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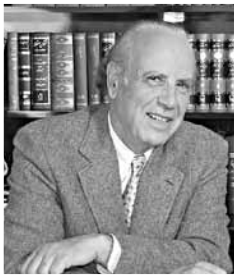
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IMPORTANT NOTICE

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



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

As a child I thought the end of the year would never come. Now it seems as if the year ends with the blink of an eye. You look back at the 365 days that have past. You are amazed at the events that have happened and that your wishes and dreams still are not a reality. I cannot believe another year has passed and I am again wishing you a Happy Holiday Season, a Healthy and Happy New Year and soon our preparations for NoRouz will begin. With each year we wish for a world that is peaceful, one that cooperates and respects all world citizens. But our wishes unfortunately have once again not come to fruition. In fact this year we have seen a world more inflamed, one that is fueled with misunderstandings, propaganda and hatred. We have witnessed voices of world citizens crying for democracy and freedom and those voices are suffocated by deception. We, however, cannot be dismayed and we cannot stop wishing and praying for wiser world leadership and compassion towards world citizens.

While our wishes have not yet been reached there are little glimmers of hope that we are going in the right direction. My glimmer of hope came during the Presidential campaigns. For the first time I saw Iranian Americans truly involved in the election. Their energy and persistence was sincere and well thought out. They were forming their own thoughts and not thoughts formed by political propaganda of others.

One of the most startling events I saw was their interest and participation in the US election. In their efforts I saw more energy and persistence with the women and for that I am proud. One of the most important issues for them was the democratic candidate losing. They feared that it would mean the destruction of Iran. In all the conversations regarding the election with Iranian Americans, when you gave your opinion they became angry, they pointed out that a Republican win would increase the risk of an attack on Iran. This was something I never heard from them before. Normally the focal point at our gatherings was the reading of our great poetry and literature and remembering the past glory of Iran. There were many immigrants leaving Iran to come to the United States, leaving their belongings and homeland. At that time they wished the United States would invade Iran and destroy the present regime. This year at the gatherings their thought process had changed. I realized they now understood that a United States intervention in Iran could result in the division of Iran (the Shah once said Iran would become Iranestan). The change in their feelings was very admirable and surprising.

Prior to the elections, discussions became very heated, in their attempt to convince their audience, this election was about keeping Iran independent, protecting its integrity and protecting those who were incarcerated in Iran's jails. This was their argument in support of the Democratic candidate. In listening to them I remembered an Iranian proverb, "Iran will never die." This statement comes from the heart and is very accurate. The author, I am sure, was ready to give up his life to protect and defend Iran. An example of this is the eight-year war with Iraq. Over one million Iranians, women, men and children lost their lives or were maimed defending their country. This is a tragic loss of lives and brilliant minds. They walked over mine fields in defense of their country.

In our interview with John Limbert, former Iranian hostage and US Ambassador, he said when it comes to the question of independence and protection of Iran, all Iranians unified with one voice will be able protect their homeland.

As Iranians, we usually take the position that we are separate, not united. We rarely form a unified organization with substance. This is very important, because in the last 35 years we have lived in exile. Our position was important to us; we needed the title of CEO or President. It solidified our existence. As a result we would organize one-person organizations in order to keep the title and position. This may work in social events such as parades and parties, but when it comes to the protection of Iran against division and the protection of its integrity and sovereignty a "solo" individual will not be effective. Maybe this election was the best example to show the world, that no one should ever underestimate Iranians, especially when it comes to important issues.

This is an unknown characteristic of Iranians, that non Iranians never knew existed. Having said all of this, however, one of the biggest faults Iranians have is the lack of good leadership; a true leader at the head can organize in a meaningful way and in turn have an impact in bringing freedom and democracy to Iran.

You cannot expect grand movements from the people in Iran because a noose, a bullet, torture or incarceration, has suffocated their voices. They have been stripped of human rights, freedom of speech and dignity all in the name of religion. Yet, they will continue to sacrifice themselves, while we watch from the outside.

Another interesting point I observed at these gatherings was in the way discussions were handled. Normally Iranian-

Americans take the position that our opinions and points are always correct; the listeners must be broken down until they accept our opinion. This has changed. We are becoming listeners and thought processors. This is a pleasant surprise and amazing and a needed change. Iranians are a super educated group of people who have behaved in aggressive ways towards one another yet so passive and humble towards other groups of people. This is slowly changing. The time has come to take a step towards unification and come together. Perhaps we have learned that while we can be polite we cannot be complacent. We have become better listeners and critical thinkers. This election perhaps gave us the opportunity and an eye opening to acknowledge that we have created a new home and that we must assimilate into this new way of life. This takes becoming involved in its local, Federal, social and political issues. This would lead us to one day have an elected political figure, an Iranian American, as a senator or a congressman in Washington. If we desire to keep Iran and Iranians safe, we must then participate in the political spectrum of ideas at a higher level in Washington. Then at time of crisis we can prevent any type of intervention and or invasion to keep Iran a sovereign nation.

Shahrokh Alavi



*Can't You See the Mighty Warrior?
How often you ask,
What is my path?
What is my cure?
He has made you a seeker of Unity,
isn't that enough?
All your sorrow exists for one reason -
that you may end sorrow forever.
The desire to know your own soul
will end all other desires.
The smell of bread has reached you -
if that aroma fills you with delight
what need is there for bread?
If you have fallen in love,
that love is proof enough;
If you have not fallen in love,
what good is all your proof?
Can't you see? -
If you are not the King
what meaning is there
in a kingly entourage?
If the beautiful one is not inside you
what is that light
hidden under your cloak?
From a distance you tremble with fear -
Can't you see the mighty warrior
standing ready in your heart?
The fire of his eyes
has burned away every veil,
So why do you remain behind the curtain,
scared of what you cannot see? -
Open your eyes! The Beloved
is staring you right in the face!
If a master has not placed
His light in your heart,
What joy can you find in this world? -
every flower is lifeless,
and sweet wine has no taste.*

(A Garden Beyond Paradise:
The Mystical Poetry of Rumi, versions
by Jonathan Star)

THANK YOU

My sympathy with our countrymen. God bless them all. I want to thank you for your generosity mailing *Mirass Iran* to me for the last few years. I have always enjoyed reading the English and Persian articles that you carefully select and publish. Your editorial is always interesting to me. Thank you very much.

Reza Moini

LATE DR. KARIM MANSOURI

I received your magazine yesterday, and it had such an emotional effect on me. I wonder if you remember my beloved late husband, Dr. Karim Mansouri? He used to write very passionate articles for your magazine. It's with a heavy heart that I write to inform you that he passed away on Jan. 13th of this year. I'm in the process of writing a letter to you and sending you a post card size card of him. Please publish this if you are so inclined... Thank you in advance for doing this, and I always enjoyed your magazine

Rosalyn Mansouri

THE SOURCE OF THE QUOTE

I was looking through the Summer 2010 issue of *Persian-Heritage*, and found

something interesting. P.16, (David Yazdan's "The Demise of the Heart of Darkness". He quotes, "If you live by sword, you die by sword." – UNKNOWN. He didn't know the source.

It is Jesus, I think (New Testament) Matthew 26:52: "For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." This he said to one of his disciples who tried to defend him the night he was arrested. "Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with th sword." Interesting.

David Yeagley

DR. KARIM MANSOURI

1935-2012

**BELOVED HUSBAND, FATHER, GRANDFATHER
BRILLIANT PHYSICIAN, WONDERFUL MAN**



It has been a while since I saw your wonderful magazine where my beloved late husband, Dr. Karim Mansouri used to contribute his passionate writings on Iranian philosophical subjects. He courageously battled three major medical problems with the last 16 years, and succumbed to vicious leukemia on January 13th of this year.

He was born on March 11, 1935 in Shiraz, Iran and was a very proud graduate from Pahlavi (Shiraz) Medical School in 1961. The alumni of that class, many living in the U.S. with Iranian and American spouses, have strong bonds and have regular reunions all over the country. I am honored that I'm still included in their activities although beloved Karim is no longer here, and I always have a joyous time attending them. Karim always considered them as family members, and indeed so do I. They had a memorial service for him in August in Chicago which was so very dignified and uplifting; if Karim was witnessing this, he would have thought it was so fantastic.

Dr. Karim Mansouri was a very proud Iranian-American who religiously followed every bit of news from Iran and all over the world. He took it all very personally and seriously and was extremely disturbed by any negative happenings. We met in New York City when I was a student at Brooklyn College and he was a third year resident in Internal Medicine. Although we came from such very different backgrounds I always maintained that it was an "arranged" marriage. Forces beyond our comprehension arranged it; forces higher than humans. We celebrated 45 years of marriage, and our union produced two wonderful children and four awesome grandchildren. I'm just so grateful for the time we had together. Life will never be the same without beloved Karim, but my fantasy is that in some small way we can illustrate that it is possible for those of differences to come together not only in peace, but bliss. Right now it's just urgent for Peace among the countries and cultures... It does take a passion for understanding ...

Rosalyn (Roz) Mansouri

HAFEZ POEM

1. *From the flower garden of the world, I have a sweetheart who is as trim as a pine tree; that is good enough for me.*
2. *I refrain from associating with arrogant and hypocritical people.*
3. *Good deeds get you into paradise, but I am content with a glass of wine in a tavern.*
4. *Sit by a stream and see life go by. It's a hint from a fleeting world and is enough for me.*
5. *Look at the riches of the world. What I have is good enough for me.*
6. *My sweetheart's company is enough for me, and she is with me.*
7. *You don't have to send me to paradise. Being with you is enough for me.*
8. *Hafez, you should not complain about the cards nature has dealt you. Your good nature and ability to write wonderful poems is great enough.*

CANDIDATE MAKES HISTORY, Becoming First Iranian American Elected to a State Legislature CYRUS HABIB

November 6, 2012, Seattle, WA— Bellevue Democrat, Cyrus Habib, claimed victory in election for the 48th Legislative District of Washington state's House of Representatives. Habib was endorsed and supported by the Iranian American Political Action Committee (IAPAC), the connected PAC of PAAIA. He will become the first American of Iranian heritage to serve in a state legislature and will be the highest ranking Iranian American in elected office.

According to the website of Washington Secretary of State, Habib brought in 60.5% of the votes, while his opponent, Redmond City Council member Hank Myers, earned 39.5% percent of the votes.

"I am touched and honored to have received IAPAC's endorsement of my candidacy for Washington State Representative," said Habib to PAAIA.

"The support I received from Iranian Americans throughout the country was truly humbling. I praise IAPAC and PAAIA for their work in supporting Iranian American engagement in public life."

Cyrus Habib is a technology lawyer and community volunteer. He grew up in Bellevue, Washington, and is a proud product of its public schools. Having lost his eyesight at age 8 to a rare form of childhood cancer, he learned early the importance of equal



opportunity, hard work, and a quality education. After winning a Rhodes scholarship to study at Oxford, Habib attended Yale Law School, where he served as editor of the law review. He returned to Washington following his graduation, and works at the Seattle-based law firm of Perkins Coie, where he assists startup technology firms with their early-stage legal needs. He is passionate about technology and entrepreneurship, and understands the needs of small businesses on the Eastside.

A disability advocate, Cyrus has testified before the U.S. Congress and written publicly on the importance of making currency accessible to blind and low-vision Americans, and before both houses of the Washington State legislature in support of tougher "distracted driving"

laws. In 2009, King County Executive Dow Constantine nominated Cyrus to serve on the county's Civil Rights Commission, where he has championed the rights of the disabled in our community.

Cyrus is a Human Services Commissioner for the city of Bellevue, which makes funding decisions with respect to the needs of the city's most vulnerable residents, including children, those seeking employment, and the elderly. He is proud to serve as a Trustee of the Bellevue College Foundation, which raises scholarship funds, to help economically disadvantaged students of the college. He serves on the board of the Bellevue Downtown Association, and on the advisory board of Overlake Hospital's Pulse, fundraising program. He also mentors and coaches high school students with mock trial and with the college admissions process.

Cyrus enjoys spending time with his family, visiting the region's many and varied restaurants, playing jazz piano, and traveling. He is a member of the St. James Cathedral parish.

The official Democratic Party nominee for the 48th Legislative District of Washington State, Habib's campaign was supported by a bipartisan list of local, regional, state and federal leaders, including U.S. Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell.

ALAMIYAN'S VICTORY



Source: Tehran Times

Iran's Noshad Alamiyan and the host nation's Petrissa Solja emerged as the winners of the respective Under 21 Men's and Under 21 Women's Singles titles at the GAC GROUP 2012 ITTF World Tour German Open in Bremen on Saturday 3rd November. The talented Iranian defeated no.7 seed Chen Feng from Singapore (11-6, 3-11, 11-5, 11-5, 11-4) at the quarter-final stage.

In semi-final, Alamiyan beat no.10 seed Asuka Machi of Japan (7-11, 11-8, 11-9, 11-8, 9-11, 11-5).

The 21-year old faced Egypt's Omar Assar in the final game and came from two sets down to beat him 4-2.

Alamiyan defeated Assar (7-11, 9-11, 11-9, 11-8, 11-6, 13-11) and won the award worth \$1680.

It was another Under 21 Men's Singles title for Noshad Alamiyan to add to his growing collection of honors.

Earlier this year in February, he was the surprise winner of the Under 21 Men's Singles title at the GAC GROUP 2012 ITTF World Tour Kuwait Open; later in the year he was the not such a surprise winner of both the Under 21 and Men's Singles titles at the ITTF Euro-Africa Circuit Morocco Open, according to ITTF.com.

