cultures, and traditions, has been so rewarding," said Feylizadeh. "The ultimate prize of winning this competition is the chance to connect with another community of Persians in another part of the world by spreading the message of Nowruz, which bonds us together and brings us closer to one another. For centuries, Nowruz has been one of the most celebrated holidays in Iranian culture. It is part of our shared recollection as far back as history



can remember. For me, Qajar imagery always sparks the notion of old and new, past and present. The new year reflects these qualities as it is a time to reflect on tradition, but also instills the hope of transformation and renewal."

Setareh Feylizadeh is a graphic designer and the founder of the *Lozi Graphic Design* firm in Paris, France. Her work has been showcased in numerous exhibitions within Iran and India. Setareh moved to Paris in 2015 where she currently works in different fields such as graphic design, visual identity, corporate design, and visual art.

An Introduction to: NOWRUZ IN THE ISLAMIC ERA

Shapur Shahbazi (1942-2006)
Encyclopedia Iranica

The Islamic conquest altered many Iranian traditions specifically associated with national ideology, imperial institutions, and Zoroastrian rituals. Although Nowruz was an established symbol of these three aspects, it did survive while less significant festivals were eclipsed by their Islamic rivals and gradually became abandoned by indifferent Mongol and Turkish rulers or hostile clerical authorities during Safavid and Qajar periods. Nowruz survived because it was so profoundly engrained in Iranian traditions, history, and cultural memory that Iranian identity and Nowruz mutually buttressed each other, and the emergence of a distinctly Persian Muslim society—and later the emergence of a nation state with the advent of the Safavids—legitimized the ancient national festival and allowed it to flourish with slight modifications or elaborations.

Indeed, as will be set out in subsequent sections, the incremental expansion of Nowruz ceremonies from the Safavids, through the Qajars, to the Pahlavi period enabled the court to parade its power and strengthened its attempts at forming a stronger central authority. Besides, it explains the establishment of increasingly sophisticated and protocol-ridden royal audiences with all the pomp and ceremony they could muster. Like all rituals, therefore, it both manifested a belief or ideology and reinforced it

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

While most of the traditions now associated with Nowruz have been inherited from the past usages, no comprehensive history of Nowruz in the Islamic period has been written. Such an account must be pieced together from occasional notices in general and local histories, brief records by geographers, and scattered references in works of poets and storytellers. Only for recent times do we have detailed information in the form of eyewitness reports by travelers and, more importantly, studies of contemporary practices throughout Persia and countries affected by Persian culture. But even these are problematic, as the former category mainly describes court usages and the latter usually gives uncritical narratives embellished with rhetorical and,

frequently, fanciful interpretations

Nowruz remains the single most important national festival of the Iranians who celebrate it with considerable zeal and pomp (Zoroastrian practices are treated separately). In the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution of 1979, attempts were made by some influential clerical authorities to dampen public enthusiasm for Nowruz, and there was a discernible tension between the various factions on the amount of freedom and scope allowed for the display of public jubilation and display of nationalistic sentiments during the Nowruz period. But this somewhat austere and puritanical approach was soon toned down: partly because of the Iran-Iraq war and the sentiments that it aroused, and partly because of the overall policy of the leaders of the Islamic Republic in the post-Khomeyni period to depict the regime as both religious and culturally proud of its ancient heritage. In this way, the fate of this festival is akin to the reception of that other 'Iranian' symbol, the *Shāh-nāma*, which also suffered only a brief and partial eclipse. Moreover, as has already been stated, the present-day religious authorities have a veritable arsenal of literature at hand in the voluminous corpus of religious discourse from the Safavids onwards that incorporate Nowruz into Shi'ite lore and popular anecdotal literature.

Persian Women In Fashion Entrepreneurship

The HNS Women's Association of Greater New York dedicated an evening to the intersection of amazing women Persian entrepreneurs. The event was *Organized by Carmen Li (MBA 2016)* and held last July at the Mad Rock Tapas in New York City. Through the show the organizers hope to educate the public on the history of being Persian and how the inheritance shapes their businesses; the intersection of New York and Tehran despite of the diplomacy overturn; the challenge and blessing of being women and being entrepreneurs their personal stories and the future that unites women not separate.

Today's Iran in the news is constantly battling the label of being troublesome, "terrorist", repressive (to women), religious, among others. However, Iran could be one of the most misunderstood countries in the world. Less known to the world is its 7000-year history, large number of women in STEM, and a booming fashion industry. Contrary to the image that Iranian women are limited, Persian women have been instrumental to the innovation of the art, fashion, film, and cultural scenes in Iran and abroad. They have challenged the status quo and pushed the boundaries for all the women in the world. Inheriting the saffron-tinted rich history, Persian women are giving birth to many businesses.

The event included a panel discussion featuring some of the leading Persian female designers based in NYC.

Mona Assemi, the celebrated Persian-American designer, founded her namesake line combining inspiration from old Persian culture and modern American lifestyle. The NY based designer combines sculptural clean lines, sumptuous crystals, and elegant metals to create a liquid dripping aesthetic for her signature collection. Her most current collections include unusual shapes and sculptural protruding elements. Her line has widely accessorized celebrities such as Giovanna Battaglia, Solange Knowles, Olivia Culpo, Rita Ora, and more. As of late, she has accessorized Beyoncé's new highly anticipated clothing line. Harrod's and Saks are among her top retailers among many boutiques all around the world. The luxury jewelry brand has been featured in *InStyle*, *Vogue*, *Allure*, *Hamptons*, *Marie Claire*, *WWD*, *New York Magazine*, *Washingtonian*, *Forbes*, among many others. Throughout all her work you'll see minimalistic lines, the use of repetition and negative space. In addition, she likes to always do what's progressive and innovative as a designer. Her biggest and most exciting challenge is to always exceed the lines of what is considered ordinary. She adores coloring outside the lines.

