

AHKAMI DERMATOLOGY ASSOCIATES, LLC

Rosaline Ahkami, MD

Diplomate American Board of Dermatology

Dermatology
Cosmetic Procedures
Skincare



دکتر روزالین احکامی

متخصص پوست و زیبایی

Visits by Appointment Only

Tel: (973) 955 4344

Fax: (973) 471 8534

Conveniently located at:

**110 Passaic Avenue
Passaic, NJ 07055**

**1031 McBride Avenue, Suite 203
Woodlawn Park, NJ 07024**

We are part of most major insurances

Smiles That Last a Lifetime

Clear Solutions to Correct Your Unique Smile.

Restoring Stability, Strength, and Function to your Smile

لیختندی زیبا و عمری رضایت خاطر

Glow Dental Spa

Behshad Ahkami, DDS.



The cosmetic dentistry specialists of **Glow Dental Spa** in Wayne offer a comprehensive range of treatments designed to give you a strong, well-aligned bite and a healthy, beautiful smile, including Invisalign®, porcelain veneers, teeth whitening, and smile makeovers. After evaluating your teeth and gums and discussing your needs and goals, **Dr. Behshad Ahkami** will create a treatment plan that is ideally suited to you and your unique smile.

Cosmetic
General

Restorative
Sedation

Have a question? Contact our office today!

برای مشاوره درباره هرگونه زیباسازی و ترمیم دندان با شماره زیر تماس بگیرید!

TEL: 973 942 6550

FAX: 973 942 6553



506 Hamburg Turnpike, Suite 101, Wayne, NJ 07470

Dr. Behshad Ahkami

A TRUE DIAMOND SOURCE

Think you have to travel to the “Big City” to find diamond experts?
Think you’re getting a high-level of expertise from that clerk at the Mall?

Think you have to “know someone” to get a great deal?

Think again!



The experts at Bentley Diamonds will show you that the expertise you can get only from people who truly love and appreciate fine diamonds is right in Wall Township.

Technology has made the knowledge of the Four Cs – Color, Clarity, Cut and Carat Weight – just the beginning of diamond evaluating.

With technology has come new coatings, irradiation, heat treatments, color enhancements and High Pressure High Temperature Treatment, to name a few. These new techniques can make a diamond look great, but may not increase its value and some of them are only temporary.

Kaz Bagheri and Dan Capuano, co-owners of Bentley Diamonds make sure you know exactly what you are buying and will take the time to educate each and every customer.

Primarily diamond merchants, Bagheri and Capuano added the jewelry store to the already thriving diamond business when they realized that some friends and customers were paying inflated prices and being given misinformation elsewhere.

As diamond-dealers they saw customers being sold overpriced and under-appreciated diamonds. Now they make sure that every piece sold at Bentley Diamonds is exactly the right size, design and cost for the customer. As diamond manufacturers and importers, they can cut out the middlemen and the steps that inflate diamond prices.

With over 3,000 settings available and the experts to make any custom setting combined with their buying power to get the highest-quality stones for less, Capuano and Bagheri will make sure your purchase will fit the occasion, your personality and your budget.

TOP: Bentley Diamond, Wall, NJ.

CENTER: Interior shot of Bentley Diamond sales floor.

RIGHT: Bentley diamond cutter appraising his work.

LEFT: Your diamond purchase is quality assured from stone to setting.



More Precious Than Our Diamonds is Our- Reputation.

BENTLEY DIAMOND

1860 Highway 35, Wall, NJ

(800) 333-DIAMONDS

www.bentleydiamond.com

FAMILY CHIROPRACTIC & SPINAL HEALTH CARE CENTER

Dr. M. Abtahi, DC

Chiropractic Physician

LET CHIROPRACTIC HELP YOU WITH THESE CONDITIONS:

Joint Pain, Neck Pain, Low Back Pain, Sciatica, Headaches, Lethargy,
Fibromyalgia, Herniated Discs, Arm or Leg Pain, Pregnancy Discomfort
and many more conditions...

دردهای ناشی از بارداری، درد مفاصل، درد کمر، ستون فقرات و ...



LIVING WITH PAIN DOESN'T HAVE TO BE AN OPTION!

تنها با یک تلفن از انواع دردها خلاص شوید!!!

Pain relief is only a phone call away!!!

(201) 995-9900

(973) 471-9585

Offices:

27 S. Franklin Tpk.
Ramsey, NJ 07446

110 Passaic Ave.
Passaic, NJ 07055

Free Consultation (\$60 Value)

Most Major Insurances Accepted



Persian Heritage

www.persian-heritage.com

Persian Heritage, Inc.

110 Passaic Avenue
Passaic, NJ 07055

E-mail: mirassiran@aol.com

Telephone: (973) 471-4283

Fax: 973 471 8534

EDITOR

SHAHROKH AHKAMI

EDITORIAL BOARD

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

MANAGING EDITOR

HALLEH NIA

ADVERTISING

HALLEH NIA

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

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

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

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

PUBLISHED BY

PERSIAN HERITAGE, INC.

A corporation organized for cultural and literary purposes

Cover Price: \$6.00

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

Typesetting & Layout
TALIEH PUBLICATIONS

Persian Heritage

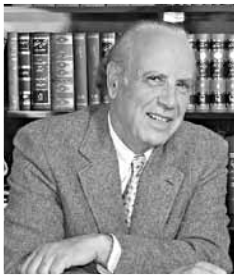
Vol. 18, No. 69

Spring 2013

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK	6
The Journey of Life, (Shakheh)	7
LETTERS TO EDITOR	8
Abraham Lincoln's Letter to His Son's Teacher	8
NEWS	9
It Takes Guts to Make a Film Like "SCANDAL"	10
COMMENTARY	
The Heart of Darkness (David Yazdan)	11
Human Rights and Religion (Norman Gabay)	12
Culture Builds Bridges Between Russian and Iran?	
<i>(Lisa Kaprova)</i>	15
"Embracing Our Differences" Exhibit	17
THE ARTS & CULTURE	
REVIEWS	18
Bobak Ferdowsi, The Guest of the First Lady	18
Islamic Art	19
<i>(Aryan M. Divan)</i>	
Bilingual Birdies	20
Achaemenid Engineers Knew the Value of "PI"	21
Iranian Americans (Maboud Ansari)	22
Poems by: Majid Nafisi and Chris D. Aechtner	22
Liberation of Tabriz	23
Interview with Susan Pourfar	24
<i>(Shahrokh Ahkami)</i>	
Love (Nicholas Gordon)	25
Sa'adi (Translated by Davood Rahni)	26
Making "Ghelye Mahi"	28
Persia's Ancient Assassins	30
Meet Cameron Rafati	31
<i>(Persian Heritage)</i>	
Heralding the Arrival of Spring In Iran	32