Phenomenex CEO, Fasha Mahjoor, Survives Jump off the 87th Floor of Skyscraper

TORRANCE, Calif – On September 3, 2012, Phenomenex CEO, Fasha Mahjoor, successfully rappelled/abseiled down 87 floors of The Shard in London, Europe’s tallest building, alongside Prince Andrew, HRH Duke of York, and a small group of fellow philanthropists to raise a combined estimated £2,000,000/ \$3,167,800 for the educational charity, The Outward Bound Trust. The group has set a world record for the longest rappel/abseil ever completed by civilians.

“I’m speechless! I can’t explain what a thrill it was to stand at the pinnacle of The Shard and look down over a thousand feet of vertical glass to the miniature world below with nothing but a harness, a rope, and faith to help me defy gravity. It was incredible to take that leap, but I must admit that I’m happy to have two feet on the ground once again,” Mahjoor reflected. “This has been a remarkable journey for me, both physically and emotionally. The three weeks leading up to this event I spent raising funds for the charity have been extraordinary. Family, friends, business colleagues and distributors from so many different countries, and even complete strangers, have so generously supported me and The Outward Bound Trust. I am quite humbled.”

The Outward Bound Trust has enabled over one million underprivileged youth to participate in challenging outdoor programs, providing life lessons in responsibility, teamwork, and leadership. Mahjoor added, “Ultimately, overcoming my own fears and jumping from the Shard today very much reflects the essence of what this organization is about, and it feels so good to know that what we have done here will afford so many young people the same opportunity to help them overcome their fears and build self-confidence” Through the outdoor education and courses provided by The Outward Bound Trust (and its many global affiliates), young people clearly see, perhaps for the first time, what they are truly

capable of achieving.


Mahjoor continued, “I sincerely believe that as business leaders we have a responsibility to give back for betterment of humanity without any geographical restrictions or boundaries. We must think beyond the confines of our companies and self-imposed bottom lines so we may continue to grow our commitments to the community and the world at large. And what better place to start than with our youth! I am truly honoured and inspired to have been a part of this event.”

When asked if he would do it all over again, Mahjoor replied, “Next time let’s try 187 floors!”

Fasha Mahjoor is an architect, businessman, philanthropist, visionary, and founder and CEO of the Phenomenex Companies.

Phenomenex is a global technology leader committed to developing novel analytical chemistry solutions that solve the separation and purification challenges of researchers in industrial, clinical, government and academic laboratories. From drug discovery and pharmaceutical development to disease diagnosis, food safety and environmental analysis, Phenomenex chromatography solutions accelerate science and help researchers improve global health and well-being. For more information on Phenomenex, visit www.phenomenex.com

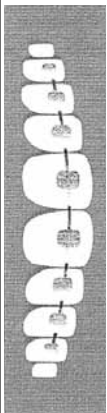
The Outward Bound Trust is an educational charity and a leading provider of financially-assisted outdoor learning. It aims to help young people realize their potential through learning in the wild, and creates a supportive and challenging environment in which young people can learn about themselves, become more self-confident, skilled and disciplined. Supporting The Outward Bound Trust will enable a new generation of young people to undertake their own character-defining challenges.

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I went to see the movie Argo with my dad. I had chosen this movie because I felt it would be one that would be of interest to my dad, not myself- how I was very wrong. The movie brought on a truth that was not only a reality back in the 70's but also one that is still very real today. As I felt my dad's energy, one that remembers and still harbors the emotions of an Iran that was and is, an Iran that doesn't provide opportunity, I felt ashamed.

As a Persian Canadian I have been ignorant and in many ways have done so knowingly. Privileged my whole life, I somehow felt justified to my frivolous complaints. Ones as silly as having to work long hours causing me to pay \$400 a month in dog daycare seemed up until tonight, just. Up until now I felt sorry for myself that I

I Somehow Forgot to Be Grateful

I'm remembering why my parents left everything behind

by Sherry Ahkami

even had to work, sorry that I had to do anything I didn't want to. I somehow forgot to be grateful. I just like so many other immigrants who come from a society that struggles has forgotten. We have misplaced our values and somehow have justified living without living for worth. We have forgotten the struggles our families made to bring us the opportunity of possibility. And so I am choosing to bow down in the race of what's what. The ones where the men take pride in who slept with more women, rather than show love to one special woman. The ones where girls flaunt their lat-

est labeled purse, forgetting that girls just like ourselves are starving and many abused beyond our imagination.

The real value lies in the moment we take advantage of the opportunities that lie ahead of us. The ones that exist simply by the fact that we live where we do. I'm remembering why my parents left everything behind. The struggles they had so I never would. This is why I am choosing to be grateful that I can dream dreams that can become possibilities. That this is the value I was given.

I'm choosing to bring some kind of validation in why I was given the opportu-

nity for a chance, and many others weren't. And because of this I will work hard without complaints to make my dreams become realities.

I will place value where it is meant to lie; I will give before I receive and most importantly I will be grateful every day that I live where I do. I will do this not only for my parents, who struggled to bring me these opportunities but also for those who weren't given any opportunity. The ones that are young just like myself but don't dare to dream. Because they know that no matter how many times they close their eyes, fantasize and hope they are always awoken to a world without possibilities. For them believing and dreaming is not enough and may never be.

I will for those who couldn't. ■

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BY TOURAJ DARYAEE

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From time to time it is important that one provide a teach-in to nonacademics and educate those who promote wrong and harmful ideas. As a history professor I would like to teach a history lesson to Mr. Dana Rohrabacher, the honorable Congressional Representative of California's 46th District in Orange County where I live and work. On July 26, 2012 Mr. Rohrabacher wrote a letter to the US Secretary of the State, Hillary Clinton, informing her that since the "people of Azerbaijan are geographically divided and many are calling for the reunification of their homeland after nearly two centuries of foreign rule," the United States should help them reach that goal. He then goes on to say that: Russia and Persia divided the homeland of Azeris homeland in 1828, without their consent. "The Azerbaijan Republic won its independence in 1991 when the Soviet Union collapsed," continues the letter "Now it is time for the Azeris in Iran to win their freedom too." Finally, Rohrabacher states: "Aiding the legitimate aspirations of the Azeri people for independence is a worthy cause in and of itself...yet, it also poses a greater danger to the Iranian tyrants than the threat of bombing its underground nuclear research bunkers."

Obviously Mr. Rohrabacher is concerned with the immediate issues at hand in the Middle East and the interests of the US and Israel in a very twisted way, because he calls the MEK (Mojahedin Khalq Organization, an Iranian exile group on the US terrorist

list), "Israel's Friends." This obviously demonstrates Mr. Rohrabacher's political stance and the influence of its supporters, which is detrimental to the US policy in the Middle East. This short sightedness and lack of knowledge about the region and its history is indeed exactly the reason for which the US has gotten involved in the Middle East (Iraq and Afghanistan), which has bankrupted us. The question is how this kind of interference in different countries and plan of dismantling nation-states, recognized by the UN would help the US? Or does it simply just help other countries in the region? Well, the short answer is that it doesn't help a bit! Last time I checked, it was the work of colonial powers in the nineteenth century, which created and divided countries in Middle East. Even in Orange County it is taught that such ideas and actions were evil and has caused problems in the world for the past two centuries. It has been a long time since any country has thought of such colonial plans.

Mr. Rohrabacher states that the Azeri people have been divided for the past two centuries by Russia and Persia in 1828 (I wonder how much travel he has had in the Republic of Azerbaijan and Iran's province of Azarbijan to make such a claim). Just a short glance in any preparatory college world history book will make it clear that the territory he is discussing was part of Iran (known as Persia then), which was invaded by Russians in 1828 and annexed through a peace treaty. But what is important is that the territory that Imperial Russia took as part of her victory over the Persians was never called Azarbijan. It was the Soviet strongman, Stalin who in order to meddle in Iran's affairs renamed the region of Arran (historical ancient Albania) as Azerbaijan as a thorn on the side of Iran and those allies who disagreed with the USSR, namely US and the UK. It seems Mr. Rohrabacher is following Stalin's footsteps!

As an ancient historian I am also tempted to give Mr. Rohrabacher a history lesson about the very ancient past. The name Azarbijan (Turkified as Azerbaijan), comes from the name of the last Satrap (Persian word now existing in English, check it in any good dictionary) of the Achaemenid Persian Empire, named Aturpat, in the 4th Century BCE. His family stayed on as local rulers even after Alexander the Great's conquest and hence the region became known as Azarbijan (Old Persian Aturpatakan). The Old Persian terms mean "Protector of Fire." This, however, is only the region south of the Aras River (Iranian Azarbijan), while to the north, Arran was named Azerbaijan by Stalin. The Republic of Azerbaijan is a twentieth century creation. Hence, there was never historically a unity or connection between the two. The region was Turkified in the medieval period and that is just one more ethnic group among many others in the modern nation-state of Iran and beyond.

But Mr. Rohrabacher should also be told that it was the Azaris of Iran and Arran who in fact invented modern ideas of Iranian nationalism. Akhundzadeh, known in the Republic of Azerbaijan as Akhundof, a national hero is the man who perpetuated the intellectual movement behind the idea of the greatness of Iran. Since then, many if not most Iranian statesmen and

intellectuals have been of Azari background (Ayatollah Khamenei and the previous presidential candidate Mir-Hossein Mousavi are both from Iranian Azarbijan). Many of the most famous Iranian historians, linguists and scholars in modern times have also been ethnically Azari, but none have called for such a separation. I don't know why Mr. Rohrabacher and his handful of friends (Mojahedin Khalgh in Washington who are spending money trying to buy congressmen and congresswomen, along with Israel), are making such nonsensical statements. They are both incorrect and historically inaccurate.

Furthermore, the Iranian Azarbijan is not only inhabited by Turkic speaking, but also Kurdish people as well as the Christian Assyrian and few remaining Armenians. Mr. Rohrabacher should read a bit on the consequence of promoting a single ethnicity in a multi-ethnic areas and nation-state such as Iran. Lessons from Kosovo and Serbia-Bosnia Herzegovina, as well as Armenia-Azerbaijan wars among other, places have shown that such ethnic divisions leads to ethnic cleansing and horrific acts of violence. Iran has been a multi-ethnic civilization for the past 2500 years. It is people like Mr. Rohrabacher who have fallen into the trap of Israel and the Mojahedin Khalgh who seek such divisions for their own opportunistic aims.

US involvement in the Middle East, particularly in Iran in the twentieth century, with a highlight of US backed coup in 1953 which dethroned the only democratically elected prime minister in that nation's history has made the modern Iran as it is today. I am sure the congressman has heard of the term "blowback," meaning any shortsighted action could lead to long-term problems in the Middle East and for the US. It should be a lesson to Mr. Rohrabacher to stay out of Iranian affairs and concentrate on unemployment, the broken educational system and poverty in his own county. He is needed more here in Orange County where things are falling apart. His similar ideas about partitioning Afghanistan have made him persona non grata in that country. Let's save California, before others begin to call for its secession from the US! ■



Chronology, the adjective” Islamic” is based on the assumption that Islam offers a model of government, but that is far from the truth. The illegitimate regime is a triple oxymoron and misnomer, it is a lie. It’s neither Islamic, nor a Republic, or Iranian. Neither Prophet Mohammad or the Koran mentioned anything about the creation of a government. This was a Khomeine’s creation. In the beginning he promised everything and it seems now that these promises never became realities. Could it be because they were false promises. It is alleged that he systematically killed and eliminated all senior members of the Armed Forces and anybody who was remotely affiliated with the previous regime. He decimated the Armed Forces so badly that it made an open invitation for Saddam Hussein to attack our Iran. This led to the massacre of one million people, most of them young or children. It plunged Iran into a new dark age. The massacre and atrocities of people continues today. Practically all of the governmental oppositions were arrested, jailed or killed. Sharia law, which includes but is not limited to the stoning of women for minor sexual or social misdemeanors remains part of the governments agenda.

And then came the creation of the dreadful and terroristic army called the so-called revolutionary guards. This force began to expand and create a malignancy, both in Iran and throughout the world. They have been responsible for most of the terroristic activities throughout the region and are responsible for killing many American soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan. They have been supporting the insurgents in those countries and supplying them with training and ammunition.

To distract the world from the atrocities they constantly drag Israel into this picture. As I have mentioned before, this was the only country that helped Iran during the Iran and Iraq war.

AL QAEDA IN IRAN

There have long been links between Al Qaeda and the government of Iran. In 2003, the Washington Post reported on a decade old relationship between Al Qaeda’s Ayman al-Zawadiri and Ahmad Vahidi, then Iran Ministry of Defense. In 2004 the 9/11 commission wrote that, “there is strong evidence that Iran facilitated the transit of Al Qaeda’s members in and out of Afghanistan before 9/11, and that some of these were future 9/11 hijackers”. Throughout the war in Iraq there was extensive intelligence that Iran was supporting the Mesopotamian branch of Al Qaeda, never mind that they were terrorizing the country’s Shiite population.

Yet it was only a year ago in July that the US for the first time formally accused Iran of forging an alliance with Al-Qaeda in a pact that allows the terrorist group to use Iranian soil as a transit point for moving money, arms and fighters to its bases in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Treasury Department outlined on the following day that there was an extensive fundraising operation, which uses an Iran-based operative and draws from donors

in oil rich Persian Gulf countries such as Kuwait and Qatar. The US has long been concerned about the alleged Iranian support for the terrorist group, even though Iran and Al Qaeda hold different interpretation of Islam and divergent strategic interests, but terror brings together funny bedfellows.

US officials said the other day that they believe Iranian assistance to Al Qaeda is driven by the same motivation: ridding the Middle East and Central Asia of US forces. The Iranians are allowing their territory to be used by the network, it stands to reason that Iran is getting something out of this as well.