Sareh Nouri, the established bridal designer based in New York City. She founded her eponymous luxury bridal line Sareh Nouri to make dresses that are both sophisticated and traditional, both ethereal and elegant. A native of Iran and a graduate of George



Mason University, Sareh first worked with various high-end bridal salons to lay the foundation to consult high-end bridal clients. Today, Sareh Nouri has been featured on top TV shows, such as TLC's "Brides of Beverly Hills", E! News with Giuliana Rancic, etc.. Former "American Idol", Diana DeGarmo and Miss America Caressa Cameron, and designed a red-carpet gown for **Deborah Norville** for the Met Gala. Sareh's designs have also been photographed for top bridal publications such as *Vogue*, *People Magazine*, *US Weekly Magazine*, *Brides Magazine*, *Martha Stewart* etc. The line is stocked by retailers across the country; Saks Fifth Avenue, Neiman Marcus, Kleinfeld, and Bergdorf Goodman are among the retailers in NYC.

Azin Valy, is an award-winning architect turned designer/ "landscape draper" in NYC. She is the co-founder of I-Beam, an architecture and design firm that is chosen as one of the best multi-disciplinary firms by *New York Magazine* and is a finalist of the American Architecture Prize. Azin is also the founder of the luxury fashion and accessories brand, Cityzen by Azin. The brand aims to merge fashion with social impact by incorporating stunning aerial views of the world and showcasing the commonalities we have as a global community. Her scarves and bespoke garments are derived from the topography of each city and connect the heart and soul of the consumers to a place they love most or want to be transported to or have impact on. Cityzen has been endorsed by Michelle Obama, Malala Yousefzai, Yara Shahidi, Tory Burch, Christine Lagarde, amongst others. Anousheh Ansari, Tech guru and "Space Ambassador", who graced the Oscar's stage in 2017 wearing a Cityzen. Most recently, Azin was featured on the NYC Life TV show, "Her Big Idea", as one of the successful female entrepreneurs in NY in 2018.

(moderator) **Zhu** is the vlogger and entrepreneur based in New York City. Her dual-lingual contents focused on the Middle East, especially Iran, and the fine lifestyle. A native of China, she studied at UPenn and schools in the UK, US, and France. Her work has been featured on *Citizen Femme*, *We Are Travel Girls*, *That's PRD*, etc. She is a guest of the Amazon Fashion Week in Tokyo. Trilingual in Chinese, English, and French, she also owns boutique handbag brand **ZHU**, saffron lifestyle brand *Paradise*, and various projects across 4 geographical locations where she has contact with.

Persian Roots of Puccini's Opera *Turandot* (Turandokht)

Dr. Asghar Seyed Gohrab

Senior University Lecturer at Leiden University

This article has been dedicated to

Dr. Rokus de Groot (University of Amsterdam)

What is the place on earth that saw the sun only once? What is it that all beings have, human beings, angels, fairies, demons, anything that grazes and flies, heaven and earth, anything that God has created? How did a Persian story grow to a world opera?

EUROPEANS INSPIRED BY PERSIAN CULTURE

Persian culture has captured the attention of European artists from antiquity. Persian imperial history, myths and legends, religions, and poetry have all in one way or another enticed European artists, musicians and scholars. European composers were inspired by Persian subjects creating artistic works. Johann Strauss's *Persische March* (1864), Thomas Arne's (1710-1778) opera *Artaxerxes*, George Friedrich Handel's *Serse* (1738), Richard Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra*, based on Friedrich Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra*, are famous examples, which are inspired by Persian culture and history.

TURAN'S DAUGHTER

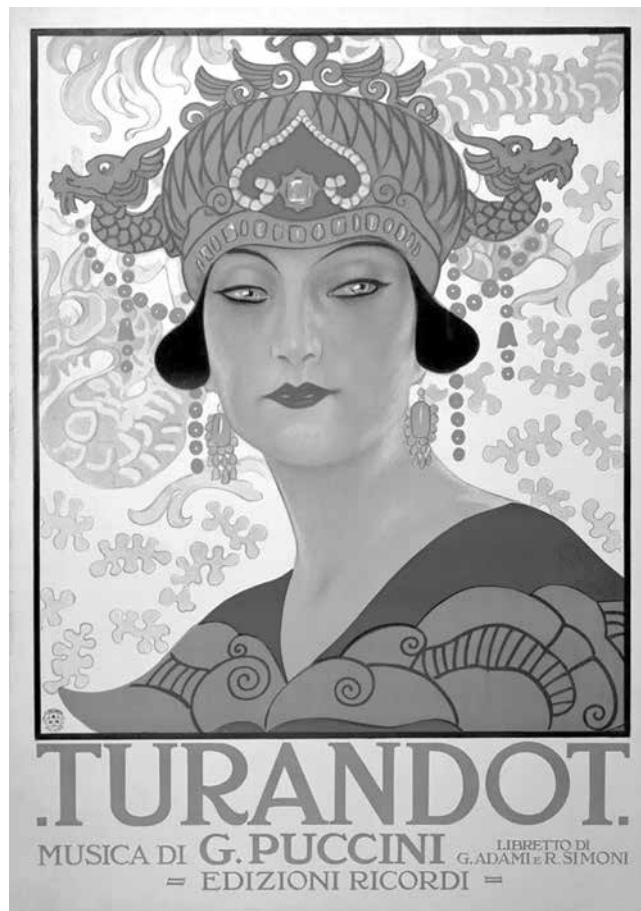
But how did a medieval Persian anecdote inspire Puccini's opera *Turandot*? The name derives from the Persian compound name *Turan* and *dokht*, meaning the daughter of Turan. *Dokht* is a shortened form of *dokhtar* or 'daughter,' 'girl.' As Persian belongs to the Indo-European family of languages, the word *dokhtar* has cognates in European languages. Turan refers to the north eastern borders Persia. *Turandot* recounts the story of a Chinese princess who kills her suitors when they fail to decipher riddles.