IMPORTANT NOTICE

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



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The arrival of NoRooz is an opportunity for my staff and me to congratulate our readers and wish them a happy, prosperous and healthy new year. NoRooz coincides with the birth of Persian Heritage magazine. It has been 18 years since its inception. Despite financial and other obstacles we still publish the magazine. Our goal is to continue to deliver information of Persian history and culture, information about our past and present achievements and to introduce to the world the bright stars of our future. We hope our magazine will remain a vehicle to keep our culture alive for future generations; a way to educate them on the roots of their parents and grandparents.

This year was filled with adventures, anxieties, laughter and tears. It was a year in which we saw the wonderful accomplishments of our children here and abroad in politics, arts, science and industry. One of these proud moments was this January at the State of the Union Address. Americans and the world anxiously waited in front of their televisions to hear what the President would say. What was the state of this Union and what was the state of the world? Prior to that evening the Persian community was excited sending emails and making phone calls informing each other of a very important guest who would be in the audience on that night. The First Lady invited Boback Ferdowsi (the young man with the MOHAWK hair-cut, who was part of the Jet Propulsion team who placed the Rover on Mars.) On that evening he was there in his new MOHAWK, on one side it said USA and the other side MARS. That night the President made reference to Mr. Ferdowsi honoring him as a representative of the talented youth in America, for his achievements and for his support of community. There was no mention of his parent's origin or of his religion.

This in my opinion, was the proper way to introduce an individual. It DOES NOT matter if they were citizens by birth or naturalized, they are Americans, and their accomplishments are individual accomplishments by an American citizen. Likewise on another occasion, in December, a horrid event occurred at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut. A terrorist, with an unthinkable amount of ammunition, murdered 20 children and 7 adults, including his own mother. The country was shocked by the event. The next day at the office I asked my co-workers the following questions: What was the terrorist's religion? What was the terrorists color? What was the terrorist's origin? There was no response. I stated, that by his name he could be European or perhaps Italian. They had no response. I stated, that because he may be Italian he may be Christian. Again no response. I then responded by stating, that it seems like none

of you care about his ethnic background, his religion, his color. PERHAPS it is because it wasn't his race, country, religion or ethnicity who murdered these innocent victims, it was ONE INDIVIDUAL, ONE KILLER, ONE TERRORIST. Yes he was American, yes he was white, yes he was Christian BUT DID ANY OF THESE ADJECTIVES MURDER THOSE INNOCENT VICTIMS? NO!!!!!!

I reflected for a moment back to 9/11, when a group of terrorists from Yemen, Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and other Arab nations murdered thousands of innocent Americans. Their act not only destroyed the Twin Towers, the Pentagon and crashed a plane in a field in Pennsylvania, it devastated the economy and pride of Americans. There were also other innocent victims that day, whose lives changed drastically, 1.6 billion peaceful Muslims. From that day forward they would have had to defend themselves against being called a terrorist by virtue of their religion. You may be asking me right now, "What do you mean by this?" It is a simple answer. If asked today, 98% of the people in the US and around the world would not remember the origin of these terrorists, but all would be able to tell you they were Muslim. It was how we were intended to remember these criminals, not by the origin of their country. Why? Because the countries of their origin were considered "friends" to America and therefore no anger or aggression should have been felt towards them. The only thing we heard over and over again was they were Muslim and Islam was behind this attack. BUT WHY DID WE HAVE TO KNOW THEIR ORIGIN, THEIR RELIGION, THEIR RACE? They were individuals, who as a group did this horrific deed! Their action in the name of religion was theirs and NOT THE 1.6 billion Muslims! And while the countries of the terrorists origin were Arab, now all Muslims regardless, of what country they were born or now call home, are looked upon as terrorists. Now, Iranians who have representation from all religions including Jewish, Christian, Bahai, Zoroastrians etc. are looked upon as terrorists because they came from the Middle East and were Muslim. Iranians were lumped into one group the minute they landed in America. And, because they came from Iran, whose government was and remains in conflict with America, they are considered representatives of Iran. This left them with two battles to fight one against the BRUTAL government in Iran from which they escaped and the other fighting for their identity as individuals.

Recovery from the emotional and financial damages suffered as a result of this classification will take a long time. That is why I believe in the importance of how one is referred to whether for a crime or achievement. That is

why I believe that at the State of the Union address Mr. Ferdowsi was Mr. Ferdowsi, a young American who is a representative of our talented and prosperous American youth. Likewise the terrorist at Sandy Hook is remembered only as a **TERRORIST** and **MURDERER** and nothing else. We have no need to know their race, religion, origin etc. Constantly referring to these adjectives perpetuates hatred and bias, bias causes division and division is something we as a nation and community cannot afford.

I hope in the future the media will stay on this course and not be bias in their reporting. I hope that they realize that an act by an individual, whether a crime or glorious achievement, is done so by one individual, not by his country of origin, his religion, his ethnicity, his color, his profession etc.

My dear readers the world is rapidly changing and growing smaller (global village). Most of us have reached a comfortable life in our new homes and have provided well for our children. For this we should be grateful. We have watched them grow and set and reach their goals, goals we never could dream. Their success is because of our sacrifices and their ability and these sacrifices have made Iranians one of the most educated and prosperous immigrant groups in the US and the world. We need to continue to work together to ensure that we only go FORWARD. We must work together to eliminate in its entirety "RACIAL PROFILING, PROFILING IN ANY WAY", and eliminate negative publicity against Iranians.

Each of us is a link in a universal chain. Together we can continue to recover from damages caused throughout the years. With this strength we will be able to continue to make great strides in our adoptive countries and protect the people of Iran and Iran's integrity as a nation. I look forward to the time when we will see better days for Iran.

I wish you all a very happy and healthy New Year.