Iran officials at the UN mission in New York called the allegation baseless, it is amazing that not only their representative lies to the international community. But these people even lie to each other. The foundation of that regime is based on lies.

Following the invasion of Afghanistan by US forces all the senior Al Qaeda members escaped to Iran and Pakistan. Some of their senior member of Al Qaeda operative and bin Laden’s family fled to Iran. Among them was a senior Al Qaeda military commander, Saif al-Adel, who was using Iran as a base to oversee Al Qaeda’s operations throughout the area. Former Iranian President Mohammad Khatam’s government suggested handling over

to the US Iran-based Al Qaeda operatives in exchange for anti-Iranian insurgents captured by the Pentagon in Iraq, but the deal was never reached, and the relation with Tehran worsened following the 2005 election or rather say appointment of the new president hardliner by the name Mohamoud Ahmadinejad.

The US diplomatic cable by the State Department official in 2008 reported the Bahraini national Adil Muhammad Mahmud Abd al- Khaliq, funneled money and other resources to Al Qaeda via Iran. This individual was also responsible of transferring money through

Iran to deliver to the Al Qaeda leaders in Pakistan. He worked closely with the Iranian authorities to secure the release of Al Qaeda militants held in Iranian prisons who are then returned to camps in Pakistan. Mr. Khilil’s partner in the operation has been Atiyah Abd al-Rahman, Al Qaeda’s overall commander in Pakistan’s tribal region and a close associate of bin Laden. Mr. Rahman had previously served as Al Qaeda representative in Iran, according to senior US officials.

By exposing Iran’s secret deal with Al Qaeda allowing it to funnel funds and operative to its territory, we are illuminating yet another aspect of Iran, unmatched support for terrorism. The Treasury Department sanctions freeze any assets held by the six alleged Al Qaeda members inside the US bar American individuals or businesses from conducting business with them.

The United States sanctioned these Al Qaeda operative and accused Iran of allowing them to operate in their territory to conduct operation in Afghanistan and Pakistan against these forces. The Obama administration last year offered a \$10 million reward for information leading to al-Sura’s whereabouts. He was one of the six Al Qaeda members who were living in Iran at a time. The

The Heart Of Darkness

Part IV

My Opinion on The Islamic Republic of Iran, the
Creation of an Evil Empire

David Yazdan

*Only two things are infinite: the universe and human
stupidity and, if you borrow trouble, you pay a high
interest rate. – Unknown.*

secret intelligence memo mentioned by the press noted.” Against the background of intensive cooperation over recent months between Iran and Al Qaeda, with a view to conducting joint attack against Western targets overseas, Iran has significantly stepped up his investment, maintenance and improvement of operational intelligence ties with Al Qaeda leadership in Pakistan and Afghanistan in recent months.

Since this malignancy started thirty-two years ago it has been at war with the Western alliance, particularly the United States and Israel. Since the time of the Reagan presidency, when the first suicide bomber attacked the Marine barracks in Lebanon, every president after has done absolutely nothing except to appease, thinking they can talk to those in power. It is not working. Fortunately, 75 million innocent people of Iran want to have nothing to do with that regime and they are vastly subjugated and tortured. The dollar, which was only eight toman during the Shah’s regime is now 2000 toman you can see the suffering of those poor people.

To be continued in the next issue of the Iran’s nuclear bomb acquisition.

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fire

Majid Kafai

Attention!

Do not come close to me for

You will be burnt

Day and night

I am melting in a fire

The fire of astonishment

The fire of Creation

The fire that taught the Suns

How to burn and shine

O! “Kafai”

Close your lips and do not utter a word

It is not at your level

To understand and fathom that FORCE

Which created the World and all the galaxies

A tiny drop

Fallen in a profound Ocean

What does it know

How the Ocean was created

When and why

What living creatures are in the Ocean

What is its depth

And its boundaries

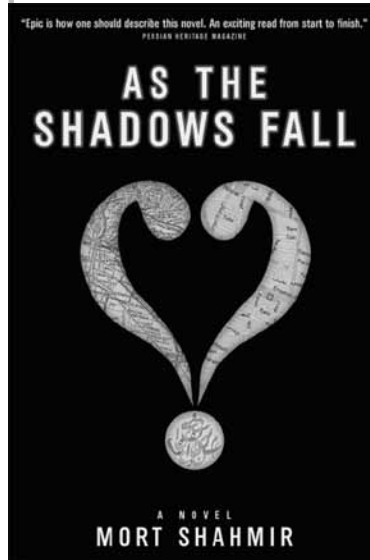
If there are any

At all.

As The SHADOWS

Fall

A Novel By: Mort Shahmir



وقتی

که

سایه‌ها

می‌افتند

نوشته:

مرت شاهمیر

Please visit: mortshahmir.com

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

The print version will be available soon.

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

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270 791 9985

Back in the mid 1990's, following the break up of Yugoslavia, when Serbian military forces were attacking innocent civilians in the independent states of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Slovenia, concerned citizens in the outside world followed the events with much trepidation. The mass migration of refugees across imaginary borders, the concentration camps full of innocent people and the ubiquitous unmarked mass graves near Zagreb, Sarajevo, Srebrenica were heart wrenching to witness and displayed a shamefully ambivalent global conscience that was satisfied to remain silent. If any lesson is to be learned from these tragic events, it is surely the need to ensure that these civilians did not die in vain and to do all we can to avoid similar atrocities occurring in the future. That said, we humans tend to have short memories when it comes to our history.

Having completed a three-year term as the science & technology advisor to Congresswoman Nita M. Lowey's and whilst working at the IBM Research Division as well as at Pace University, I was befriended by a cadre of diehard American scholars of Croatian heritage who were desperately struggling to encourage the U.S. government to intervene militarily to stop the bloodshed in their motherland. Most striking of all was the education and understanding I gained about the history, culture and life stories of the noble people of the Balkans. I was baffled when one day I received an unsolicited email from an Australian of Croatian ancestry giving me 1001 reasons that the Croatians were originally from Persian descent. My first reaction was one of bewilderment.

After witnessing the constant stream of negativity aimed at Iran and the Iranian diaspora by the Western media, and in lieu of the fact that under such pressure most Iranian expatriates abroad have resorted to disguising themselves as Greek, Turkish, Italian, Jewish, Lebanese, Latinos etc, it was refreshing to hear that a blond young lad had the yearning to be Persian!

Noel Malcolm, the acclaimed British modern historian and author of the book *Bosnia: A short history*, provides the reader with the most comprehensive narrative of a multi-ethnic Bosnia and the many empires that had governed the region over the past two millennia. He specifically writes about

the history of tribes that migrated into Bosnia from Iran 1,700 years ago. For example, the word *Kravat*, or *Hravat* whilst having no etymological roots in Slavic languages, can be traced back to ancient Persian. In fact, the word sounds familiar as it is engraved on a rock situated in the southwestern region of Russia inhabited by Greeks. Its root, *Khoravat* found in the Avesta the Zoroastrian holy book, means Friendship.

Historical evidence supports the migration of the Croats and other peoples who settled in today's Balkans 1,700 years ago. This coincides with a period in the Sassanid Dynasty in Iran where the caste based hierarchical Zoroastrian religion, as spearheaded by the priests, the *Mobad*, had formed a strong alliance with the governing elites. After making Zoroastrianism the official state religion, state sponsored persecutions and heavy taxes were levied against other faiths. In addition to the future Croats, other groups who later became Bosnians, Serbs,

other ethnicities. Coincidentally, the same handkerchief, called a *Dastar*, is still used by shepherds in Iran to prevent their necks from burning in the sun. At times they wrap bread and feta cheese in it and tie it to the tip of a stick held over the shoulder. Until recently, in Mazandaran, the groom would wrap a red or green handkerchief around his neck, symbolically equivalent to a wedding ring.

In 1656, Louis the 14th formed a Croat volunteer army whose distinction was the silk neck handkerchief with distinct ties. They even used the handkerchief for covering wounds in battles. At times, they attached the handkerchief to their body armor. The armored protection was historically made of leather, thus the phrase, 'a la croate', entered the French language in the mid-17th century. One hundred and seventy years later, the tie became internationally accepted as a symbol of formal attire. Since the late 15th century, the French term, *cuirasse* or the Italian term, *corazza* was loosely used. Although both these names have Persian Avestan (Old Pahlavi) roots, some scholars have retroactively tried to fabricate an old Latin etymology for the word, *coracea*.

In the Avesta, (*Vandidad*, chapter 14, verse 9), twelve essential items are cited as a

requirement for military personnel; the eighth item is the *Konret*, aka *Grivpan* in Old Pahlavi, which is a cloth attached to steel armor. On one of the major carvings in Persepolis, (and as illustrated in Figure 42 in *Iran in the Ancient East* written by Ernst Herzfeld), *Ardeshir's father (Artaxerxes)* dressed in Median attire clearly has a tie around his neck.

To sum it all up, I suppose it depends who you hear the story from and who writes history. For me it conjures up memories of the Greek American restaurant owner in the movie, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, who claimed that culture originated in Greece. All other nations with ancient roots-- the Jews, the Persians, the Chinese, the Indians, the Egyptians—make the same claim. One can only surmise there is a degree of truth to each claim, with the understanding that all these civilizations exchanged, borrowed and lent ideas to one another. What ties us all together is humanity and humility, compassion and empathy, and the aspiration to safeguard and leave the world a better place for the generations that follow. ■

BOSNIA AND CROATIA: WHAT IS THE TIE WITH IRAN?

Davoud Rahni

Armenians and South Ossetians moved from Iran to Asia Minor and later to the Balkans circa 300-500 AD. Ironically, the Zoroastrians themselves had to flee Persia to India in three waves between in the 7th - 15th centuries due to Islamic persecution. A modern migration took place post 1979 and included millions of Iranians fleeing to the US and other Western nations. The Jews of Iran, having been assimilated for nearly three millennia, also migrated to the US and Israel. However, against all odds, a sizable Jewish community, alongside Zoroastrians, Armenians, Assyrians, and the *Baha'i* still remain in Iran.

Amongst those non-Zoroastrians persecuted in the Sassanid era of the 3rd - 6th centuries, the Christians and the believers of the *Mazdakism* and *Manichaeism*, (the latter most presumably becoming the Croats), were especially targeted. In his book, Malcolm writes that these ethnicities later became part of the Slavic race. According to Malcolm, both the Serbians and the Croats were of Iranian roots; however, only the Croats tied a handkerchief around their neck to distinguish themselves from

REVIEWS

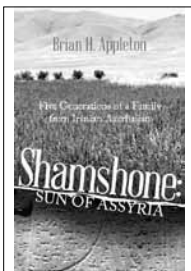
SHAMSHONE: SUN OF ASSYRIA

Brian Appleton

Tate Publishing and Enterprises, LLC (2012)

This is a truly fascinating book that exemplifies one of PERSIAN HERITAGE'S most important goals. Regardless of what citizenship we pronounce we are formed by our family before us." Customs and traditions flow from one generation to the next as normally as our DNA.

This unique and educational book takes the reader on the journey of an Assyrian man named Sam." His life starts in Golpachin Village and continues to Tabriz, Tehran, Chicago, London and finally to San Jose" His journey is an education for the reader as the author has filled the book with information on the history, culture and religions of Sam and the lands of his journey. With each page I became more immersed into the world that formed the man Sam" In the first chapter, Sam was just the name of the man in the book, by the end Sam was my friend. In the epilogue was happy to see that Sam was and is doing just fine.



THE NEW MIDDLE EASTERN VEGETARIAN MODERN RECIPES FROM VEGGIESTAN

By Sally Butcher

Interlink Books,

A beautifully photographed culinary and cultural tour of the Middle East and the surrounding region

In this upbeat and sassy guide to Middle Eastern vegetarian cooking, Sally Butcher, proprietor of Persepolis, one of London's best Middle Eastern food emporiums, proves that the region is simply simmering, bubbling, and bursting with sumptuous vegetarian recipes-both traditional and modern.

Written in her trademark engaging, practical, and knowledgeable style, Sally takes a fresh look at many of the more exciting ingredients available today in local grocery stores and supermarkets, as well as providing a host of delicious recipes made with more familiar fare.

Packed with recipes like fragrant Persian Rice Cakes, Cucumber and Pomegranate Salsa, Ginger and Tamarind Eggplants, Fiery Green Beans, Pink Pickled Turnips, Fig Jam with Chopped Pistachios, and Halva Ice Cream with Chocolate Spice Sauce, The New Middle Eastern Vegetarian is filled with aromatic herbs and spices, inspiring ideas, and all the knowledge needed to create wonderful vegetarian dishes from the land of Veggiestan.

Sally Butcher is a London-based food writer and cookbook author. She also runs the acclaimed Persian food store, Persepolis, with her Iranian-born husband. Her first book, Persia in Peckham, was published to critical acclaim and was short-listed for the 2008 Andre Simon Award.

It was also selected by the Sunday Times as the Cookbook of the Year.



"A MUST SEE" DOCUMENTARY ON HAYEDEH



The documentary "Hayedeh: Legendary Persian Diva" by Pejman Akbarzadeh has been released on DVD by Persian Dutch Network. Cited as a "Must See Film" by Dutch magazine 'Elsevier', the documentary contains an extensive review of Hayedeh artistic activities from the beginning in late 1960s at Radio Tehran to the end in 1990 in California.

The documentary looks at Hayedeh's career against the backdrop of political and social upheaval in Persia (Iran) as the nation went from monarchy to revolution to protracted war that forced many of its best and brightest into exile.