SEVEN BEAUTIES

As a recent investigation has shown (Mogtader & Schoeler, 2019), this story appears in anecdotal form in twelfth century Persia in at least two different sources.

The first source is the Persian masterpiece *Seven Beauties*, by the Persian poet Nezami (d. 1209) who recounts the romantic history of the pre-Islamic Persian king Bahram. The plot of this story is very complex, filled with mathematical, astronomical, cosmogonic, medical and mystical symbolism. A simplified plot runs as follows. In his early years, Bahram is sent away for education. During a hunting expedition, he comes across a temple. He goes inside the building and sees portraits of seven princesses from the Seven Regions of the world.

He instantly falls in love with all of them. As soon as he comes back to Persia, he builds seven pavilions and invites the brides to his palace complex. From Saturday to Friday he visits each night one princess, telling him erotic and didactic stories. Each of these princesses teaches him a lesson and is instrumental in his development as a human being. He starts with the Indian



princess in the black pavilion, and then on Sunday, the day of the Sun, goes to the Byzantine princess Humay, till he visits the Persian princess in the White pavilion on Friday, the day of Venus. The colour symbolism, from black to white (leading finally to radiance and colourlessness) is based on astronomical/astrological, mathematical and spiritual symbolism. This journey from black to white also refers to Bahram's spiritual development from darkness and ignorance to light and illumination, uniting himself with the source of light. He grows to a Perfect Man and an ideal king.

THE RUTHLESS PRINCESS

The plot of a cruel princess who asks riddles from her suitors appears in the red pavilion. It takes place on Tuesday, the day of Mars. Dressed all in red, King Bahram visits the princess Nasrin, who wears crimson robes with hair like the colour of fire and skin whiter than snow. The whole interior of the pavilion is decorated in red, red carpets, roses, and serving red wine. The princess tells a story of a princess in a far-off place in Russia. She is beautiful, skilful in bow and arrow, and is more learned than any men. Her father begs her to marry one of the suitors but she declines. Eventually she leaves the palace and let a palace be built high on a mountain. Hidden swords are placed on the passageway leading to the palace so that they decapitate anyone walking on the road.

She would only marry the strongest and the most intelligent man who could enter this new palace, escaping the swords, and

opening the locked door of the palace. Once in the palace, they had to answer four riddles asked by the princess. Would the suitor fail, he was immediately put to death. The princess orders to put her portrait on the city gate, challenging young men to suit her. Many suitors come but lose their lives. While her father weeps and shows pity on their deaths, the princess is cold and laughs, ordering to put the severed heads on the city gate. One day, a prince who is on a hunting expedition, arrives and falls deeply in love with the portrait of the princess.

Realizing that this princess is ruthless, he goes to a sage, and asks him how to overcome the invisible swords, how to unlock the palace's door, and how to answer the riddles. The wise sage says that death comes to everyone but love does not, so the prince should pursue his quest. The sage teaches him how to escape the swords, unlock the door, and answer the four riddles, giving him equipment. The prince succeeds to come into the palace's garden, a desolate court without any trees and flowers.

After long waiting, a maiden comes to him and asks him to go back to her father's palace and wait for the princess to come and ask him the riddles.

The prince goes back. At seeing the prince, people rejoice and remove the portrait of the princess and the skulls of suitors from the city gate. People prepare a feast, drink wine, dance and play music. After waiting for two days, on the third day the princess comes. While smiling, she removes two pearls from her ears and gives them to the prince, asking him what these gifts mean.

The prince gives her three pearls that the wise sage had given him. Then he orders courtiers to bring a scale and puts these three pearls on one side and the two pearls on the other. They were equal in weight.

The prince answers: "if, as the scholars say, life is but two days long, here is your life and mine. And here is yet another life, which is our life together, when we are made one by love." (Chelkowski, 1975: 93) Afterwards, the princess calls for a mortar, grinding the pearls and adding sugar to them. She then throws them into a cup and gives them to the prince, asking him what he thinks of such a gift.

He brings forth a flask of milk that the sage had given him and pours it to the cup and asks the princess to drink. The powdered pearls remain in the bottom of the cup. Afterwards, the princess gives the prince her precious ring and asks him what he thinks of the gift. The prince gives her a luminous perfect pearl. Finally, the princess unfastens her necklace and gives the prince a pearl exactly the same as the one the prince had given her, asking him what he thinks of the gift.

The prince brings forth a glass bead and a string and puts the bead between the pearls, saying to the princess, may our love guard us against evil spirit. In this way he answers all questions.

In Nezami's account, the prince does not ask riddles, and the riddles asked by the princess are not verbal questions. But in a second source of the story, we find several verbal riddles asked by both the prince and the princess. This second source is *Javāmi 'al-hekāyāt* ('Collection of Stories') by Mohammad 'Aufi (ca. 1170-1232).

'Aufi's story is short and it mostly concentrates on ten riddles presented by the princess. 'Aufi places the story in the Roman empire and emphasizes the cruelty of the princess as she kills 42 suitors who failed to answer the riddles. Here a prince falls in love with the cruel Roman princess by hearsay. He goes to her palace and challenges her.

The princess's father shows big sympathy with him. The

majority of the riddles are related to cosmogony, religion and ethics. These are riddles to test the intelligence of a young person, which often appear in Persian epic poetry.

After answering all of these questions, the prince asks a riddle from the princess, and gives her one day to solve it. In 'Aufi's retelling, the princess goes to her mother for advice. She convinces her to marry the prince. Several of the motifs Nezami used also appear in 'Aufi's story such as putting severed heads on the city gate, the king who deeply sympathizes with the young men vying his daughter, and falling in love either through hearsay or portrait.

Another source of the story, which is written much later, is a longer story based on 'Aufi's narrative. It is here that we see the setting is changed to China. In Persian romantic tradition, including folklore, China is famous for handsome girls, and a Persian prince often goes in quest of finding his marriage partner in China.