Shakheh Akbari

THE JOURNEY OF LIFE

Once upon a time
 In a far away land
 There lived a handsome prince
 One day he flew through the clouds
 He landed on a small island
 Wanted to see his princess in love
 They were lost, they were found
 They felt the oneness of their heart again
 They let their bodies to become one
 The magic of their old passion
 Was awake was alive
 They flew through the joyful sky
 High and high together
 They talked, they walked
 They laughed and they cried
 But did together
 Their never ending desire
 Their dream like happiness
 Had to all come to an end
 They were blown apart again
 Destiny of separation
 Back to their empty nests
 Their Unforgettable memories
 Shall get them
 Through the journey of life

Shakheh

ALI A. GHORASHI, D.D.S

Restorative, Implant
 & Cosmetic Dentistry
 for the Entire Family



Telephone:
201.818.6565 1.866.NJNYDDS
 Fax: 201.818.6525

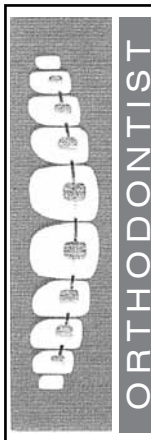
Valley Dental Group, LLC
 545 Island Road, Suite 1A, Ramsey, NJ 07446
WWW.RAMSEYSMILE.COM

SHEILA BAHADORI, D.D.S., M.A.

Practice Limited to Orthodontics
 for Children and Adults

Telephone:
201.818.6565 1.866.NJNYDDS
 Fax: 201.818.6525

Valley Dental Group, LLC
 545 Island Road, Suite 1A, Ramsey, NJ 07446
WWW.RAMSEYSMILE.COM
 Office Hours by Appointment



A VERY GIFTED ARTIST

It was a pleasure to see the kind face of a young talented artist on the cover. She has a style of her own and she deserves to be recognized internationally as a very gifted artist.

I wish the lovely Negar a very long happy and productive artistic life and I wish for you a very Happy New Year.

Majid Kafai

IMPORTANT WORDS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

I have great respect for teachers all my life because of my parents, and also it has been my own understanding for so many years that upto the present time President LINCOLN has been the most respectable figure in America's history of presidency.

He was a real man, not a pseudo figure. After receiving this letter from *Persian Heritage* and reading it joyfully and carefully, I do believe it should be printed in the first page of all tutorial books.

Also it should be mentioned in cultural magazines and journals not once but be repeated on and on to correct the global misunderstandings of "STANDARDS and ETHICS," which has been undermined by media, society and even educational centers for many decades.

Regards, Jaleh Radmard

MY CLASSMATE

Karim Mansouri was a classmate of mine in Shiraz at grade 9-11 high school. This was during the reign of late Dr. Mossadegh. I used to sit lots of times with him and chat. He was a great guy, well balanced and in peace with himself. He was also a very good soccer player. He was also sharp with good eyes to see and criticize if something seemed not right.

In Sept 1953 when I was in University of Tehran, I wrote him several letters (with anonymous name) from pro Mossadegh student demonstrations. Naturally without a return address. He knew well who is writing them. He was a real gentleman and his survivors should be proud of themselves.

Fred Arzideh



Abraham Lincoln's Letter to His Son's Teacher

Respected Teacher,

on the band wagon...

*He will have to learn, I know,
that all men are not just,
all men are not true.
But teach him also that
for every scoundrel there is a hero;
that for every selfish Politician,
there is a dedicated leader...*

*Teach him to listen to all men...
but teach him also to filter
all he hears on a screen of truth,
and take only the good
that comes through.*

*Teach him for every enemy
there is a friend,
Steer him away from envy,
if you can,
teach him the secret of quiet laughter.*

*Teach him if you can,
how to laugh when he is sad...*

*Let him learn early that
the bullies are the easiest to lick...*

*Teach him there is no shame in tears,
Teach him to scoff at cynics
and to beware of too much sweetness...*

*Teach him, if you can,
the wonder of books...
But also give him quiet time to ponder
the eternal mystery of birds in the sky,
bees in the sun,
and the flowers on a green hillside.*

*Teach him to sell his brawn
and brain to the highest bidders
but never to put a price-tag
on his heart and soul.*

*In the school teach him
it is far honorable
to fail than to cheat...*

*Teach him to close his ears
to a howling mob
and to stand and fight
if he thinks he's right.*

*Teach him to have faith
in his own ideas,
even if everyone tells him
they are wrong...*

*Treat him gently,
but do not cuddle him, because only
the test of fire makes fine steel.*

*Teach him to be gentle
with gentle people,
and tough with the tough.*

*Let him have the courage
to be impatient...
let him have the patience to be brave.*

*Try to give my son the strength
not to follow the crowd
when everyone is getting*

*Teach him always
to have sublime faith in himself,
because then he will have
sublime faith in mankind.*

*This is a big order,
but see what you can do...
He is such a fine little fellow,
my son!*

Lasik Inventor



Gholam A. Peyman, MD, a faculty member at the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Phoenix, was named by President Obama as one of the 12 eminent researcher recipients of the National Medal of Technology and Innovation.

Gholam A. Peyman, MD recipient of National Medal of Technology and Innovation, the nation’s highest honor for technological achievement, bestowed by the President of the United States, President Obama, on America’s leading innovators and a Hall of Fame of Ophthalmology and retina surgeon who is also a prolific and successful inventor.

Gholam Peyman has, thus far, been granted 136 US Patents covering a broad range of novel medical devices, intra-ocular drug delivery, surgical techniques, as well as new methods of diagnosis and treatment.

His most widely-known invention to date is LASIK eye surgery, a vision correction procedure designed to allow people to see clearly without glasses. He was awarded the first US patent for the procedure in 1989.

In addition to the numerous other honors and awards he has received, in 2005 he was selected by a ballot among the more than 30,000 ophthalmologists around the world to become one of the thirteen living ophthalmologists inducted into the Hall of Fame of Ophthalmology.

Peyman was born in Shiraz, Iran. At the age of 19, he moved to Germany to begin his medical studies. He received his MD at the University of Freiburg in 1962. He completed his internship at St. Johannes Hospital in Diusberg, Germany in 1964 and at Passaic General Hospital in Passaic, New Jersey in 1965.