"Hayedeh Legendary Persian Diva" also includes rare videos, audio clips, photos, and original interviews with the main figures of the singer's career such as Farid Zoland, Andranik, Sadeh Nojouki and the last Persian queen Farah Pahlavi.

The documentary had its sold-out US premiere at the 3rd Noor Film Festival in Los Angeles in May 2009. The Hollywood director Reza Badiyi in an interview with Radio 670 KIRN described the film as a "Chapter on the beauties of Hayedeh's life".

The documentary was also nominated as the "best documentary" at the Festival but according to BBC Persian TV: "Presentation of unveiled information in the film caused the objections of some of Hayedeh's relatives." A few months later, in Sep. 2009 the semi-official Fars News Agency in Tehran criticized the director Pejman Akbarzadeh for making a film about the "corrupt monarchist singer, Hayedeh". "Hayedeh, Legendary Persian Diva" was also screened at the 9th Int'l Exile Film Festival in Sweden. Following the sold-out screening, Hooman Khalatbari, Graz-based opera conductor wrote in a review: "this is the first Persian documentary which covers all aspects of a singer's career."

The documentary maker Pejman Akbarzadeh who lives in Amsterdam, currently works on a new documentary about the Persian community in Holland and also continues his activities as a pianist and journalist.

As well as by raising an issue of Arab claim to supremacy, Karsh also explored the phenomenon of Muslim states making alliances with non-Muslim states to fight another Muslim State. There are various examples of this: the Iran-Iraq war in which Saddam bought weapons from the USA, and Iran from the USA and Israel, their so-called 'enemies'. Also, there is an example of Azerbaijan-Armenia war that occurred after the collapse of the USSR, in which Russia and Iran supported and aided Armenia, while Turkey backed the Republic of Azerbaijan which is predominately Shi'ite Muslims.

This pattern of pragmatic co-operation reached its peak during the 19th century, when the Ottoman Empire relied on Western economic and military support to survive. (The Charge of the Light Brigade of 1854 was, at its heart, part of a French-British effort to keep the Ottomans from falling under Russian hegemony.) It has also become a central feature of 20th and 21st century Middle Eastern politics. (Karsh 2010).

Karsh's article "Muslims won't play together" also focused on the recent attempt by Muslim states to kick-start the 'Islamic' games in response to the Olympics. This attempt failed even before it happened due to the disagreements between Muslim states. Benedict Anderson talks about nationhood in his book "Imagined Communities" (2006 revised). The issue with the Islamic world is that Nationhood only existed between mainly two major powers, the Ottomans and the Persians which were multiethnic and religious. Since the collapse of these two empires the Muslim world and Middle East have been even more divided with nation states which were created recently by mainly Britain and France.

The third corner of the multicultural triangle is religion for two reasons. Religion can sound absolute, and it can serve as a translation for all manner of perceived group conflict. (Bau-man 1999, p.21)

Since we now know of the division of nationhood, linguistic and cultural divisions in the Muslim world, the term 'Islamic' seems as inadequate as the term

'Soviet' or 'Communist' which were formerly used in categorising a vast number of people and cultures. One of the points brought out in the book "Visibly Muslim: fashion, politics, faith" by Emma Tarlo (2010) is that although there is no hegemony in the Muslim world of dress codes, there is a unified sense of the veil, and what is acceptable in one Muslim society might not be the case in another. "There is no such thing as a clear-cut category of Muslim dress. Muslims around the world wear a huge range of different garments, many of which relate to local regional tra-

predominantly Muslim lands, or for the purpose that are restricted or peculiar to a Muslim population of a Muslim setting" (p.152). Now with the early exploration into definition this term of 'Islamic' seems to marginalise the non-Muslim population in Muslim nations.

The problem with the definition given by Blair and Bloom (2003) is that according to the Quran, no person, people or religious community can claim a permanent right of possession over any territory. "Say: 'O God, King of the kingdom (1), Thou givest the kingdom to whom Thou pleasest, and Thou strippest off the kingdom from whom Thou pleasest; Thou endowest with honour whom Thou pleasest, and Thou bringest low whom Thou pleasest: all the best is in Thy hand. Verily, Thou hast power over all things.'"(2) [Qur'an 3:26].

Therefore the issue is that the term used to define 'Islamic' art as art in lands that are predominantly Muslim is inadequate since there is much art produced by non-Muslims for non-Muslims or art work produced by non-Muslims for Muslims. The other side of this coin is the Western definition of land and territory and the term being used to generalise and oversimplify an area that was predominately influenced by other cultures, such as Persian and Turkish.

"The integrity of states was seen as an antidote to empire building, to the hegemonic reach across the oceans and continents to recover lost splendours of the ancient world in another, more technologically advanced, form.

(Niezen 2003, p.131)"

The model for Nationhood by Anderson (2006) while being a good model for Latin America and in a minor degree probably applicable to the Muslim nations falls short of encompassing the form of modern nationalism or the rise of vernacular languages and dialects of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish languages as well as the old civilisations of the past, while Latin America is relatively new, the Middle East isn't.

"The 'discourse of art' as 'conflict of interest' is also a discourse embedded within the Guggenheim's own institutional

ISLAMIC ART

part Two

Aryan M. Divan



ditions than religious and some of which are not particularly associated with either." (Tarlo 2010 p.5) This example of no unifying or hegemony in dress codes or wear of Muslim women can also be used in describing art work from different Muslim societies and ethnic groups.

Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom in their article "The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the study of unwieldy field" in the Art Bulletin March 2003 volume Lxxxv number 1, stated that the definition and historiography of 'Islamic' art is "generally held to be 'art made by artists of artisans whose religion was Islam, for patrons who lived in

history and curatorial politics. Within the context of the broader uses of full disclosure, these discourses reference real social and economic interests that were as much part of museum politics thirty years ago as they are today.” (Rectanus 2002, p.15)

The other point is the definition of art itself. One then wonders how ‘Islamic’ art breeches the definition of art. If we try to give art a clear and comprehensive definition then we would have to disregard the philological and etymological origin that it draws from. The confusion of thought is that human activities would not be embraced and would be severely limited in restricting art by a term of division which will limit itself by the imposed categorisation and lose all concept of meaning if restricted. This construct of ‘Islamic’ art as a categorisation is a reflection on the twentieth and twenty-first century in its construction of ‘tradition’ in a body of works and buildings in a variety of cultures in an integral way that endows early works - through a concept of crossing off cultures - with a generalised terminology eliminating the historicity of past and other cultures. (Reiman 2001)

“... there are two overlapping modes for characterising any entity as authentic: genealogical or historical (‘origin’) and identity or correspondence (‘content’). Authentic objects, persons, and collectives are original, real, and pure; they are what they purport to be, their roots are known and verified, their essence and appearance are one.” (Lindholm 2008, p.2)

This categorised definition of ‘Islamic’ art as a chronological continuum has discouraged and marginalised trans-historical comparisons, creating a historiography in which the diversity and contribution of different groups - though not separated by ethnicity or nationality - with different periods. “Religion can sound absolute, that is, it can be made to sound as if it determines objective and unchangeable differences between people.” (Bauman 1999, p.21) which brings an absolute and no separation, it doesn’t give the vital voice and status that separates art of different religions and periods, making it opaqued by linear and compartmentalised narratives in which the art is read in a religious context rather than an expression of historical imperative or a dynamic aesthetic experience that was

susceptible to recreation and re-signification. (Reiman 2001)

“For the Umayyads, the Muslims who ruled in the multicultural capital of Cordoba from the eighth century to the eleventh century, the construction of a mosque in 785 A.D. was linked to the formation of identity. It meant the creation of a building that would set their faith apart from that of the important Christian and Jewish populations who they ruled.” (Dodds 2007, P.350)

Some Historians have attempted to solve the issue that arises with the relationship between the religion of Islam and art that has been made for religious purpose i.e. a mosque or patterns on the Qur’an, prayer carpets etc. However the issue arises particularly with definition of ‘Islamic’ art when it is used on non-religious art work. The issue with what is dubbed secular ‘Islamic art’ is that secular culture differed in region and area, and has an issue with neologism that has both a widespread acceptance and condemnation.

“Rather, most scholars tacitly accept that the convenient if incorrect term ‘Islamic’ refers not just to the religion of Islam but the larger culture in which Islam was a dominant - but not sole - religion practised. Although it looks similar, ‘Islamic art’ is therefore not comparable to such concepts as ‘Christian’ or ‘Buddhist’ art, which are normally understood to refer specifically to religious art.” (Blair and Bloom 2003 p.153)

That is to say that Christian art does not include all of Europe nor does it include art from the fall of Rome to the Reformation. It also excludes various sects of Christianity such as the Orthodox for their artwork is referred to as Orthodox Christian art and not in the mass general term but a separate category in itself, etc. Buddhist art does not encompass all of Asia or the art works produced in Asia, between the Chinese, Thai or the Kushans and Kyoto. This is an important distinction, which is overlooked when looking at definitions given to ‘Islamic art’ (Blair and Bloom 2003).

“Canclini 1995 stated that the “Ontological correspondence between reality and representation, between society and the

collections of symbols that represent it. What is defined as patrimony and identity claims to be the faithful reflection of the national essence.” (p.110)

So then what is ‘Islamic art’? According to Blair and Bloom 2003, “Islamic ‘art’ is generally taken to encompass everything from the enormous congregational mosques and luxury manuscripts commissioned by powerful rulers from great architects and calligrapher-painters to inlaid metalwares, intricate carpets produced by anonymous urban craftsman and nomad women.” (p.153). This study of ‘Islamic art’ which entails inlaid metalworks, glass, textiles, carpets, pottery etc., are not viewed according to Western thought as such works are called handicrafts and are considered minor and decorative works of art. Architecture in Asia and Europe was just as important to Muslim societies but the visual representation in architecture changes – sculptures, for example, are rare in Muslim societies. So the term ‘Islamic art’ serves as a misnomer for basically everything and everywhere. It does not denote even any given period of time, school, dynasty, movement or region. It is a visual culture that has roots in a particular region of a particular time and a period when whoever the leader was and his espoused religion - as a patron of art - that would commission, celebrate or restrict art and all that it encompasses.

“Every group wants to differentiate itself and affirm its identity makes tacit or hermetic use of identification codes that are fundamental to internal cohesion and to protect itself from strangers.” (Canclini 1995, p.111)

The field and study of ‘Islamic art’ history is relatively new. The view on the Muslim world, in Benedict Anderson’s 1983 book Imagined Communities stated that “...take only the example of Islamic: if Maguindanao met Berbers in Mecca, knowing nothing of each others languages, incapable of communicating orally, they nonetheless understood each others ideographs, because the sacred text they shared existed only in classical Arabic.” (p.13). While this is a simplified vision, the sacred text that unites all Muslims is the Qur’an written in classical Arabic even if the Muslim society did not understand it nor was it their vernacular language. This does not apply well to art, which is what the category of ‘Islamic art’ is attempting to do.

to be continued

Dr. Majd's book outlines the huge loss of civilian life in Iran during World War One and after as a result of British, Russian and Ottoman military, political and economic interference.

Below are excerpt of a highly informative review posted at Amazon:

One of the little known calamities of World War One, and one which I only strayed across account of fairly recently, where I read a mention of between 9-11 million Persians (approximately half the then population of Persia) dying, was the widespread famine that hit Persian (Iran) at the end of World War One. Apart from the odd mention in other books and articles, the only significant study of this event is this book by Mohammad GholiMajd.

Before looking at the book, a brief history lesson is probably in order: The history of the Middle East in the First World War is extremely complex. What can be described as the first phase, from November 1914 lasting until the end of 1915, marks a period in which Britain, Russia and Turkey violated Persia's proclaimed neutrality. In short, Britain, France and Russia made a pact for a new division of Middle Eastern properties, and the Persians, with the aid of Germany and Turkey, made a valiant attempt to drive out these foreign forces.

The second phase was from the beginning of 1916 until March 1917. During this time, the British and the Russians again invaded Persia, and successfully drove out the Turks and defeated the Persian Army. The British were driven in this by the perceived threat to India, then a major component of the British Empire.

With the advent of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the Middle East was partitioned into British, French and Russian spheres of influence. Britain extended her control over the rest of the southern and eastern regions, and eventually captured Baghdad in March 1917. At this time, the war began to extract a toll on civilians. Widespread famine began to devastate the local populations in Persia in early 1917. Local crops withered and the import of foodstuffs from India, Mesopotamia and the United States became nonexistent, due to the use of the local transportation means for war supplies by both sides. The author, Dr. Mohammad GholiMajd, has a PhD from Cornell University, lives in the United States and has written a number of books and articles on Iraq and Iran. Some of these include:

The Great Famine and Genocide in Iran in 1917-1919

Mohammad-GholiMajd



University Press of America, 2003

In addition, the Allies refused to pay for local oil, which greatly aggravated the conditions brought on by the drought and famine. Between 1917 and 1919, it is estimated that nearly one-half (9-11 million people) of the Persian population died of starvation or disease brought on by malnutrition. Those men fit enough to fight, took up active resistance against the British, who now controlled most of the region. This is all more or less verifiable history, although little known today.

In this book, Mohammad GholiMajd argues that Persia was the greatest victim of World War One and also the victim of possibly the worst genocide of the twentieth century. The author based his research on the great famine in Iran on documents and reports of the US State Department archives as well as from news and information taken from newspapers printed in those years, especially the Ra'd and Iran newspapers in Persia. Majd quotes the American Charge d' Affaires in Tehran at the time, William Smith Murray, has having claimed that a third of Persia's population died from a combination of famine and disease. He also used as sources the memoirs of the British officers and commanders who were present in Persia (Iran) during the World War I. The book reflects on the direct role that the interventionist British and Russian forces played in the famine and subsequent mortality in Iran during the World War I.