In this quest story, after much hardship the prince arrives in China and falls in love with a princess through hearsay. An old woman tells him about the cruel behaviour of the princess, imploring him to forget her. The prince goes to the princess's palace, and she asks him riddles in four consecutive days.

The prince answers them all. On the last day, the prince presents a riddle to the princess and gives her one day to guess an answer. Unable to solve the riddle, she sends beautiful maidens to the prince to make him drunk, and to seduce him to dig out the answers.

One of the maidens brings the drunken prince to bed and discovers the answer to the riddle. Before making love, the maiden tricks him, running away while leaving behind her cloths. When the next day, the prince comes to the palace to receive the answer from the cruel princess, who haughtily says to the prince that she will kill him, he says, "last night I was on a hunting expedition. I chased a bird. I caught her, prepared her for consummation, but she flew away, yet I have her wings and feathers still with me." This answer convinces the princess of his intelligence and agrees to marry him.

This longer version of the story was translated into Turkish under the title of *Ferec ba'd al-shedda* ('Relief after Hardship'). In the Persian stories, the actual names of the prince and the princess are not mentioned, but in this Turkish translation, Calaf appears, which is a corruption of Khalaf meaning 'successor,' 'child,' or 'offspring.'

François Pétis de La Croix (1653-1713) translated the story very freely into French and added Chinese colouring to it. The European versions of the riddle princess starts from this period. Carlo Graf Gozzi (1720-1806) had adapted several oriental stories, among which this particular narrative. Puccini's libretto is written by Giuseppe Adami (1878-1946) and Renato Simoni (1875-1952). Puccini knew the story already through the play written by Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805), which was based on Gozzi's version.

RIDDLES ASKED BY PUCCINI'S TURANDOT

It is fascinating to see how an anecdote, which comes probably from an oral Persian background, developed to several complex stories which all emphasize the riddling elements through a powerful, handsome and cruel princess, who tests the intelligence and physical prowess of her suitors.

Answers to riddles:

the Red Sea
a name

Sister Arch Bridges: ONE IN IRAN, THE OTHER IN SWITZERLAND



TEHRAN – The masonry arch bridges of stone or brick have long been constructed across the globe, some lasting for millennia. They are also iconic for having similar characteristics, amongst them Veresk Bridge in Iran’s Mazandaran province and Wiesen Viaduct in the canton of Graubunden,

Switzerland, both designed in the 20th century for single-track railway. Swiss Embassy in Iran on Sunday, January 26, posted a story on its twitter account (@SwissEmbassyIr) showing pictures of the two bridges. “The iconic Veresk Bridge in #Iran’s Mazandaran Province, constructed in 1937 by a multinational team

including Swiss engineers. A similar single-track railway construction, the Wiesen Viaduct, inaugurated in 1909, is located in the Swiss canton of Graubünden (photos David Gubler),” the tweet wrote. The Veresk Bridge, located in Veresk district of Savadkooch county, connects the railway between Tehran and the Caspian Sea region. The bridge is known as one of the masterpieces of the Danish engineering firm Kampsax, (consisting of Danish, German and Austrian engineers) serving the Trans-Iranian Railway network in northern Iran. The construction of this bridge included craftsmen of many nationalities, including Swiss and Italian people. Near the bridge is a memorial structure built in memory of all the construction workers who lost their lives in the course of building the bridge and its nearby tunnels.

The Chief Engineer, Austrian Walter Aigner, following his wishes, is buried in the local cemetery of Veresk. Under the bridge is a tunnel through which trains pass after crossing the bridge and gradually dropping altitude and before pulling into the train station. During World War II, it was known as the

Pol-e-Piroozi, or the “bridge of victory”. Currently, trains connecting Tehran to Gorgan or Sari pass over the bridge an average of four times a day. The Wiesen Viaduct, made from concrete blocks with dimension stone coverage, spans the Landwasser southwest of the hamlet of Wiesen, in the canton of Graubunden. Designed by the then chief engineer of the Rhaetian Railway, Henning Friedrich, it was built between 1906 and 1909 by the contractor G. Marasi under the supervision of P. Salaz and Hans Studer. **UNESCO registration**

Iran’s tourism ministry pursues possible inscription of cross-country railways, which includes arrays of bridges including the Veresk Bridge, stations and other historical monuments on the UNESCO World Heritage.

This industrial heritage, which dates from the World War I and II, contains expanded railway networks mainly stretched from south to north. It also includes a variety of monuments such as Tabriz railway station as well as Veresk and Sekhat-tala bridges built at hard-to-access points of deserts or highlands.

Wine & Prayer AND Hafiz of Shiraz (شراب و مناجات)

A New Edition of the Persian Master's Poetry

Translated by: Elizabeth T. Gray, Jr. and Iraj Anvar

Ashland, OR, October 2, 2019

While tensions between the United States and Iran continue to oscillate, a new book of translations of Hafiz of Shiraz (d. 1389), released on September 23rd, displays the central and unwavering role that mystical poetry plays in the Persian psyche.

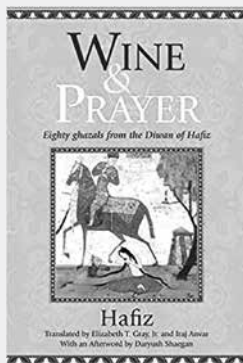
Native Persian speakers - in Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, other parts of Central Asia, and in these countries' diasporas - have a special bond with the fourteenth-century poet Hafiz. Poems from his *diwan* are not only memorized, recited and sung by individuals of every kind in every corner of the Eastern Islamic world, but even used for divination. Hafiz was the unrivaled master of the Persian *ghazal*, a lyric form roughly equivalent to the English sonnet in length, intensity, and complexity.