Winner of the 2013 NOWROOZ BANNER

CELEBRATING
NOWRUZ
IRANIAN
NEW YEAR

MARCH 16 & 17, 2013

LACMA



FARHANG
FOUNDATION
FARHANG.ORG

Farhang Foundation is pleased to announce that the winner of the 2013 Nowrooz Banner Contest has officially been selected and the design is now being unveiled for the first time. Sheida Koufigar, an Iranian-American graphic designer currently studying at California State University, Long Beach, was named the winner of this year’s banner contest, which called upon the public to submit designs that visually represent the spirit of Nowrooz, the Iranian New Year. “When designing the Nowrooz banner, my goal was to imply a sense of nostalgia by depicting familiar images in a modern and minimalist style,” said Sheida Koufigar. “One of the most memorable aspects of Nowrooz is the Haft-Sin, the traditional centerpiece of the Iranian New Year that depicts the various harmonious elements of life and rebirth. The ‘mahi va tong’ (goldfish and bowl) is a familiar and beloved fixture of the Haft-Sin that represents the joyful celebration of life and new beginnings.”

Now in its third year, the Farhang Nowrooz Banner Contest continues to attract hundreds of submissions each year from within and outside of the United States. Past winners include Nasrin Beyraghdar of Irvine, CA and Navid Ghaem Maghami of San Francisco, CA.

Fashion Design After Persian Carpet

This year’s collection of the French fashion designer Hermes has been copied from an antique Persian carpet design woven in the city of Tabriz, Iran.

Iranian son-in-law of the US Secretary of State

MehrNewsAgency: After so much criticism about Kerry’s nomination to the position of Secretary of State in Obama’s new cabinet, and Kerry’s positions on Iran and Syria, news reveals that his son-in-law is an Iranian. Vanessa Bradford Kerry, John Kerry’s younger daughter by his first wife, has married an Iranian-American physician, Dr. Behrouz (Brian) Vala Nahed in 2009. Kerry was criticized over his positions on Iran’s nuclear program and stress upon diplomatic ways to solve it, closer ties with Bashar al-Assad, his willingness to visit Tehran, etc. But Kerry said that he would use his powers to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, and Republicans approved him for the position.



IRANIAN DIRECTOR MASUD DEHNAMEKI:

It takes guts to make a film like “SCANDAL”

Source: Tehran Times

Director Masud Dehnamaki said that he did not need approval of the cultural authority to make the film and added, “It takes guts to make such a film like “Scandal”, his latest film which challenges Iran’s official view on Muslim clerics. “Certain people lament that this film would raise people’s expectations about the clerics,” he said during a meeting held at the 31st Fajr International Film Festival in Tehran.

“The film’s aim is such. It gives a fillip to us and it holds a mirror in front of us. Nowadays, clerics have distanced themselves from people with their involvement in politics,” he added.

“Scandal” tells the story of Haji Yusef, a cleric living among the ordinary people in a poor district of Tehran. He meets Afsaneh, an infamous woman, who is on the verge of complete moral corruption. Haji Yusef decides to help Afsaneh, but he faces some problems.

The film did not receive much of a warm welcome from the Iranian officials and MPs who watched it weeks before its premiere at the Fajr festival.

“I try to tell whatever I consider important to say in a film,

because they may not allow me to make my next film,” he noted.

Dehnamaki also was criticized for choosing comedian Akbar Abdi to play the role of Haji Yusef. He compared an actor with a loudspeaker and said, “Logically speaking, we would not refuse to use a loudspeaker when mourning due to the fact that it has previously been used in a wedding ceremony.”

“We hired Akbar Abdi due to his popularity,” he stated.

Dehnamaki was formerly the managing director and chief editor of the weeklies “Shalamcheh” and “Jebbeh”, which covered subjects on the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

In 2002, he cut his teeth as a filmmaker on “Poverty & Prostitution”, a documentary focusing on Iranian women engaged in prostitution due to poverty. He had said that he made the documentary to show the crisis of justice in Iranian society. The film never premiered in Iran. However, bootleg copies of the film were selling like hot cakes on the black market.

“Which Blue, Which Red?”, his next documentary on the rivalry between the Iranian capital’s two football teams, Esteqlal and Persepolis, and their fans was a complete flop.

He made his feature debut in 2007 with “The Outcasts”, about a group of gangs that head to the front during the Iran-Iraq war. He then made two sequels to the comedy drama.



Don't Let Your Taxes Break You!

نگران گزارش مالیاتی خود نباشید!

ما آماده ارائه هرگونه مشاوره و خدمات جهت برنامه‌ریزی مالی، تهیه گزارش‌های مالیاتی، و حسابداری جاری به شما هستیم

Grippaldi & Wollruch, LLC; CPA

1035 Rt. 46 East, Suite 101, Clifton NJ

We Offer Experienced, Professional Services

Individuals, Partnerships corporations
 Competitive Rates
 Business Consulting
 Tax Planning
 Payroll Tax Returns
 Monthly Accounting
 Audits Assistance
 Electronic Tax Filing
 Retirement Planning
 Year-round Service

(973) 546 2050
(973) 476 8700
FRANK@GWRCPA.COM
WWW.GWRCPA.COM



SAVE \$50 ON ANY PERSONAL TAX RETURN w/COUPON

SAVE \$75 ON ANY BUSINESS TAX RETURN OR CORPORATION & LLC w/COUPON

The Heart Of Darkness

Part IV

David Yazdan

*Among free men there can be no successful appeal
From the ballet to the bullet "this is why the Islamic
Republic is doomed sooner or later."*

By Abraham Lincoln

The successor of Ayatollah Khomeini was another questionable leader perhaps even worse. Immediately after the fall of Saddam Hussein in April 2003, he gave the order to the commander of the Quds Force, Brigadier General Qassem Suleimani to call his Hezbollah's military leader Emod Moghniyah to create the Mahdi army. Some 300 fighters recruited from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia under military training with Hezbollah in Lebanon. In an August 2007 interview with an independent newspaper, British Newspaper, Sheikh Al-Sadr explained Mahdi's army relationship with Hezbollah this way, "we have formal links with Hezbollah, we do exchange ideas and discuss the situation facing Shiites in both countries." A copy of Hezbollah and the way they fight and their tactics, we teach each other.