In large, Majd blames the British who, after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, were the controlling power in Persia. Local transportation was taken over by the British for the transport of war materials, isolating farmers from their customers inside Persia. At the same time, Majd claims that significant amounts of food were confiscated by the British to

supply British troops both within Persia and in the region.

Majd's conclusion is that, unknown to most, one of THE major genocides of the twentieth century occurred in Persia during and immediately after WW1. In general, one can believe the approximate accuracy of his sources – there was a major famine and millions died – whether it was one third or one half of Persia's population is purely an academic argument – deaths were literally in the millions and the impact on Persia was enormous. However, "genocide" assumes the deliberate and willful killing of large numbers of non-combatants. That the British would deliberately undertake this is not believable and in this, Majd's argument is not credible, it's more of an emotional response. Which is understandable – picture in your mind if a third to a half of the US population had died off in WW1 from famine which was made worse by a foreign occupation under the same basis as happened in Persia. What would your reaction be?

What is believable is that this happened, albeit not deliberately induced by the British. After all, much the same thing happened in India during WW2, where a major famine resulted in millions dying, whilst all the effort of the Indian Govt went into fighting WW2 rather than alleviating the famine. Again, this is not genocide, but a focus of effort on the war and the ignoring of the fate of millions of civilians who were at best, irrelevant to the war effort.

Overall, a good study of this little known piece of history but the conclusion that this was a genocidal campaign by the British is sadly erroneous. As with many of the author's other books, an interesting and historically needed study is marred by an emotional approach and conclusion which really don't gel with the actual facts. It wasn't genocide, it was simply that the British focus was on the war and all else, including the fate of Persian peasants, was secondary. However, it's still a sad state of affairs when the deaths of millions of people is no longer remembered outside of the country where these deaths occurred, if in fact they were ever really known outside of Persia.

They're interesting studies on subjects that are little known outside of Iran, some harder to read than others, but overall and as a general assessment, they're marred by a rather biased approach to the topics. ■

Shab-e Yalda

Yalda History and Traditions in Iran



Yalda, a Syric word imported into the Persian language by the Syric Christians means birth (*tavalud* and *milaad* are from the same origin). It is a relatively recent arrival and it is referred to the “*Shab e Cheleh Festival*” a celebration of Winter Solstice on December 21st Forty days before the next major Persian festival “*Jashn e Sadeh*” this night has been celebrated in countless cultures for thousands of years. The ancient Roman festivals of Saturnalia (God of Agriculture, Saturn) and Sol Invicta (Sun God) are amongst the best known in the Western world.

In most ancient cultures, including Persia, the start of the solar year has been marked to celebrate the victory of light over darkness and the renewal of the Sun. For instance, Egyptians, four thousand years ago celebrated the rebirth of the sun at this time of the year. They set the length of the festival at 12 days, to reflect the 12 divisions in their sun calendar. They decorated with greenery, using palms with 12 shoots as a symbol of the completed year, since a palm was thought to put forth a shoot each month.

The Persians adopted their annual renewal festival from the Babylonians and incorporated it into the rituals of their own Zoroastrian religion. The last day of the Persian month *Azar* is the longest night of the year, when the forces of *Ahriman* are assumed to be at the peak of their strength. While the next day, the first day

of the month “*Day*” known as “*khoram rooz*” or “*khore rooz*” (the day of sun) belongs to *Ahura Mazda*, the Lord of Wisdom. Since the days are getting longer and the nights shorter, this day marks the victory of Sun over the darkness, The occasion was celebrated in the festival of “*Daygan*” dedicated to *Ahura Mazda*, on the first day of the month “*Day*” Fires would be burnt all night to ensure the defeat of the forces of *Ahriman* (principle Evil). There would be feasts, acts of charity and a number of deities were honored and prayers performed to ensure the total victory of sun that was essential for the protection of winter crops. There would be prayers to *Mithra (Mehr)* and feasts in his honor, since *Mithra* is the *Eyzad* (deity) responsible for protecting “the light of the early morning” known as “*Havangah*”. It was also assumed that *Ahura Mazda* would grant people’s wishes, specially those with no offspring had the hope to be blessed with children if performed all rites on this occasion.

One of the themes of the festival was the temporary subversion of order. Masters and servants reversed roles. The king dressed in white would change place with ordinary people. A mock king was crowned and masquerades spilled into the streets. As the old year died, rules of ordinary living were relaxed. This tradition persisted till Sassanian period, and is mentioned by *Biruni* and others in their recordings of pre-Islamic ritu-

als and festivals. Its’ origin goes back to the Babylonian New Year celebration, These people believed the first creation was order that came out of chaos. To appreciate and celebrate the first creation they had a festival and all roles were reversed. Disorder and chaos ruled for a day and eventually order was restored and succeeded at the end of the Festival.

The Egyptian and Persian traditions merged in ancient Rome, in a festival to the ancient god of seedtime, Saturn. The Romans exchanged gifts, partied and decorated their homes with greenery.

Following the Persian tradition, the usual order of the year was suspended. Grudges and quarrels forgotten, wars would be interrupted or postponed. Businesses, courts and schools were closed.

Rich and poor became equal, masters served slaves, and children headed the family. Cross-dressing and masquerades, merriment of all kinds prevailed. A mock king, the Lord of Misrule, was crowned. Candles and lamps chased away the spirits of darkness.

Another related Roman festival celebrated at the same time was dedicated to Sol Invictus (“the invincible sun” Originally a Syrian deity, this cult was imported by Emperor Heliogabalus into Rome and Sol was made god of the state. With the spread of Christianity, Christmas celebration became the most important Christian festival. In the third century various dates, from December to April, were celebrated by Christians as Christmas. January 6 was the most favored day because it was thought to be Jesus’ Baptismal day (in the Greek Orthodox Church this continues to be the day to celebrate Christmas). In year 350, December 25 was adopted in Rome and gradually almost the entire Christian Church agreed to that date, which coincided, with Winter Solstice and the festivals. Sol Invicta and Saturnalia. Many of the rituals and traditions of the pagan festivals were incorporated into the Christmas celebration and are still observed today.

It is not clear when and how the word “Yalda” entered the Persian language. The massive persecution of the early Christians in Rome brought many Christian refugees into the Sassanin Empire and it is very likely that these Christians introduced and popularized “Yalda” in Iran.

Gradually “Shab e Yalda” and “Shab e Cheleh” became synonymous and the

two are used interchangeably.

With the conquest of Islam the religious significance of the ancient Persian festivals was lost. Today “Shab e Cheleh” is merely a social occasion, when family and friends get together for fun and merriment. Different kinds of dried fruits, nuts, seeds and fresh winter fruits are consumed. The presence of dried and fresh fruits is reminiscence of the ancient feasts to celebrate and pray to the deities to ensure the protection of the winter crops.

The Iranian Jews, who are amongst the oldest inhabitants of the country, in addition to “Shab e Cheleh” also celebrate the festival of “Ilianout” (tree festival) at around the same time. Their celebration of Ilianout is very similar to Shab e Cheleh celebration. Candles are lit; all varieties of dried and fresh winter fruits will have to be present. Special meals are prepared and prayers are performed. There are also very similar festivals in many parts of Southern Russia that are identical to “Shab e Cheleh” festival with local variations. Sweet breads are baked in shape of humans and animals. Bon fires are made; dances are performed that resemble crop harvesting. Comparison and detailed studies of all these celebrations no doubt will shed more light on the forgotten aspects of the is wonderful and ancient festival, where merriment was the main theme of the festival.

SHAB-E YALDA IS A TIME OF JOY

Another account of “*Shab-e Yalda*”, “Night of Birth” as the Eve of the Birth of Mithra, the Sun God ‘Shab-e Yalda’, celebrated on 21 December, has great significance in the Iranian calendar. It is the eve of the birth of Mithra, the Sun God, who symbolized light, goodness and strength on earth.

Mithra-worshippers used the term ‘*yalda*’ specifically with reference to the birth of Mithra. As the longest night of the year, the Eve of Yalda (*Shab-e Yalda*) is also a turning point, after which the days grow longer. In ancient times it symbolized the triumph of the Sun God over the powers of darkness.

The Cult of the Sun was first introduced to Iran thousands of years ago by migrant Aryans. Mithra the Sun God remained a potent symbol of worship throughout the following centuries. Centuries later, during the Achaemenid era, Mithra became a principal deity, equal in rank to Ahura Mazda (the god of all goodness) and Anahita (god-

dess of water and fertility).

In Sasanian times, Zoroastrianism became Iran’s official religion, but Mithra’s importance remained undiminished. This is evident from the bas-reliefs as Naqsh-e Rostam and Tagh-e Bustan. At Naqsh-e Rostam, Anahita bestows the royal diadem upon Nasri, the Sasanian King. At the investiture of Ardashir I, Ahura Mazda bestows this diadem to the new King. At Tagh-e Bustan too, Ahura Mazda is again conferring the royal diadem upon Ardashir II. Mithra is always present as a witness to these ceremonies.

Over the centuries Mithraism spread to Greece and Ancient Rome via Asia Minor, gaining popularity within the ranks of the Roman army. In the 4th century AD as a result of errors made in calculating leap years and dates, the birthday of Mithra was transferred to 25 December. Until then Christ’s birthday had been celebrated on 6 January by all branches of the Christian Church. But with the cult of Mithra still popular in Roman Europe, the Christian Church adopted many of the Mithraic rituals and proclaimed 25 December as the official birthday of Christ. Today the Armenian and Eastern Orthodox Churches continue to celebrate 6 January as Christ’s birthday.

It was said that Mithra was born out of the light that came from within the Alborz mountains. Ancient Iranians would gather in caves along the mountain range throughout the night to witness this miracle together at dawn. They were known as ‘*Yar-e Ghar*’ (Cave Mates). In Iran today, despite of the advent of Islam and Muslim rituals, Shab-e Yalda is still celebrated widely. It is a time when friends and family gather together to eat, drink and read poetry (especially Hafiz) until well after midnight. Fruits and nuts are eaten and pomegranates and watermelons are particularly significant. The red color in these fruits symbolizes the crimson hues of dawn and glow of life, invoking the splendor of Mithra.

Because Shab-e Yalda is the longest and darkest night, it has come to symbolize many things in Persian poetry: separation from a loved one, loneliness and waiting. After Shab-e Yalda a transformation takes place - the waiting is over, light shines and goodness prevails.

‘The sight of you each morning is a New Year

Any night of your departure is the eve of Yalda’ (Sa’adi)

‘With all my pains, there is still the

hope of recovery

Like the eve of Yalda, there will finally be an end’ (Sa’adi)

THE FESTIVAL OF “YALDA” WINTER SOLSTICE CELEBRATIONS TRADITIONS IN IRAN

The winter solstice, December 21st or 22nd, is the longest night of the year. For example, this year; on 21st December London (England) will see only seven hours and 49 minutes of daylight. Near the winter solstice, the length of the day changes very slowly, as does the Sun’s height in the sky – one of the reasons why the long winter nights seem to go on forever!

In Iran, the winter solstice has been celebrated for centuries and it is called *Shab-e yalda*, which refers to the birthday or rebirth of the sun. *Yalda* is a Syriac word and means birth (*tavalod* and *milaad* are from the same origin). The ceremony is traced to the primal concept of Light and Good against Darkness and Evil in the ancient Iranian religion. This night with Evil at its zenith is considered unlucky. The last day of the Persian month of ‘*Azar*’ is the longest night of the year.

From this day forward, Light triumphs as the days grow longer and give more light. This celebration comes in the Persian month of ‘Day’, which was also the name of the pre-Zoroastrian creator god (deity). Later he became known as the God of creation and Light, from which we have the English word day (the period of light in 24 hours).

Early Christians took this very ancient Persian celebration and linked it to Christ’s birthday. Today, the date for Christmas has slightly changed, but there are many similarities such as, lighting candles, decorating trees with lights, staying up all night, singing and dancing, eating special foods, paying visits to family and friends. ■





Good morning John and thank you for giving us your time for part II of your interview with Persian Heritage Magazine.

It is my pleasure.

The Iranian community as well as the community at large continues to have a curiosity about your incarceration period. What did you do to occupy your time during that long 444 days?

I think to best understand what happened is by reading two books, Kim Wells' "444 Days" and Mark Bowden's "Guest of Ayatollah." They both extensively cover this subject.

Fair enough.

The only new point I would like to add here is that there is a narrative among Iranians that we were treated very well, but that is simply not true.

What can you tell us about the "Canadian Caper," Tony Mendez and Argo? I find the timing a little suspect and intended for propaganda value like the 300 Spartans. I have been avoiding it because I thought it might be like On the Wings of Eagles, which made Ross Perot look like a hero at a time when all the jails were being liberated.

The movie is worth a look, some Iranians will like it others not, but "Wings of Eagles" was rubbish.

Do you think that Reagan and his re-election had anything to do with the release of hostages?

The timing of our release was not coincidental. The plane didn't take off until Carter was out of office. This timing was not accidental. But the October surprise? Many believe it but there doesn't seem to be any evidence emerging after 32 years.

Is there a statute of limitations on keeping government documents classified?

The historian of the State Department makes documents declassified after 30 years, but in some cases documents are

An Interview with

John W. Limbert

Former hostage, scholar and diplomat who is hoping for peace between Iran and the United States

PART TWO

BRIAN APPLETON

held longer.

Carter is usually blamed by the monarchists for the fall of the Shah. Is there any truth to that?