Wine & Prayer is a new and expanded edition of *The Green Sea of Heaven*, Elizabeth T. Gray Jr.'s acclaimed 1995 translations of Hafiz's *ghazals*. For this new book Gray, a poet, scholar, and corporate consultant, joined forces with Iraj Anvar of Brown University, a scholar and translator of Rumi, to completely rework the original fifty *ghazals* and to translate thirty new ones, including expanded notes to the poems and online access to the original Persian text. Suitable for literary enjoyment, spiritual practice, or the study of classical Persian, this edition brings to the English reader Hafiz's genius with language, his passion for the Divine Beloved, and, in places, his scandalous - to clerics then and now - exaltation of music and wine as images of, and vehicles for, ecstasy and transcendence.

Wine & Prayer presents the *ghazals* of Hafiz in English translations that capture the subtleties, paradoxes, and spiritual depths of the poet hailed by Persian-speakers as the "Tongue of the Invisible" and the "Interpreter of Mysteries." In the book's Afterword, Persian scholar Daryush Shayegan notes how "there is no antagonism between the earthly wine and the divine wine, just as there is none between profane love and the love of God, since one is the necessary initiation to the other." This describes the vein of rich ambiguity that Hafiz mines throughout his work, and which Gray and Anvar capture in their translations.

Recent translations of Hafiz have been controversial. Professor Omid Safi, an Islamic Studies scholar and translator of Sufi poetry, notes that "there are so many fake translations of Hafiz floating around, offering 'versions' that have no earthly connection to anything that the Persian poet and sage of Shiraz named Hafiz ever said. Elizabeth T. Gray Jr. offers us something different: poetic translations rooted in close readings of the original Persian, developed in consultation with a native speaker scholar."

Wine & Prayer is published by White Cloud Press as part of their acclaimed Islamic Encounters Series and their Sufi poetry translations, and is available nationwide with distribution by Publishers Group West.



Ghazal 8

When you hear the words of those who know,
don't say they are wrong.
You do not understand such speech, my lovely one.
That is what's wrong.
I do not acknowledge this world or the next.
God be praised for these heretical thoughts.
I don't know who is within wounded-hearted me
that I am silent while he shouts and moans.
My heart has dropped its veil. Where are you, O minstrel?
Sing your songs that will save me.
I never cared about worldly things. To my eyes
your face gave them their beauty.
The thoughts churning in my head keep me awake.
I've had a hangover for months. Where is the tavern?
Given how my heart's blood stained the cloister,
you have the righteous authority to wash me with wine.
They cherish me in the Zoroastrian temple
because the flame in my heart never dies.
What instrument did the minstrel play behind the veil?
that life has passed by and my mind is still filled with joy?
Last night your love echoed within me.
The inside of Hafiz's heart is still filled with that sound.

چو بشنوی سخن اهل دل مگو که خطاست
سخن شناسی نئی دلبر خطا این جاست
سرم به دنیوی و عقبی فرو نمی آید
تبارک الله از این فتنه ها که در سر ماست
در اندرون من خسته دل ندانم کیست
که من خموشم و او در فغان و در غوغاست
دل ز پرده برون شد کجایی ای مطرب
بنال هان که از این پرده کار ما به نواست
مرا به کار جهان هرگز التفات نبود
رخ تو در نظر من چنین خوشش آراست
نخفته ام ز خیالی که می پزد دل من
خمار صد شبه دارم شرابخانه کجاست
چنین که صومعه آلوده شد ز خون دلم
گرم به باده بشوید حق به دست شماست
از آن به دیر مغانم عزیز می دارند
که آتشی که نمیرد همیشه در دل ماست
چه ساز بود که در پرده می زد آن مطرب
که رفت عمر و هنوزم دماغ پر ز هواست
ندای عشق تو دوشم در اندرون دادند
فضای سینه حافظ هنوز پر ز صداست



A Question and Answer
with:

**Elizabeth T. Gray, Jr.
&
Iraj Anvar**

Translators of *Eighty ghazals*
from the *Díwán* of *Háfiz*

about their book:
Wine & Prayer
Wine, Prayer and Hafiz of Shiraz



Who is Hafiz?

EG. Hafiz of Shiraz, (d. 1389) is quite simply the most important lyric poet in the Persian-speaking, Eastern Islamic world. He is one of the greatest mystical and lyric poets to write in any language. In most Persian households, his *díwán* stands on a shelf next to the Qur'an. His poems are not only memorized, recited, and sung by individuals of every sort, they are used for divination. It has been said that everyone who reads or listens to Hafiz's poetry feels a direct connection with him and understands exactly what he means. Khorramshahi, in the introduction to his famous *Háfiznáme*, says, "The *díwán* of Hafiz is not a mere literary collection, it is beyond literature. It is a book of life."

While an historical figure surrounded by legends, we know almost nothing about him. We know that he lived most of his life in Shiraz, a city of gardens and vineyards in what is now south central Iran, and made a living by his verse at royal courts. No mean trick considering how deadly court politics could be during decades of foreign invasions and intra-dynastic strife.

How did you first encounter him and his work?

EG. In 1972, I dropped out of college for a year and followed the hippie road (as one did, then) from London to Kathmandu and down to Sri Lanka. In eastern Anatolia I began to hear about Persian poets who wrote love poems to a Beloved who might be human or might be God. As a poet, on my own mystical quest of sorts, this was just what I'd been looking for. Hafiz was supposed to be the best of the lot so when I got to Tehran I bought an armful of English translations—and was appalled. To me they all sounded like warmed-over forgettable Victorian homilies about drinking and women, done by some lieutenant stationed somewhere with time on his hands. I left them behind and headed off for Isfahan, Shiraz, Bam and then Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Despite my disappointment, I decided to visit the tombs of Hafiz and his fellow-Shirazi poet Sa'adi before I left Shiraz. I will never forget the late afternoon I arrived at Hafiz's tomb. The golden light fell aslant on the carved alabaster *ghazals* on

his tomb and the surrounding structures. Nor forget the sound of streams running through the garden among the roses. Nor the circles of disciples surrounding various *shaikhs*. The poems were visually gorgeous, and indecipherable. I concluded on the spot that these pilgrims hadn't come here based on the translations I'd read in Tehran, and vowed I'd learn to read them when I got home. I wanted to make the book I'd wished I'd had in hand that afternoon.