According to US Military Officials in Iraq the Quds Force, an elite unit of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corp., (IRGC) has played an extensive role in funneling arms to Iraqi Shiites, Militia and Mahdi army. One of these players in Mahdi's army by the name of Qais Khazari was captured that spring; Kuwait clearly implicated the Quds Force in the killing of American service men. Khazari and the Hezbollah operative captured by coalition forces said that the senior leadership of Quds Force was responsible for the January 2007 ambush in Karbala in which 5 American soldiers were killed. One soldier died in the ambush carried out by an attacker wearing an American style military uniform and the other 4 soldiers were kidnapped and killed later. Khazari said that in his word that there was no way that the Iranian Special Forces could do anything in Iraq without the support of Iranian Quds Forces under the order of the Ayatollah Khomeini. Their network was training, equipping, funding and assisting a special group in undertaking these criminal activities in Iraq. The US continued to see the use of Iranian manufactured and supplied rockets, mortars and explosively formed penetrators in Iraq. In fact, General Berger, the spokesman for the US multi-national forces in Iraq said that they had captured individuals who tell us that they have recently been to Iran and been trained by Quds Force operatives, and demanded Khazari's release. In fact, the situation got so bad that eventually a bunch of Iraqi members of the parliament traveled to Iran to persuade the commander of the Quds Force General, Qassem Suleimani to get Sheikh Al-Sadr to agree to halt the fighting. All this clearly suggests that when it suits Tehran's purposes, Sheikh Al-Sadr will see to it that a new round of violence will spontaneously occur in Iraq. It is amazing that throughout all this time, both General David Petraus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker never clearly condemned the Tehran dirty work in Iraq and reported clearly to the Government and the Congress, or they did and the Government, as I recall, continued to cover up and say that the Iranian Government did not order this. I have never heard such non-sense from George Bush that he refused to declare the problem and take care of it. From further studies it is clear that going to Iraq in the first place, was the wrong thing to do and then staying there and lying

to people was another thing. They have so many opportunities to kill Moghtada Al-Sadr but they never did, for whatever reason, up to this day, I don't understand. This murderous roll of Tehran continues to this day. Although the interference in Iraq is somewhat less now, but they are still interfering now by arming and supporting the Taliban and Al Qaeda and more evidence is coming in that senior Al Qaeda leaders are hiding in Iran.

The Ominous situation by this Government of Iran is not just helping the terrorist group across the Middle East, it is also killing our own countrymen, boys and girls, and the girls particularly are generally raped before executed. The continuation of their effort to make a nuclear bomb is another problem facing the Western civilization in general and the Middle East in particular. Despite all the sanctions and mediating by various Government and United Nations, they continue to accelerate in making the atomic bomb. The only thing which has slowed it down was the recent violence that was introduced into the computers and that slowed it down to the extent that it may only postpone it for a year or two. Whatever it is, it is really a tragedy that the international community is sitting back and allowing this to happen. This Government is responsible for international terrorism, killing its own people and Americans and Europeans, yet none of them are doing anything about it. The two faces of Russia and China are also contributing to this murderous behavior. These two countries are benefiting from various aspects of Iran, by supplying them the tools to make the bomb.

The question is, we can easily see what Russia and China are doing, but do we really see what the British are doing?

To be continued

Reference: Wall Street Journal

Miss Farzami, articles from New York Times and Washington Time

ART LIMO SERVICES

24 hrs 7, days a week

SUV, STRETCH VAN



Roozbeh Keihani

201 953 6554

artlimoservices@yahoo.com

برای تهیه لیموزین

برای مراسم خود با روزبه کیهانی تماس بگیرید.

شیک، تمیز و با سرویس کامل



Once, when filling out an INS application form for legal permanent residency, Albert Einstein came across a question asking him about his race. He answered - "Of Human Race".

It was in the news that a conference was being held by United Nations about "Peaceful Coexistence Among the Followers of the Monolithic Religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam in the hope of establishing an increasing level of friendship and good will among the participants.

It is always delightful for a follower of these religions to hear such news, and I was especially pleased to see that the attention of sages of the world is finally drawn to the plain fact that it is not rational for religions to have antagonistic attitudes toward each other, as some of them do. Rather, they should support and complement one another in an effort to maintain peace and security for their followers.

Schiller once said, "Accumulating ever-increasing power is not a wise way to gain fame and power. Greatness comes when we utilize power in logical, proper and rational ways."

People are not born with prejudice and hatred. Religious discrimination being the worst, I cannot express the humiliation I constantly suffered as a result of religious persecution and prejudice during my childhood in the city of Kashan (in Iran 1940's).

Often, I am forced to remember the prejudice infested environment of Kashan, where I was raised and grew up. Agonizing memories of our neighborhood baker who persistently refused to put a loaf of bread I intended to buy in my hands, as it was customary to do. He considered me, a 10 year old boy, as untouchable (najess), and thought that touching my hands or contacting my flesh would make him unclean. The origin and cause of this dreadful misconception was his religious discourse, usually read or told to him by someone, more often than not, his mullah. He had been taught that the Christians, Zoroasterians and Jewish people and any non-Muslim are filthy and "najess" because they drink wine containing alcohol, which causes intoxication.

A Jew, a Christian or a Zoroasterian (oldest Iranian Religion), whether he or she drinks wine or not, is untouchable. The poor baker was not aware that a 10 year old boy knows nothing about wine and ignorantly kept his distance from this untouchable boy. Despite my young age, I felt humiliated, and vigorously resented and hated many kind of discrimination, mistreatment or insult I recall my father always saying: "the remedy for these wrong doings is the advancement of knowledge, and in the future, the well educated man would never tolerate such capricious attitudes.

Once I was talking with a close and highly educated friend who is a medical doctor. He loves wine and indeed drinks it much more than any Jew. During one discussion, I noticed a hint of anti-Semitism in his remarks. I told him:

"I notice that your attitude towards Jews and other non-

Muslim are not much different from that of your father or your ancestors. I understand the difference between the cleansing properties of alcohol and its intoxicating effects. My objection is to the philosophical aspects of mis nonsense. Do you cleanse 'dirt' with 'dirt'? Why you! you with your higher education?"

"It is an inherited trait," he said.

I remember my father saying education will eradicate this kind of thinking. But, in this day and age, even my highly educated friend and personal doctor is no different from the old neighborhood baker in Kashan. Why?

In spite of the fact that he has been exposed to Christian values during his education abroad, he is still under the influence of his past religious doctrine, and there are many more like him throughout the world.

Discrimination and religious hatred exists in various forms. In public and private gatherings, practiced by literate and illiterate people. Our good doctor is one of them.