I am often asked that question by Iranian Americans. There is no evidence and I have said it is not true in the past. But lately I have put a new twist on the question. Carter was a graduate of the Naval Academy, served on nuclear subs and has a strong technical background. In 1977 and 78 he saw that the USA had a shortage of people in math, science and engineering and we needed to make up that shortage. Usually to create an adequate technical demographic is an educational process that takes 15 or 20 years, but Iran was already the best source for this class of people. So if Carter could make conditions there so miserable that they would come here, he could short-circuit that long training process.

That sounds like a conspiracy theory. Whether there was a conspiracy or not, certain conservative factions certainly benefited from the aftermath and were able to promote their agenda making inroads into our civil liberties with the Patriot Act, suspending the protections of Habeas Corpus.

And torture of POWs.

You did a great job explaining the Iran Contra Affair in your latest book and the role of Michael Ledeen. What can you tell us about the American Enterprise Institute and the New American Century? Is that still an agenda, to divide or again colonize the Middle East?

I don't know. I haven't followed that. I've done events at the AEI...they have some serious scholars like Ali Alfoneh and Michael Ruben. I gave a talk there once and no one was laughing at my jokes. I told one about how in Washington DC a moderate on Iran was someone who would bomb it tomorrow. They took it seriously. In principle I will talk to any group. I don't just talk to groups I agree with. Everyone needs to hear other opinions.

That is what democracy is supposed to be about; diversity of opinion and the right to dissent isn't it?

Absolutely.

Which regime had more political prisoners, executions, disappearances and torture, the Pahlavis or the mullahs?

I have no idea. Both regimes have bad human rights record. But many royalists had it good under the Shah.

I asked the question because a lot of royalists have a Rococo or Camelot like nostalgia, romanticizing the memory of the Pahlavi era. After the revolution I watched the people taking down a torture house I didn't know was there only a few blocks from my house on one side and US embassy on other.

Really!

A "carrot and stick" policy is a poor choice of words our politicians are fond of repeating, since in Iran they use carrots and sticks to motivate donkeys. For a long time during the Iraq invasion the media kept saying An Najaf instead of Al Najaf, which is one of the holiest sites in Shia Islam and we both know what "An" means in Persian. Do you think these faux pas are on purpose?

I think it is a combination of ignorance and indifference. In Arabic certain letters are not pronounced as they are written which is the case with Al Najaf so perhaps that is where the media made the error.

Iran twice offered to halt its enrichment of uranium to 20 percent, which the United States has identified as its highest priority in the nuclear talks, in return for easing sanctions. Meanwhile, it is now known that France and Germany were prepared in spring 2005 to negotiate on an Iranian proposal to convert all of its enriched uranium to fuel rods, making it impossible to use it for nuclear weapons. The deal was vetoed at the insistence of US President George W. Bush. Why do you think Bush vetoed this and do you think that Bush made a mistake in vetoing this offer?

I try not to assign motives to people. I have no idea of Bush's motives. You are talking about a more general condition of the relationship... neither side seems able to say yes. If the other side agrees to something "they must be cheating us." Neither side is willing to move on a position until the other side gives up something. The US won't stop sanctions until Iran stops their nuclear program and vice versa.

Well I think the Iranian people are seriously suffering under the sanctions. I have friends who can't afford to buy dollars to send to their children studying abroad right now.

Well for example in Shiraz we had a nice middle class life in 1970; the value of that salary in Iran today is now \$1.50. We don't hear about starvation though.

Why did the Brazil, Turkey, Iran Tehran Declaration fail?

Good question. I think it delivered 85 to 90% of what the US and Iran had agreed on in Geneva eight months before. The problem was that by the time that agreement came up, the USA had expended so much effort in getting consensus in UN for sanctions that there was no backing down. Congress was anxious to impose unilateral sanctions on Iran, which was upsetting to our allies so Secretary Clinton convinced them to hold off until after the UN sanctions. What surprised me at the time was the very dismissive language that was used not just "no" but "hell no!" whereas my response would have been: "this is interesting and needs further study." People know how to say no... it's easier to say no than reach a deal... we are good at saying no. I was in Europe at the time... and was interviewed by the Persian service of German radio... they asked me the same question. I didn't have a good answer so what I do in these situations is resort to poetry. In this case I quoted Shahriar: "Amadi jaanam be gorbanat vali hala chera?" or "O love of my life, you finally came to me – but why now?"

Boy I can relate to that one. Why did the Russian Step-by-Step Proposal fail?

You or me on that one! It took months of very difficult diplomacy to get Russia and China on board with sanctions.

I don't think the USA feels comfortable with Russia brokering an Iran deal. I think that the Cold War competitiveness is not completely over but it is unrealistic of the USA to expect Russia to have no relations with Iran, they share a border and a long history.

April 2012 Iranian 5 Step Proposal and 5+1 Proposal? In reading over the history of proposals from both sides from 2003 to 2012 it looks to me like some progress is being made and that there are numerous opportunities for win win situations on regional cooperation against terrorism, cooperation on regional issues like Afghanistan and Syria, cooperation on stopping drug trafficking, repair and parts for Iranian commercial airlines, medical isotopes, trade of uranium for fuel rods, international cooperation on nuclear safety and nuclear fuel supply etc.

You have done your homework on this subject.

How do you make negotiations work and avoid another war? It seems like there is so much to be gained by cooperation on both sides. Is it just mutual distrust and mutual hubris that is preventing progress? It seems like both sides want to be the author of the peace proposal. Couldn't a third party national mediator let each side author every other point and share the authorship?

What can I say, in a reasonable world the answer is yes.

But I think it took guts for the White House to offer negotiations, one on one with Iran...

Iranians are running from it. It hasn't happened since Oct 2009. I don't know what they are afraid of, for all their bluster.

Are they afraid of losing conservative votes by talking to the US government? Ahmadinejad's term is almost up. Who will be next?

I don't know and it doesn't matter, since their president has no power.

Given the history of the lack of success of the effectiveness of sanctions like on Cuba and in Iraq why does the UN and the US government continue to pursue this approach? Do you think that it is disingenuous and engineered to fail as a justification to invade?

Set up to fail is a little too conspiratorial. The outreach of Obama set up to fail to usher in sanctions is another theory, but I don't think so.

Is the nuclear issue another WMD bogeyman created to weaken public resistance to a new war or do you believe a nuclear Iran constitutes a real threat? Is it a threat to global security or a threat to the status quo?

Romney said that a nuclear Iran is the greatest threat to the USA. Why are we so obsessed with this issue? Why not be more concerned with dysfunctional Pakistan that already has a nuclear arsenal, nonfunctional civilian government, claims it didn't know Osama was living one mile from their military academy, has ties

with the Bombay terrorists and so on. Why are we so obsessed about Iran when there no proof exists that they even have a nuclear weapons program?

What did you think about Ahmadinejad's last UN speech about US bullying and a new world order of equals?

Nothing new there. He actually toned down his usual rhetoric.

Why did Russia and China and Japan go along with the sanctions when they had so much trade with Iran?

I will cop out on that question...ask them. I try not to assign motives to other people's actions.

Well I'm guessing they had more to lose not having commerce with the USA than Iran. Why did Harper choose to cut Canada's diplomatic ties with Iran and why now?

I have no idea. One bit of speculation...it was done right before the showing of the film Argo at Toronto International film festival. Actually closing an embassy is not the breaking of diplomatic relations. A country can have diplomatic relations with another country without having an embassy there. The British recently closed their embassy in Tehran after it was attacked but still maintain diplomatic relations with Iran.

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How does India manage to avoid US reprisal for continuing trade with Iran?

Good question. Behind all this may be some wisdom that one you don't want to tick off everyone and two you don't want to push Iran too far into a corner or it will react dangerously.

What do you think about Rohrabacher's Plan to Partition Iran? Isn't it ironic that in 1947 the secession of Western Azerbaijan and the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad were overturned by the Shah with the help of the CIA but now that there is a regime uncooperative with the US government, partition is being promoted. Is there any evidence that the CIA has been promoting and funding separatist movements in Western Azerbaijan and Khuzestan? Would this not be a violation of the UN charter?

All I can say is an Iranian proverb that "to be a donkey takes more than eating grass." There are other ways to be a donkey. I don't know if the CIA is behind attempts to partition Iran, it would be a major mistake for US or Israel to try to partition Iran. Nothing unites Iranians more than threat of partition.

As a member of the NPT doesn't Iran have the right to enrich uranium for domestic use for generating electricity and for medical isotopes? The US built the light water reactor for their medical isotopes and started the Bushehr reactor that Russian Federation has the contract to finish. Why does the US think that Iran under the IRI is any more dangerous than Israel, Pakistan or India who are not members of the NPT and who purportedly have

nuclear weapons?

What you see on this issue is a dialogue of the deaf. .Iran always speaks about its rights and the West always speaks about Iran's obligations.

Did Iran agree to these "obligations" or were they imposed upon them?

They did agree to them in treaties. The nuclear issue is a morass. There are people who are experts on it but I am not. Both sides have made it the crux of the problem and that is why we can't get anywhere.

In your opinion has Ahmadinejad actually stated that he wants to wipe Israel off the map or has he only wished for an end to Zionism?

I understand Ahmadinejad was quoting Khomeini about Israel being erased from the pages of time. But if I were an Israeli I would be worried. For Israeli hardliners Ahmadinejad is the gift that goes on giving.

I believe I have no more questions for you for the moment. I and Persian Heritage thank you Mr. Ambassador once again for your time in addressing all these questions. It is important for our readers and the general public to gain a better understanding of these issues and I know that in your heart you are an educator first. You are a definite asset to the United States and the world community and an intellectual property we should be proud of.

Thanks for your kind words. It has been my pleasure.

The Salt Mummies of Iran

Iranian miners working at the Chehr Abad salt mines (located west of the city of Zanjan in Iran's northwest) made a startling discovery in the winter of 1993. They discovered a human body with long reddish hair, beard and a lower left leg still inside a boot. The body had been buried inside a tunnel, which was roughly 45 meters long. Another five bodies were to be discovered in the ensuing years, including those of a woman and teenager.

There were other artifacts found with the body, notably three iron knives, a pair of woolen trousers, a silver needle, sling parts of a leather rope, a grindstone, and a walnut.

Isotopic analyses have been conducted on five of the salt-preserved "mummies" to help identify their origins and determine the times they had lived. The bodies have been dated to a vast time range between the 4th century BCE (circa Achaemenid era) and 4th century CE (Sassanian era).

There are variations in the geographical origins of these bodies as well. Researchers from the Department of Environmental Sciences, Università Ca' Foscari in Italy, have matched the osteological samples from various the Iranian sites and those from the salt "mummies" found in the mine.

The isotopic studies have led the Italian researchers to the following hypotheses:

1. Two of the "mummies" may possibly have hailed from the Tehran-Qazvin area, which is consistent with the salt mine region.
2. Two of the "mummies" were probably from Iran's northeast regions or even modern-day Central Asia.
3. The fifth body appears to have come from further away, possibly from further east (possibly further into Central Asia towards China's northwest or ancient Mongolia).

According to a Tehran Times report, a number of the salt mummies are currently being housed in special showcases under controlled conditions at the Zolfaqari Museum of Zanjan.



T'aarof

From Wikipedia

T'aarof, **Ta'arof** or **Tarof**, is a Persian form of civility emphasizing both self-deference and social rank, similar to the Chinese art of etiquette, *limao*. The term encompasses a range of social behaviors, from a man displaying etiquette by opening the door for a woman, to a group of colleagues standing on ceremony in front of a door that can permit the entry of only one at a time, earnestly *implo*ring the most senior to break the deadlock.

The prevalence of t'aarof often gives rise to different styles of negotiation than one would see in a non-Iranian culture. For example, a worker negotiating a salary might begin with a eulogy of the employer, followed by a lengthy bargaining session consisting entirely of indirect, **polite** language – both parties are expected to understand the *implied* topic of discussion. It is quite common for an Iranian worker (even one employed in an Iranian neighborhood within Europe) to work unpaid for a week or two before the issue of wages is finally broached. *Citation needed* likewise, a shopkeeper may initially refuse to quote a price for an item, suggesting that it is worthless (“gh'aabel nadaareh”). T'aarof obliges the customer to insist on paying, possibly several times, before a shopkeeper finally quotes a price and real negotiation can begin.

T'aarof also governs the rules of *hospitality*: a host is obliged to offer anything a guest might want, and a guest is equally obliged to refuse it. This ritual may repeat itself several times before the host and guest finally determine whether the host's offer and the guest's refusal are real or

simply polite. It is possible to ask someone not to t'aarof (“t'aarof nakonid”), but that raises new difficulties, since the request itself might be a devious type of t'aarof.

At times t'aarof can lead to one performing a task that one does not want to perform. For instance, if one friend offers a ride to another friend only because they are being polite, they may become stuck in the situation if the friend agrees to get the ride. Of course if one was going by the rules of t'aarof, one would refuse the offer many times before accepting.

POLITICAL THEORY

Some political theorists have argued that during the period of serfdom, at princely courts, t'aarof regulated diplomatic discourse. It involved a sharp curbing of one's comportment, speech, and action to make people, honor, and prestige calculable as instruments for political advancement.

According to D. M. Rejali, for the feudal elite the ornamentation of speech symbolizes prestige. With the advent of capitalism and its scientific paradigm, communication became more precise and the formality of t'aarof a hindrance in the pursuit for rapid capital accumulation.

SOCIAL CUSTOMS

It is a way of denying your will to please your counterpart, however the will is only denied because of the custom and not to please the counterpart. But there are situations where tarof persists upon a request to make the counterpart genuinely satisfied. Tarof often causes misunderstandings between both parties and is a source for awkward situations in a social setting. The closest one can come to tarof in the western culture is the question of “Who's paying the restaurant bill?” This is an awkward situation where everybody in

the company is reaching for their wallets and it's usually resolved by social status, the one with the highest income, biggest reason or most power pays. But, still everyone insists on paying.