When I returned to college I began my study of classical Persian. At the end of my first year I announced that I was ready to translate Hafiz. I remain deeply grateful to Wheeler Thackston and Hossein Ziai, once they stopped laughing they agreed to help me work my way through a tiny handful of poems. The poems were more luminous and polyvalent than I could ever have imagined.

IA. Honestly, I don't know because I don't remember when it occurred. What I know is that I began to hear his lines in songs and quoted by those around me even before I could talk. My understanding of Hafiz has come in stages across my life. My first direct and conscious contact with him was in the elementary school where I could read a *ghazal* and also see his name as the composer and then memorize it. Later, in my twenties, when I lived in Rome, I felt the true impact of his work. I began to understand him at a different level, and to appreciate his poetry from a new perspective. I can say that it was a journey of rediscovery of the man and his work.

Thereafter, reading his *ghazals* became part of my life. When Jim Morris introduced me to Liz and I began to work with her on her translations, I was struck by Hafiz and his work in a whole new way. When you translate any work, you get to go deep and discover things that you never would as just a reader. After this experience, Hafiz occupied a much larger part of my heart and life. In fact, working on Hafiz translation gave me the courage to start translating Rumi, a project I had been thinking about for years. Compared to Hafiz, Rumi's work seems to be simple and more straightforward to translate. Rumi's poetry is not multilayered as is Hafiz's poetry. Now, again, after this new effort with Liz I feel even a deeper connection with Hafiz. Now I enjoy more than ever reading Hafiz and contemplating his lines.

What is it about this 14th century poet that makes him of interest to readers today?

EG. At least during my lifetime, there has been an increasing hunger for experience, art, and literature that speaks to the spirit, to the soul. While it takes many forms in many individuals in many cultures, the spiritual quest is always with us, and it is in love that we find its purest expression. A topic we are unlikely to exhaust any time soon. While Islamic literature, and medieval Iran, are unfamiliar to many readers, Hafiz's poems "speak to every heart" and his commentary on our world—and its institutions and delusions—seems deeply relevant, highly contemporary, and often hilarious. He misses nothing, and sees to the center of everything.

IA. To me Hafiz is and will always be readable because he transcends time. The truths in his work were as valid then as they are now, and will never be outdated. He talks about life, and the essence of its basic components that do not change. In terms of these essentials we are the same humans now as we were in the 14th century. Technology has not changed our spirit. His poetry has a pulse and his words are like veins with blood circulating in them.

Rumi is most popular Persian poet in the United States today. How do he and his work relate to Hafiz?

IA: Rumi is the most popular in this country because he is more straight forward and easier to understand, and therefore easier to translate. In fact, he expands mostly on one topic, love. He is deeply spiritual and deals with the core of Islam which is basically about love. We also owe his fame in this country to Coleman Barks (I will expand on Barks's work later in this discussion). Hafiz speaks of a wider array of earthly concerns, but it doesn't mean that he neglects the main topic of Rumi's work. In fact, one can see the core of Rumi's thought interspersed throughout Hafiz's work. As someone who has read both poets deeply, and translated both, it's clear to me that some of Hafiz's ghazals are directly connected to Rumi's, and that he was inspired by him. In my mind, I cannot choose between the two. They complement each other.

What challenges did you face in translating these poems from classical Persian into contemporary English?

EG. Well, first, Iraj and I are told at least once a week that Hafiz is untranslatable. We agree. While some *ghazals* are slightly easier to bring into English than others, basically there is no way to capture the brilliance of his thoughts, language, rhythms, formal choices, puns, and turns of phrase. We agree, he's untranslatable. So, does that mean you don't try? That you simply tell people, "There's this great poet and he's changed my life and what you should do is go study classical Persian for years and then you can read him"? We don't think so. We think you try and bring to an English reader as much of Hafiz as you can. (And, of course, we get the pleasure of spending hours exploring Hafiz's verse.)

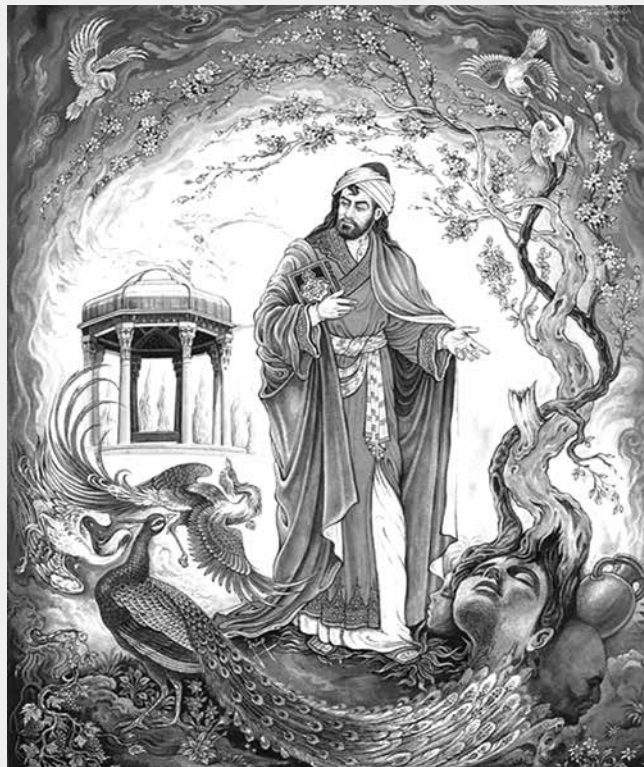
Second, there is always the fundamental question of how "literal," how "close to the bone" do you make the English version? I'm pretty sure that translators of literary work have argued

about this for millennia. My first versions, done in 1973, were very free. I imagined I was producing something like Pound's *Cathay*. Given that various scribes had moved lines around over the centuries, I figured I could too. It was Elizabeth Bishop who turned to me, after reading some early drafts, and said: "This poet stands at the pinnacle of Persian poetry. Is that correct? Do you really think you know what he was trying to say better than he did? That you can improve on his work?" It was a moment of devastating illumination.