Why?

Let us not blame only my fellow Iranians. Religious discrimination is practiced by people of all lands. In Europe, Africa, America and other countries, there is prejudice and hate against Muslims, Christians, and Jews and all others.

Why?

Is it not astonishing to see Europeans, Greeks, Sunni Muslims, Shi-ite Muslims, Protestants, Catholics, Black African, some of whom have pledged to serving the children of Jesus, all living and acting in the black tunnel of religious hatred and discrimination?

Why?

Pope Pius XII, who was the leader of Christianity during World War n, could have saved millions of lives, and prevented all the killing and destruction, but he did not.

Why?

The Orthodox Christian Serb priest could have saved the lives of thousands of Muslim men, women and children, in Bosnia, sooner and better than the armies of the UN or the U.S. He refused to do so.

Why?

Even religious leaders provoked and promoted blood-letting and killings. For centuries during their fame and power, many religious leaders of the three monolithic religions could have saved millions of lives, just as Mahatma Gandhi did in aborting the murder of millions of Muslims by the prejudiced Hindu of India. But they did not (The Hindu religious leader once said, "all doors of heaven are opened to a Hindu who kills a Moslem whose shadow has fallen on him").

Why!

The answers as well as the root of the question will remain alive among the Jews, Muslims and Christians until the end of time.

Since discrimination and hatred are based in part in negative writings of the great religions, and since the stability and continu-

Human Rights and Religion

By: Norman Noorallah Gabay

(Translated and Adapted from Persian)

Once, when filling out an INS application form for legal permanent residency, Albert Einstein came across a question asking him about his race. He answered - "Of Human Race"!

ity of these writings is tied to the stability and continuity of these religions, discriminations will always be with us in some form or another.

All prophets have tried to predict the future to satisfy a basic need of human beings to be prosperous and happy. But, history is also a prophet which predicts the future based on the past. If we remain unaware of the past, we cannot build the future. Look at the lengthy Crusades of the Ottomans, including the massacre of one million and five hundred thousand Armenians.

Considering the fact that almost all the cruelties inflicted on all people over the past centuries have been in the name of religion, the neutralization of hateful religious writings and edicts is THE ONLY WAY to preserve the human rights of their followers. Such an act will also avoid further cruelty in the name of religion, eliminate the use of religious edicts to create chaos and riots, and prevent a few religious leaders from enriching themselves and Irving a life of luxury by exploiting the religious fervor of their own flock.

It helps when, sometimes, a wise, moral and intelligent clerical leader is in the seat of power, like Pope John Paul II. He declared formally that, based on accepted and reliable evidence, “the hands of Jews are not red with the blood of Jesus Christ” (meaning all the massacres, looting, rioting and burning Jews suffered in the past for this reason, have been for nothing).

Or did the case of Mullah Mohammed Mohsen Feiz, (in the 17th Century) who upon witnessing the massacre of one hundred and fifty Jews because they did not want to become Muslims at the hands of Mohammed Beik Etemad-aldoleh in Kashan, hurriedly ran to the palace of Shah Abbas, without any fear of the dreadful consequences to himself and obtained from the Shah a decree firing Etemad Aldoleh from his position, that put an end to the madness.

Or the case of the wonderful priests, who hid many Muslim and Jewish children in Bosnia and in Germany in the basement of their church.

But, there is no assurance that a prejudiced Priest, mullah or rabbi, in order to protect and preserve his personal political or economic interests, not start brainwashing his flock against other religions. This could start a bloodbath so vast, like in Bosnia, that the UN would not dare to step in. Such things are happening as you read this in Ireland, Sudan and the Middle East

Christianity and Islam are not even mentioned in the Torah, because they came into existence respectively 1300 and 1800 years after it was written. However, there are some extremely negative statements about non-Christians while at the same time conforming Judaism. Similarly, there are shameful and dark remarks against both Jews and Christians in printed Farsi treatises, such as Jews and Christians being untouchable (najess), despite containing same common grounds with the rules and laws of Judaism,

Such writings as well as edicts put forth by some powerful religious leader have repeatedly been responsible for pogroms, massacres, as well as individual acts of religious hatred that have changed the course of history for the worst

It was not Igal Amir who assassinated Itzhak Robin, the

peaceful warrior and a champion of peace. His act was a reaction to and the result of the words and speeches of the so called fanatic Jews and their like-minded fellow Jews.

It was not the Christian Serb who captured several dozens innocent Muslim children and women, locked them in a house and set the house on fire. This was the reaction to centuries of hateful religious preaching.

Yes, they did what they were told, but it was centuries of indoctrination by their preachers that triggered it during the 9/11 attack, and we shall unfortunately witness similar incidents in the future. The world should confront religion hatred because it is religion hatred that is killing people and not weapons. The World Trade Center was not destroyed by airplane. It was destroyed by religious hatred to kill more than 3,000 people even though they did not know any of them.

Once I was listening to a speech by a state senator in which he repeatedly referred to human rights. I asked him afterwards if he really believe that the UN and super-power nations really cared about human rights? When he answered that he was quite sure they did, I reminded him of the many instances that religion has been responsible for the abuse of human rights, and mentioned the case of Solomon Rushdi as the example. I then asked whether it would be advisable to have an international law banning issuing of formal or informal religious decrees and edicts, like the one Mr. Solomon Rushdi raises?”

The Senator said, “Write it down and I shall hand it over to the proper authorities, especially the Office of Human Rights in the UN, for I, myself, am a member of the Human Rights Commission of the US Senate.”

I did as he asked, but I never heard from him or about it again.

I mention this only to draw attention to the adverse effect of religious edicts on human rights. Human rights doctrine did not explain who is human. Does people who deny others life should be called human?

All inventions, discoveries and initiatives were first a simple “thought” or “hypothesis”. Then later turned into amazing and admirable results. A new heaven will be born, right in this earth, the day hate, prejudice and resentment is eradicated from all religions.

A long time after sending a letter to the Senator, I read an interesting notion in the “Payam” magazine, No. 159 and I mention it here only for the sake of quoting news. In an interview with a reporter in the Davos Conference in Switzerland (on that time), Mrs. Masoomeh Ebtekar, the Vice President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was asked by a reporter, “do. you see any conflict between Islam and Judaism?” Her answer was, “absolutely not, we are all children of Holy Abraham. I have faith that there will be a merger of all three major religions of the world, i.e. Islam, Judaism and Christianity in the new century, based on the universal belief in one God.”