COMMON WORDS USED IN TAROF:

Ghabeli nadare: It's not a big deal

Ghadamet ro chesham: (you can walk on my eyes) I am small in your presence. (you are very welcome to us)

Ghorbanet beram: (I will sacrifice myself for you) Thank you very much

Cheshmet roshan: (light in your eyes) You're worth it

Khashesh mikonam (I do kindness) You are humbling me

FAKE TAROF

A customer comes to the cashier to pay for groceries. The cashier says “it's okay, you honor me with your presence” When the customer insists on paying, the charade of tarof continues with a customary

word exchange, which is culturally learned from a young age. The discussion concludes with a minor argument and the cashier is finally paid the full amount of the groceries and the customer leaves.

GENUINE TAROF:

A person will offer guests every comfort available by discomforting him/herself. Sometimes this leads to offering things above one's means. As an example the host will use the last funds to buy groceries to make an overly pleasant stay for the guest. This may have dire consequences for the host, but this is the generous side of tarof and its only purpose is to satisfy the guest.

AWKWARD TAROF:

A host insists upon a request for the guest to sleep on the main bed while the host him/herself sleeps on the floor. Or a host piling food on a guest's plate since the host is believing that the guest is believing that the guest is tarofing, but the guest is actually full and satisfied.■

Iranians

Iran's most precious jewel is its people. Lonely Planet calls them warm and fascinating people, and Will Hide, a London-based travel journalist writing for the Times, has concluded after returning from his trip to Iran that this country has the friendliest people in the world. The hospitality of ever-smiling Iranians is sincere and simple - they are always eager to help travelers, offer a cup of tea, pay for your lunch or invite home for dinner.



OUTDOOR CAFE IN TEHERAN, IRAN. BY TOMALLEN

An Interview with

Negar Ahkami

Artist

Persian Heritage

Thank you for this opportunity. Persian Heritage magazine has been following your art career since the inception of the magazine. We have enjoyed the success you have achieved.

Please introduce yourself starting with your family background.

My parents are Shahrokh and Nahid Ahkami. So I think your readers know something about my family background! Between my two older sisters and I, my parents have ten grandchildren.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in northern New Jersey. It was great to have the ability in childhood to run free outside, and then when I needed it in my adolescent years, to have the constant access to New York City's culture and street culture. By the time I was a teenager, I was ready for city life, and moved to New York when I was 17.

And your educational background?

I had a liberal arts education at Columbia University. I went to law school at Georgetown in my early 20s. Roughly ten years later, I went for my Masters in Fine Arts at School of Visual Arts in New York.

Are you married and do you have children?

I am married with two young children.

Have you lived abroad and did that influence you?

During my high school years, I spent my summers staying with Iranian family friends who emigrated to Paris and Belgium. Starting around age 14, I asked my parents if I could go to Paris instead of having any other presents for my birthday. My parents were beyond generous in allowing this, and recognized in me an intense emotional need for a change of scenery and for cultural stimulation. Our family friends generously welcomed me in their homes and indulged my passion to learn French. For one summer in college, I also lived in Florence, Italy.

Although these trips were never more than three months at a time, I immersed myself in the cultures and made the effort to blend in and get to know the people in their own language. I spent a lot of my time in France and Italy going to museums and churches, spending hours in front of great paintings, and sketching. I did not go to museums as often in Belgium, because



I mostly stayed in the countryside. But I thought a lot about Van Gogh, because the landscapes and even some of the people I knew looked like Van Gogh paintings. The exposure I had in Europe to early Modernist paintings impacted my sensibility.

In some ways my obsession with these other cultures led me back to my Iranian roots. In my youth, it was as if I had a big gaping hole inside of me. My Iranian heritage was ripped out of me, from my rejection of aspects of the culture, and from my over-assimilation as an American. These unfortunate responses were largely defense mechanisms from the negativity and teasing I experienced during the Hostage Crisis at an early, formative age. My passion for French and Italian and for traveling to Europe filled the void that was left in me when my family stopped traveling to Iran, after the Revolution.

Eventually, I found myself feeling that Iranian culture and art history was just as rich as these other cultures I took time to learn about. I would grow increasingly disheartened by the ignorance here, and occasionally in Europe, about Iran's contributions to world culture. I began to observe how marginalized Iran was, not just in media culture, but also in Western education. It was confusing to see this everywhere in American culture, and come home to my parents who were so fiercely proud of Iranian culture and of its contributions to world civilization. By the time I reached college, I felt like I needed to learn things for myself, and sort out the confusing mixed messages about Iran. This led me to major in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures at Columbia, where I primarily focused on Iran. The ideas and opinions I generated in those years formed the backbone of who I am as an artist. So in an indirect way, my travels to Europe had a huge influence on me.

How old were you when you decided you wanted to become an artist and what inspired you?

I can't pinpoint a specific time. As long as I can remember, I felt like I understood the world best through images. When I would see art in museums and galleries, even as a kid, I felt a sense of community and kinship with artists. I felt as if the paintings were talking to me, inviting me to participate in their conversations. I had early fantasies about the performing arts, but I did not have encouragement from my family in those directions. I probably would have loved to perform or work behind the scenes in theater or film. But I had a growing sense in my teenage years that painting was more my path. The independence of painting better suited my personality. It struck me that with painting, I could more easily stick to my own vision without compromise or a team of individuals.

What was the focus of your artwork in the beginning and how did this evolve?

In my twenties, I was experimenting and my work varied. But a strong female perspective was evident in a lot of my early works. Although I was trained in a Western figurative tradition of working from observation, I learned to trust my instincts, because the images that were based on my imagination were far more interesting. Persian influences were also apparent in my work early on, particularly my sense of color and love of symbolism. But I would wonder why Persian art always had to be beautiful and steeped in poetry. I saw German expressionism as liberating, both formally, as well as in subject matter – with its angry visual energy, and biting socio-political critiques.

In 2001, I began combining my Western and Persian art influences in more obvious and intentional ways. Just before the start of the U.S.'s 2003 invasion of Iraq, I started consciously addressing my long-held beliefs about the need for a different kind of Persian art – one that was unafraid to be bold, expressive and unpoetic. I wanted to create works that engaged my Persian influences, but still retained my own style and iconography. In those years I would think of it as Persian Expressionism.

Your canvasses go from paper to wood panels, how do you chose the surface?

Perhaps because my paintings develop spontaneously and from my imagination, it's important to me to feel excited about the surface I am working on. In my twenties, I went through an obsession with painting on denim. Paper became one of my chosen surfaces in 2001, out of practicality because I did not have a studio for a period of time. But I also loved the look of coffee cup stains on paper, and started using that in my work. I soon got tired of the fragility of paper, and its flatness. I was experimenting with relief-like textures on canvas, and found that much more exciting. Wood panels are more reliable than canvas, when building up many layers of relief-like textures. The surface has to be stable. But I also like the presence of wood – there is something substantial about it, and it looks more like an object.

Through your transition as an artist we can see your subject matter change from the benign to the political, what was, were and remains the catalyst for the change?

I am not sure if I would characterize all my early work as benign. There was an element of confrontation, feminism and sexual politics emerging in my work in my 20s. Even then, I was interested in belly dancers as an exoticized image of Middle Eastern women. My 1999 "Lipstick Revolution" portraits of Iranian women, rendered in my own lipstick kiss marks, may have looked benign, but there was a politics behind it. I was responding to the way women in Iran were wearing a lot of red lipstick on the streets of Iran when it was against the law. I wanted to pay tribute to this brave, daily act of rebellion by Iranian women, which revealed a lot about Iranians that was being ignored by American journalists. American media culture and the art world were only obsessed with Iranian women in black chadors. In a small way, I wanted to make my own counterpoint to that ubiquitous image.

After 9/11, a lot of political issues and concerns started to make their way more directly into my work. September 11th re-opened my childhood wounds about Iran and the U.S., and created some new ones, making me need to express my dissent through my art. But 9/11 is not the only reason for the increased politics in my work. I happened to resign from my day job the exact same week as 9/11, to focus on my art. Prior to 9/11, I was generating many of the ideas that would eventually lead to my aesthetic. I was brewing with frustration about the state of Iranian art, and about the misperceptions of Iranians in media culture and in the art world. After 9/11, I had the time to develop my voice, and the increased sense of urgency to get there faster.

Do you think you could ever go back to the benign subject matter?

I do think there is room for my work to not have to be always political. I think political art has an important place, but I am also starting to take on themes that are related to other human concerns, like family and desire. I do not see this new direction as benign. There can be high drama and intensity in themes related to human experience, but they are not necessarily political.

The initial attraction to your paintings is your unique use of color (especially the Persian blues that are the basis for the tiles in the mosques) and texture making your paintings three dimensional. This lures you to the canvas and there you find an incredible story being told through your images. Do you deliberately choose the color and texture to make a statement?

People often assume that my favorite color is blue – it's not. It's the electricity that happens when rich blues are combined with orange and yellows that excites me. The frequent use of blue in my work, as well as my use of low-relief texture, relate to my intentional dialogue with Iranian ceramic traditions. Iranian ceramics are so exquisite, and the molded low-relief ceramics have gorgeous textures. Growing up as a lover of art history, I often found myself frustrated with the flatness of a lot of paintings. I enjoy making and looking at the rich textures in my work. But there is also an element of imperfection to my uneven surfaces that deliberately goes against the tendencies for slick perfection in contemporary art. I like paintings that have a human, expressive sense of touch, and texture helps me achieve that.

In a lot of my work, my use of blue is inspired by Iran's mosques and the water symbolism behind their blue tiles. To

me, Iran's blue mosques are the most beautiful buildings in the world. And yet, if you ask most people in the U.S. what they think of when they think of an Iranian mosque, they would likely imagine it as some kind of factory where sinister things happened. When I paint mosque-like cityscapes, melting down into a patterned ocean, I am satirizing the fears of Iran that are embedded within the American psyche: the perception of an inevitable Iranian nuclear meltdown, or of an extremist culture spreading in America's direction. My satire of something that has been so damaging and painful has a healing affect for me. It is a way for me to take control over, and make fun of, the bombastic political rhetoric between the U.S. and Iran. I have felt so powerless against the forces of politics, the politics here and in Iran. The out of control water imagery in a lot of my work is an expression of this powerlessness.

Do you prefer the color and texture or subject matter to be the lure to your work?

When I started out, the subject matter was the most important to me, because I felt such urgency behind the messages in my work. For many years, there was such a frustration with the state of affairs related to Iran that I felt like I needed to scream through my paintings. That's become less true, probably because there now has been so much political art coming out of Iran and in the Diaspora, and to some degree, my voice has been heard, so there is less of a feeling of maddening invisibility. Also the discourse about Iran in the U.S. has advanced in the last few years. After the 2009 demonstrations, there finally seems to be

a more nuanced understanding about Iranians in media culture. Subject matter is still an important part of my work. But I have less of a feeling of urgency to communicate certain issues -- and I am taking more time to focus on the way my paintings look, and building textures. The formal aspects of my painting are becoming increasingly more important.

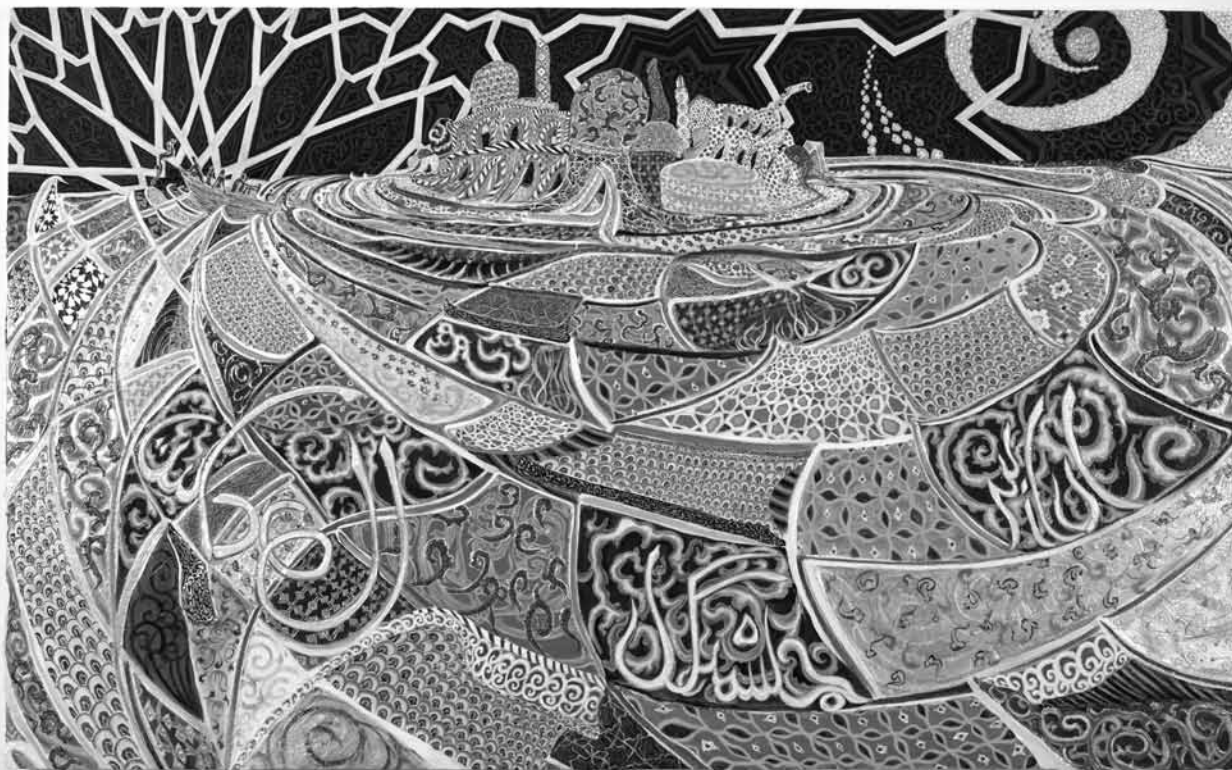
Can an artist tell a clearer story than journalist words and provide a better understanding to the public on current events?