I remain committed to trying to bring as much of an Hafiz *ghazal* as I can to a reader, as a free-standing moving, beautiful poem in contemporary English. I also want, as a reader and a translator, to have as much—unobtrusive—commentary available as possible, to have a sense for the context, imagery, wordplay. But let me be clear: if choosing a beautiful phrase (or rhyme) means losing something that feels important to the poem, I increasingly choose to err on the side of the more literal rendering. There is no "improving" on Hafiz.

Then there are the specific issues of bringing Persian into English. For instance, Persian pronouns don't indicate gender. How amazing is that? The Beloved (whom I love, or seek, or have lost) can be a woman, a man, a young boy, a king, a patron, or God. The Persian poet can utilize the entire range of such nuance in a single word or phrase, but the English translator has to work around or choose. And then there are the multivalent thematic associations with roses, nightingales, wine, tavern-masters, dusty thresholds, thrones, and jasmine. For the Persian listener/reader such images carry into the poem a long literary and cultural tradition.

Our Translators' Introduction takes a shot at discussing formal and lexical challenges, and explains some of the prevalent imagery. Daryush Shayegan's Afterword speaks to the spiritual and religious context of the work in the context of the Persian



tradition. The annotations at the back of the book offer a more highly-granular explanation, poem by poem.

IA. I don't think I can add much to what Liz says about this issue. I basically agree with most of the things she says. However, "*traduttore, traditore*", "translator, traitor" is an Italian word play which originates in pre-Renaissance Italian literary circles. Apparently, it was used for the first time in relation to the translation of Dante into French. Well, what can I say? A translator being a traitor seems to me, to some degree, to be a correct assessment, but without this betrayal every literary work on earth would have to remain imprisoned in its own cultural domain and could only be read only in the original language. Therefore, to accept the idea of abstaining from translating great works into other languages means closing windows to other cultures. So, I choose to be a "traitor" in this regard because, by translating a work, even if I can only convey thirty percent of the original, I know that I have rendered a service. According to a great number of orthodox Muslims, translating the Qur'an is a sin and it must only be read in Arabic.

How did you two come to work together on this new and expanded edition of Hafiz's ghazals?

EG. In fact, James Morris, now at Boston College, introduced us in 1994. I was revising the manuscript of translations that, had the Revolution not intervened, was to have been published by the Imperial Academy in Tehran. Steve Scholl, at White Cloud, suggested I work with Iraj on a final review of *The Green Sea of Heaven* before it went to press. It was an amazing experience, and over the next twenty years we went on to read and perform Hafiz (and Rumi) with an array of performers and musicians. We spent months discussing his translations of Rumi, and mine of Farrokhzad, and continued to learn from one another. In 2018, when Steve asked if we'd like to do a new and expanded edition of Hafiz, we leapt at the chance to do it together, starting from the ground up.

IA. In 1994 I received a call from Liz who said she was referred to me by our mutual friend Jim Morris. Steve Scholl had asked her to review her translations with a native scholar before White Cloud published them. To make a long story short, over the next several months we went over her translations, word by word. After *Green Sea's* publication, we had many delightful events reading the ghazals in both languages for all kinds of audiences around the country and collaborated in other translations of modern Iranian poets, as she mentioned above. Last winter – when *Green Sea of Heaven* went out of print – Liz called and asked if I wanted to work on a new expanded edition together, which was a great blessing for me. This time we spent hours and hours on Skype working on the new translations and revising the old ones. For me it was a joy doing this work and I savored every moment of it.

Some recent English translations of Rumi and Hafiz have been plagued by controversy. What is all that about?

EG. See my answer to the question of the translator's stance and choices, above. Any translator is essentially, I think, a disciple of the writer he or she is translating,

at least for the duration of the project. Translating a poet is the most intense reading and exploration of that poet's work that can be done. I bless every translator and their choices, but, please, if you are going to call it a *translation*, it is my firm belief that you really, actually, like, you know, *really* need to understand what the poet said.

IA. There has been a lot of talk about this issue in recent years. I don't think I need to be polite about this and just hint about certain "translations" without naming names. Words have specific meanings and they are there for us to communicate and to point at things. We all know the meaning of translation. Translation does not mean to rewrite, edit, interpret and add new ideas to someone else's translation of an original work in a more "poetic" fashion – and then call it your "translation" without speaking a word of the mother language. There are other words in this rich English language that can convey the meaning of doing this.

Let me talk first about the work of Coleman Barks. In addition to enjoying his work, I have a lot of respect for him and feel deeply indebted to him, as an Iranian-American scholar, a fellow *paesano* of Rumi, for putting Rumi on the map in the United States. But I love his work by itself, without considering that they are called "translations" of Rumi's poetry. The only objection I have is to the characterization of his books. The word "translation" in the title is in some important ways misleading. Mr. Barks knows English and the value of the words in this language, which is why his work is loved. But readers are entitled to know, before embarking on a book, what they're actually reading. Mr. Barks has improved his versions of Rumi over the years by engaging in a deep study of Rumi and the Persian poetry tradition. He has been personally involved in a Sufi order and he tries to bring to his English readers the heart of Rumi's message but at the same time not emphasizing Islamic teachings.

For some time now, Mr. Barks has been co-translating with John Moyne, a native Persian speaker and scholar of Sufism, and these more recent Rumi books do seem closer to the Persian texts. A good example of this is the popular Rumi quote that is widely shared, including as a tattoo on Brad Pitt's bicep: *Out beyond ideas of rightdoing and wrongdoing, there is a field. I will meet you there*

In the original text, Rumi uses the Arabic words *iman* (faithfulness) and *kufir* (infidelity) for rightdoing and wrongdoing respectively: *iman* and *kufir* being terms that are Quranic and related to the Islamic shariah (law). Barks, writing for non-Muslim audiences, makes a creative choice that does downplay the Islamic roots of Rumi's poetry, but is still firmly tied to the real, Muslim figure of Rumi. In short, reading Rumi via Barks one must understand that you might not always be getting the full Islamic context of the Master's original poetry.