I read this interview several times and I convinced myself that religion cannot be forced on anybody, and challenging religious beliefs is totally useless. The only remedy is to abolish any religion hatred and discrimination, and to establish an equilibrium, a balance and conformity with the times. Destruction and nullification was the destiny of the communist regimes, which killed, burnt,

Berthold Brecht once said:
*“Remember us when the times comes
 that a man rushes to help another man
 and humanity supports humanity.”*

and destroyed for seventy years, and tried to eradicate religion and religious beliefs. Now their successors are trying to create an equilibrium, and for this the world is welcoming them. Human being should understand that security of all is dependent on the security of every single human. Otherwise, there will be no security for anyone.

In a time not too far in the past human beings, including girls and boys, were hunted like animals and sold as slaves. No religion in the world came forward to put an absolute ban on slavery or the selling, buying and exploiting of human beings. Nobody, indeed, imagined at that time there would come a day when there would be an end to these brutal and shameful deeds, when cruelty is defeated by the intellect and rationality.

The world witnessed the abolishment of the import and export of human beings throughout the world without a credit being given to any particular religion. This was accomplished without the forces of the UN or the Human Rights Organizations or contemporary mass media. Only the force of human determination and morality was in play.

Let us look forward to the day, when all the hateful writings are eradicated and abolished, when nobody would be allowed to commit cruelty or discrimination, and when no man is imprisoned by false and whimsical judges who rely on baseless religious edicts.

Comprehending the message I am trying to deliver is more important than agreeing or disagreeing with my thoughts. I respect all readers who disagree with my ideas, but understand my message, for my main goal is 'Delivery of the Message.'

Berthold Brecht once said, "Remember us when the times comes that a man rushes to help another man and humanity supports humanity."

Let us look forward to a day when man reaches the height that no one but God can envision. ■

THE STONE GARDEN

An old man whom was living in one of the desert areas of Iran, had a beautiful garden and was very dependent to his garden. Since this garden had been in a desert it was very valuable to him.

By the effects of natural drying the garden became completely dry and he was very depressed. In 1961 instead of that garden, he made a garden of stone and wood. He hoped that his rock garden would be never oppressed again and it would be safe from disasters. After this the garden was called *The Stone Garden*.

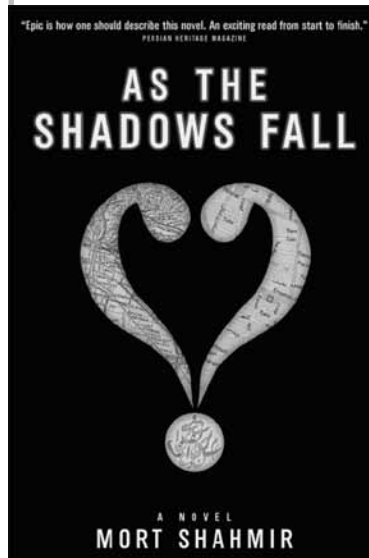
For a long time he was attending the garden as a typical one, until he passed away on April 2007. He was buried right there next to his garden.

This garden, which is a masterpiece, is located within 45 kilometers from southeast of Sirjan city, near Balvard town in Kerman province. It was built by a deaf person named Darvish Khan. In fact this garden is a memorial of a lost garden.

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.

Contact:

mort809@yahoo.com

270 791 9985

Relations between Russia and Iran date back to the 16th century. Both nations share a long tradition of cultural, economic, political and social interaction, facilitated by the close neighborhood on the Asian continent and many common interests. The first Persian ambassador to Russia was Mirza Abolhassan Khan Ilchi in the 18th century, during the Qajarid dynasty. There was a lively exchange of commerce and trade, but also of culture on both sides. Nowadays, the news about Russian-Iranian arms deals and fueling the Bushehr nuclear power plant might overshadow the less spectacular information about cultural activities, but they are happening, nevertheless Iran has aligned itself with Russia and China in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), led by Russia and China,



Persian-Iranian culture is several thousand years old, one of the richest heritages in world history, including architecture, calligraphy, literature, music, painting, pottery, metalworking, manufacture of tiles and stonemasonry.

Persian literature inspired such western poets as the German classical author, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. It still continues to inspire many people worldwide today, last but not least, the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, who loves to read the poetry of Omar Khayyam. In 2008, he said in an interview that he admires Iranian literature and history, which is part of the world's history.

"Iran is a world power. Its territory originally stretched from the Middle East to India. Even part of the former Soviet Union was ancient Iranian territory. What I want to say is that the his-

moved to Bukhara, where he lived for the rest of his life. He wrote about 1000 four-line verses. The Persian name for such quatrains is rubaiyat. Omar Khayyam's philosophical outlook on life is expressed beautifully in the following rubaiyat: The mowing finger writes, and having writ, Moves on; nor all thy piety nor wit, Shall lure it back to cancel half a line, Nor all thy tears wash out a word of it.

What has been done, remains done. Therefore it might be wise to think before acting, or in the case of a writer, to think before writing. Omar Khayyam's thoughts about the futility of life and the insecurity of human existence stand out in this rubaiyat:

Into the universe, and why not knowing, Nor whence, like water willy-nilly flowing. And out of it, as wind

CULTURE BUILDS BRIDGES BETWEEN RUSSIA AND IRAN

PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY:

Lisa Karpova, Pravda.Ru



in which Iran has observer status and might join in soon. Russia and Iran trade in agriculture, energy and telecommunications.

Both countries established a joint oil exchange. Gazprom and Lukoil are involved in Iranian oil and gas projects. Other areas of trade are carpets, textiles, chemicals, glass, plastics, plaster and stone products.

Many scholars agree, however, that Iran's prize possession has always been its rich culture which manifests itself in many facets throughout Central Asia. Iranian culture is, for example, those hand-woven Persian carpets, which display a multitude of colors and forms in artistic, creative designs. They are some of the most beautiful rugs, made of the finest silk, a prize possession, handed down from one generation to the next.

tory of our countries and the interaction of our cultures goes much deeper and has much stronger roots than specialists sometimes think. This is the guarantee that we will always find a way of solving any problems that arise, because we understand each other", President Vladimir Putin explained.