I think the artist can offer a complexity that too often does not come across in the media. I wouldn't say that this is a "clearer story" though. Art often takes some degree of work for the viewer to experience and try to comprehend. But the rewards are great, as art can really reflect the soul of a people, and that of the individual artist who is operating in a specific socio-political milieu.

Do you paint to tell a story to the public or paint to tell your story to yourself?

Early on, I was doing both. I was satirizing the world around me, to point out flaws in the world-- and doing so had a healing affect for me. I don't really think of it as story telling --it is more about expressing emotion. My work involves my own emotional responses to aspects of the broader culture. But it is not just about my emotions, or to please myself. When I paint, I am connecting with the world around me, and with the neuroses of the world that I have struggled with, out of discomfort or disagreement. I love

Hyperbolic, 70x48x3in, Acrylic and glitter on gessoed panel, 2011



how painting is so solitary, but how it makes me feel united with the world, with other people, and with the world of ideas and art.

What experiences in your life influenced your subject matter?

This question is too hard to answer. There is so much going on in my subject matter and there are decades of complex influences and experiences behind each symbol and painting. My subject matter usually has layers of influences: U.S.-Iranian relations and American media coverage of Iran has influenced my work; my actual experiences in Iran and with Iranian people and culture has been extremely influential; my love for (and discontents with) art history and contemporary art; and personal experiences as an Iranian-American woman. Each painting has a mixed bag of complex influences behind it that have shaped my perspective. I cannot privilege one experience over another.

Besides your painting and sculpting you have a line of furniture and handbags. How did this come about? Do you take new pieces or redefine used pieces. Does this share the same importance as the canvas?

You are referring to two different art pieces, both of which are sculptures. The furniture piece you are referring to is my “Suffocating Loveseat Sectional,” which is an absurdist Persian-looking Louis Quatorze sectional sofa that forms a fully-enclosed rectangle. The person sitting inside the piece cannot escape. It is an expression of the limited access that people have to Iranian women; and the confining aspects of being a woman in Iran.

This piece was built from scratch –using plywood and upholstery, and Persian-looking fabrics, and then painted with gold embellishments to look like a Louis Quatorze chair. This furniture piece originated as a character in my paintings. It was an image I dreamed up in my fantastical paintings of harem women. I am most interested in making paintings, but in this case, I felt like it was an important symbol and that it needed to exist in the world.

With the handbags, you are referring to an art piece that I worked on from 2003 to 2007. I bought boxes of these very sad-looking, fake Chanel purses. They were probably the saddest fake Chanel purses in existence – they had no Chanel logo, but they had the iconic quilted texture. They were bright gold and, with bright orange price tags stuck on them, \$3.99. I had a weird obsession with these bags, and I knew instantly what I wanted to paint on them. I slathered on many layers of gesso in the middle of the bags, and painted over the gessoed areas. The gold bag served as a gaudy border to my paintings.

My paintings on the bags were small-scale versions of my larger paintings. They depicted cartoonishly oppressed Odalisques; or cartoonishly menacing mosque-like buildings that resembled polluting factories or power plants. I was making a statement about the cheapening of Persian culture – how in contemporary global contexts, Iranian culture has been reduced to a vulgar cartoon. This cheapened, imitation version of Persian culture is the one I was forced to inherit, coming of age in America during a time when Iran was suddenly treated as a brutal joke. I wore the painted bags everywhere for 4 years, including some parties with very respectable Iranian women who had real Chanel bags.

Wearing these bags was a statement about the baggage of my identity. In those years when I first painted and wore the bags, Iranians did not seem interested in contemporary art, and it was frustrating to me that they would spend so much money on luxury goods, displaying no interest in art that did not follow the traditional paradigms of poetry and decoration. I will admit, I had a perverse thrill when Iranian women of taste asked me “WHERE did you get that BAG?!” – especially when the \$3.99 price tag was still on them. When I wore the bags in elegant settings that were not Iranian – my very flamboyant assertion of ethnic identity gave me another kind of thrill.

I referred to the bags as “Islamables.” It was an absurd name playing with Orientalist tendencies to label Iranian identity as Islamic. And it was an attempt to render the associations that non-Muslims have with the word “Islamic” into something loveable and touch-able. (People loved to touch the paintings on the bags, because of the shiny and rich textures.) In 2007, I made a large shelf for the bags that looked like a hybrid of Iranian Mehrab and Shaker-style American furniture. I called it “Islamables Mehrab Shelf.” It was a shrine to my Iranian-American identity. I stopped with the bags after that, because the project felt complete.

You seem to be very connected to the tradition and culture of Persia, this is reflected in your works. Are you equally inspired by your American culture and traditions?

My art primarily reflects my total passion for Iranian art. But the point of view and perspective in my work cannot be divorced from my American upbringing and education –growing up in a multicultural environment and in an educational system that has taken pride in the Civil Rights and Feminist movements. There is a freedom, and a respect for satire and cartoon, that I associate with age-old American traditions. There is a visceral feeling and anger to a lot of my work that takes permissions from the impulses of American expressionists, graffiti artists, and punk rock. The flamboyant assertion of identity in my work is consistent with the expressions of minority cultures in the U.S., who wear their marginalized identity as a badge of honor, as a way to turn negativity into an empowering ownership. The self-deprecating and dark humor in my work is influenced by Jewish American humor and American independent film culture.

Did your family encourage or discourage a career in the arts?

Both. Ultimately, my parents are responsible for my being an artist. They recognized my need to escape through art from age 10 and onwards, and they gave me the opportunities to make this happen. The exposure I had to great art in my early teenage years was incredible, and because of them. They gave me the tools to make art, driving me to art school on Saturdays as a child and teenager, championing my earliest exhibitions. I could never be an artist today without this encouragement.

When I became a senior in college, their tone changed. Suddenly they put pressure on me to go to law school. I was devastated by this because I had zero desire to be a lawyer, and it had nothing to do with my interests or talents. From their perspective, I understood where they were coming from – because of the Iranian value of security, and they come from families where even the artists had professional degrees. But also, my grades in

college were very good, so there was a guilty and insecure feeling that I could be throwing it all away.

Law school, and practicing for 3 years, was very difficult. I tried to make it work, and I met amazing people and had great opportunities. But I was unhappy. Eventually it became crystal clear that painting as a hobby was not enough, and I could not continue down this path without spending the rest of my life feeling bitter. When I was about to turn thirty, my parents were so tired of my complaining that they said –“so why don’t you just quit already?” At that point, I realized the only thing holding me back was myself. From then on, they were back to being encouraging. Sometimes too proud! I will admit, I had many little arguments with my father, begging him not to promote my work or mention me in his magazine!

You have two wonderful parents. As with all children I am certain that you disagreed with some of the advice given to you during your developmental age. Now you are a mother what do you believe to be the best advice and direction you can give to your young children?

I would want to encourage my children to be ambitious and try out a lot of things, expand their horizons, as my parents have done with me. If my children have strong desires or dreams in certain directions, I want to give them opportunities to build a foundation, and gain confidence in that area early on. I would hope that I will trust them to make the decisions that are right for them when they are older. I am no expert on parenthood, and like many new parents, there is a humbling and an appreciation of what your own parents have done for you.

Is there anything you believe you would have different in your life? If so why?

I try not to regret. We all go on our own imperfect journeys and it is part of learning and it makes us who we are. I am happy and feel fortunate for whatever I have in my life.

Where does the artist Negar Ahkami see herself in the next twenty years?

It would be nice to imagine myself still working with my dealer in New York, Leila Heller – but that I will no longer feel the need to have to live in New York. It’s hard for me to imagine leaving New York City, since I was 17 when I moved here and I never looked back. But part of me has a strong fantasy of ending up in some countryside somewhere with a huge barn for a studio -- or maybe even in Europe. I fantasize about spending my days hibernating inside a big, beautiful art studio, and emerging from it to have great meals with my family.

We try to end our interviews with a message from the interviewee. What advice would you give to the young people of the world?

I recommend to all the young people to work hard and trust your deepest instincts and desires. Don’t try to fight or suppress them, or let others do so. Be brave. And don’t hold yourself back with fear or insecurity! I know that’s easier said than done, but it is a colossal waste of your time and energy.

NINE LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP FROM XENOPHON’S CYRUS THE GREAT

BE SELF-RELIANT

“Never be slow in replenishing your supplies. You’ll always be on better terms with your allies if you can secure your own provisions ... Give them all they need and your troops will follow you to the end of the earth.”

BE GENEROUS

“Success always calls for greater generosity--though most people, lost in the darkness of their own egos, treat it as an occasion for greater greed. Collecting boot [is] not an end itself, but only a means for building [an] empire. Riches would be of little use to us now--except as a means of winning new friends.”

BE BRIEF

“Brevity is the soul of command. Too much talking suggests desperation on the part of the leader. Speak shortly, decisively and to the point--and couch your desires in such natural logic that no one can raise objections. Then move on.”

BE A FORCE FOR GOOD

“Whenever you can, act as a liberator. Freedom, dignity, wealth – these three together constitute the greatest happiness of humanity. If you bequeath all three to your people, their love for you will never die.”

BE IN CONTROL

After punishing some renegade commanders. Here again, I would demonstrate the truth that, in my army, discipline always brings rewards . .

BE FUN

“When I became rich, I realized that no kindness between man and man comes more naturally than sharing food and drink, especially food and drink of the ambrosial excellence that I could now provide. Accordingly, I arranged that my table be spread everyday for many invitees, all ofwholl I would dine on the same excellent food as myself. After my guests and I were finished, I would send out any extra food to my absent friends, in token of my esteem.”

BE LOYAL

When asked how he planned to dress for a celebration, if I can only do well by my friends, I’ll look glorious enough in whatever clothes I wear.”

BE AN EXAMPLE

“In my experience, men who respond to good fortune with modesty and kindness are harder to find than those who face adversity with courage.”

BE COURTEOUS AND KIND

There is a deep – and usually frustrated – desire in the heart of everyone to act with benevolence rather than selfishness, and one fine instance of generosity can inspire dozens more. Thus I established a stately court here all my friends showed respect to each other and cultivated courtesy until it bloomed into perfect harmony.”



Commencing with the scholarship awards for the academic year of 2012-13, the Board of Directors of the Iranian-American Scholarship Fund will award annually, from the general fund, on behalf of the community, one named scholarship in honor or memory of an academic individual of Iranian heritage with respect to their work and contributions. This year, *The Hossein Ziai Memorial Scholarship* has been established. The Board would like to extend sincere thanks to all who have supported this Scholarship Fund for the past 15 years. For the academic year of 2012-13 scholarships are awarded to 25 outstanding applicants. This brings our total to 175 scholarships awarded to date. Congratulations to this year's recipients.

2012-13 Graduate Recipients

Niknaz Aftahi UC Berkeley – Architecture	The Hand Foundation IASF Mother Fund
Ashoordin Ashoormaram U of Arizona - Physics	The Shamsedeen Zayanderoudi Annual Memorial Scholarship (1)
Kiana Ashtiani U. Of Chicago – Int. Studies/Poli Sci	The Farhang and Parichehr Mehr Annual Honorary Scholarship (2) The M. Ali Aghassi Annual Memorial Scholarship (3)
Daryoush Behbood SMU Dedman School of Law	The Shahri (Aghassi) Estakhry and Sarah E. Aghassi Scholarship The Morteza Gheissari Annual Memorial Scholarship (4)
Lida Binesheian Texas Tech-Pharmacy School	The Jamileh Yeganeh Memorial Annual Scholarship (5) The Shayesteh Zarrinkelk Memorial Scholarship (6)
Samila Charkhezarrin Indiana University Dental School	The Kamal and Safieh Asgar Memorial Scholarship (7) The Mojdeh Akhavan Annual Scholarship The Ostad Family Annual Scholarship
Neda Ghandchi Howard U. Speech Lang. Pathology	The Rointun Bunshah Memorial Scholarship (8) The Ahmad Kashirad Memorial Scholarship (9)
Mazyar Kahali Harvard U. - Architecture	The Bita Daryabari Scholarship
Elham Khazaei Samuel Merritt U.CA. Podiatric Medicine	The Mahmood and Fereshteh Mahdavi Annual Scholarship The Behrooz and Nasrin (Owsia) Akbarnia Annual Scholarship
Arash Nayeri Vanderbilt School of Medicine	The SUSMA- Shiraz University School of Medical Sciences Alumni Annual Scholarship The Abbas and Jannat Bolandgray Annual Scholarship
Cyrus Nejat USC - Astronautical Eng.	The Habib Tayebi Annual Scholarship The Massih & Haleh Tayebi Annual Scholarship
Mariamme Sadri Columbia U.- Social Work	The Farnam Family Annual Scholarship The Fred and Gita (Khadiri) Khoroushi Annual Scholarship
Sara Shemirani California College of the Arts	The Firouzan Gheissari Annual Memorial Scholarship (9) The Massoumeh Najimian Memorial Scholarship (10)