And then there is Daniel Ladinsky's so-called "translations" of Hafiz, and here I have to be really harsh and call it completely fraudulent and dishonest. I have heard that he is really a nice man and has his followers. In his defense, he genuinely feels that he has captured the spirit of Hafiz in his work. He is an American disciple of Meher Baba, who loved Hafiz and listened to recitations of his poetry every night. But it seems highly doubtful that our great poet Hafiz has authorized Ladinsky to write his own new age-ish "poetry" and claim it is a genuine translation. I do not accuse Mr. Ladinsky of being dishonest but I can't help to think that perhaps he is delusional. I have looked at his work and been unable to find a single phrase that belongs to Hafiz.

ELIZABETH T. GRAY JR.

Elizabeth t. Gray Jr. is a poet, critic, translator, and corporate consultant.

Her long poem, *Salient: A Poem* will be published by New Directions Publishing in 2020. Her sequence of poems, *SERIES | INDIA*, appeared in 2015 (Four Way Books). Translations from classical and contemporary Persian include *Wine and Prayer: Eighty Ghazals from the Dīwān of Hafiz* (2019), “*Let Us Believe in the Beginning of the Cold Season*” by Forough Farrokhzad (in Mantis, 2014), *Iran: Poems of Dissent* (2013), and *The Green Sea of Heaven: Fifty Ghazals from the Dīwān-i Hāfiz-i Shirāzī* (1995). Sections of the Tibeto-Mongolian folk epic “The Life of King Kesar of Ling,” co-translated with Dr. Siddiq Wahid of the University of Kashmir, appear in *Columbia University Press’s Sources of Tibetan Tradition* (2013).

Other work has appeared in *Little Star, Talisman, Hyperalergic, Paris Lit Up, Modern Poetry in Translation, The Kenyon Review Online, Poetry International, The Harvard Review, New England Review, Ploughshares* and elsewhere.

She has served as a Guest Editor for Epiphany and the New Haven Review. Ms. Gray was the founding CEO and managing partner of Conflict Management, Inc. and Alliance Management Partners, LLC, international consulting firms specializing in the management of complex negotiations and the formation of inter-corporate strategic alliances.

She serves as Chair of the *The Beloit Poetry Journal* Foundation and as Corporate Secretary of Friends of Writers. In 2018 she joined the Board of Human Rights and Democracy in Iran, based in Washington, D.C., and served as Chair of the Iran Human Rights Documentation Center, in New Haven, Connecticut from 2009-2015. She holds a B.A. and J. D. from Harvard University, studied at the University of Isfahan, Iran, and received her M. F. A. from Warren Wilson College. She lives in New York City.

Ghazal 13

*In these times the only untainted companions left
are a cup of pure wine and a book of ghazals.
Travel lightly, the pass of salvation is narrow.
Lift a glass, there is no substitute for this dear life.
I'm not the only one in the world afflicted with idleness;
the theologians also don't practice what they preach.
On this turmoil-filled road the eye of reason
knows the world and its works are fleeting and worthless.
My heart longed for union with you
but on life's road death plunders the caravans of hope.
Grasp the curl of a moon-faced one and stop babbling
that good luck and bad are the work of Venus and Saturn.
Our Hafiz is so drunk on the wine of pre-eternity
that in no epoch will you ever find him sober.*

IRAJ ANVAR

Iraj Anvar is an actor, singer, stage and film director, writer, translator, and educator.

Born in Tehran, he studied in Genoa, Italy and earned a degree in acting and directing at Alessandro Fersen’s Studio di Arti Sceniche in Rome.

On returning to Tehran, he co-founded the Tehran Theater Workshop, the most important center for innovative and avant-garde theater in Iran. In addition to directing and performing, he taught acting and diction at Tehran University and translated plays by Genet, Pirandello, Adamov, and others.

A few months before the Iranian revolution, he received a scholarship from Farabi University to attend New York University’s Department of Performing Arts, where he earned a PhD in Middle Eastern Studies and taught Persian language and literature. He has also taught Persian literature and language at Harvard, Columbia, the University of Pennsylvania, New York University and University of Wisconsin.

He created the English subtitles for the Oscar-nominated film “Children of Heaven” (1998) and directed “From Kaf Mountain to Vernon” (2002), a documentary film about an Abkhazian community in Vernon, British Columbia.

He has had a lifelong involvement in the poetry of Rumi and Hafez. His translations of Rumi ghazals, include *Divan-i Shams-i Tabriz: Forty-Eight Ghazals* (2002) and *Rumi, Say Nothing* (2008).

A new translation of his third set of Rumi’s ghazals and ruba’is is forthcoming.

He has performed Rumi and Hafez in Persian and in his own English translations at the Asia Society, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, St. Bartholomew’s Church, the Metropolitan Museum of Art (NY) and elsewhere.

He currently teaches Persian at Brown University.

در این زمانه رفیقی که خالی از خلل است
صراحی می ناب و سفینه غزل است
جریده رو که گذرگاه عافیت تنگ است
پیاله گیر که عمر عزیز بی بدل است
نه من ز بی عملی در جهان ملولم و بس
ملائت علما هم ز علم بی عمل است
به چشم عقل در این رهگذار پر آشوب
جهان و کار جهان بی ثبات و بی محل است
دلم امید فراوان به وصل روی تو داشت
ولی اجل به ره عمر رهزن امل است
بگیر طره مه چهره ای و قصه مخوان
که سعد و نحس ز تاثیر زهره و زحل است
به هیچ دور نخواهند یافت هشیارش
چنین که حافظ ما مست باده ازل است