At the 24th Moscow International Book Fair in September 2011, a selection of poems by Omar Khayyam was presented in Russian translation. The volume comprised the favorite poems of the former Iranian Foreign Minister, Ali Akbar Velayati. As always, Omar Khayyam's poetry received a warm welcome in Russia.

Omar Khayyam (1048-1131) was a Persian astronomer, mathematician, philosopher and poet. Born in Nishapur, he was educated in Samarkand and later

along the waste, I know not whither, willy-nilly blowing.

"Omar Khayyam is a venerable and honored figure who brings to mind the delicacy and gracefulness of ancient Persian civilization," the Iranian journalist, Kourosh Ziabari, writes in his essay, "Introducing the heritage of Omar Khayyam." Just like the Iranians, the Russians are book people. Reading literature is highly valued and long reading lists are a must at all schools. Thus, it comes as no surprise that literary activities play a leading role in the cultural exchange of both nations.

Recently, the Iranian Majlis' (Parliament) Library gave historical books to the Russian State Library as a gift. Among them were ancient manuscripts and the Holy Koran. They are important for researchers and theology special-

ists, as well as for students of Iranian culture and history. The Russian State Library in Moscow and the Iranian Majlis' Library in Tehran have been working together for over two years and plan to continue their fruitful cooperation.

From the 14th to the 19th of November 2012, a week of literary exchange took place in Iran, dubbed the "Literary Bridge between Russia and Iran" and organized by Tehran's Book City Institute. The "Literary Bridge between Russia and Iran" is part of a five-year plan. In 2013, an Iranian group will visit Moscow in return.

A group of Russian literati and scholars was invited to participate in a series of literary events with visits of the Iranian Academy of Persian Language and Literature, the Faculty of Foreign Languages at the University of Tehran, then onwards to the beautiful city of Shiraz, where the mausoleum of the Persian poet, Hafez, is a tourist attraction.

The group of Russians included Professor Marina Reisner of the Moscow State University, Professors NataliaChalisova and Maxim Rusanov, both from the Russian State University for Humanities. Two Russian writers, novelist IldarAbouzyarov and poet SanjarYanishev, were also invited.

At the Hafez Shiraz Institute for Higher Education, Director Kurosh-KamaliSarvestani spoke about the affinities between Persian and Russian literature. Professor Martina Reisner held a lecture about the influence of the Persian language on the literature of the Middle East and Russia, comparing the Persian poet, Hafez, with the Russian poet, Alexander Pushkin.

Professor NataliaChalisova spoke about the translations of Hafez's poetry into the Russian language. She uttered the opinion that the subject of Hafez's poems was the beauty and elegance of human beings.

The Russian novelist, Ildar-Abouzyarov, delivered a speech about the influence of Persian stories on his own writings. "My father had a box full of Persian stories. He read them for me when I was a child. This made me dream of becoming a writer," the novelist confessed.

Hafez (1315-1390) was a Persian poet born in Shiraz, where his mauso-

leum attracts many visitors from all over the world. His poetry collection, the Diwan, can be found in the homes of many educated people in Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan. They learn his poems by heart, using them as proverbs for every day. The themes of his ghazels are love and faith. They can be interpreted literally, mystically or both:

Last night, from the cypress branch, the nightingale sang, In old Persian tones, the lessons of spiritual stations.

The cypress tree is a symbol of love in Persia, the nightingale's song also evokes the idea of human love, but the "lessons of spiritual stations" suggest a mystical undertone.

Hafez was prominent in his home town Shiraz, where he held the position of court poet. In his memory, a dome-like structure was erected above his grave in 1452 at the order of Babur Ibn-Baysunkur, a Timurid governor. This grave with dome was the center of the Musalla gardens that featured Hafez's poetry.

In 1773, a bigger memorial was constructed, with two rooms built at the east and west end, while the north and south sides remained open. The building split the Musalla gardens into two regions, with the orange grove in the front and the cemetery in the back. The marble grave was engraved by a calligrapher with excerpts from Hafez's poetry.

In the 19th century, however, the grave and gardens deteriorated. The site even remained in ruins for two years, until 1901, when it was restored. In 1931, the orange grove was repaired and the Ministry of Education organized the building of a new mausoleum for Hafez.

The present day structure is elevated one meter above ground level and encircled by five steps. Eight columns, each ten meters tall, support a copper dome in the shape of a dervish's hat. The underside of this dome features an arabesque, colorful mosaic which is well lit at night, presenting a focal point for tourists.

In the Musalla gardens, seven rectangular pools were added. Paths, flower beds and orange trees evoke the idea of paradise. The word "garden" itself stems from the Persian language. Persian gardens were designed as a reflection of paradise on earth. Who could

possibly resist entering paradise in the Musalla gardens of Shiraz, to read the engravings of Hafez's poetry on the poet's tomb?

According to FaramarzAmirian, head of ITTC, the Iranian Tourist Board, Shiraz belongs to the most visited tourist hot spots in the country. Not only Russians, but multitudes of people from around the globe visit Shiraz every year. Iran gives short term tourist visas to 68 nations, so they can profit from nature and cultural sites in Iran.

An international tourist poll states that Iran belongs to the five top countries worldwide, visited for its beautiful nature. It is the 10th country globally on the list for important historic places. FaramarzAmirian attributes Iran's attractiveness for global tourism to its old culture. Iran is famous for being the "cradle of civilization."

The Iranian Tourist Board operates 64 tourist hotels in different regions of the country. Those in Shiraz, Isfahan, Tehran and on the Island Kish receive the highest numbers of international visitors. Furthermore, seniors get discounts on travel packages within Iran.

Iranian literature is not only popular with adults in Russia, but with children, too. Recently, the Russian State Children's Library in Moscow unveiled Iran's "Good Stories for Good Children," written by the Iranian children's writer, MehdiAzarYazdi. This book was jointly printed by Russia's Veche Publishing House and Iran's Amirkabir Publications.

Veche editor-in-chief, Sergei Dmitriev, and Amirkabir director, Ahmad Nesari, Pushkin Library Foundation director, Maria Vedenyapina, and Iranian diplomats attended the ceremony, together with a group of Russian children who enjoyed the reading.

MehdiAzarYadi (1921-2009) wrote stories for children after Persian masterpieces, such as the Gulistan, in eight volumes. They also include stories from the Holy Koran and the life of the Prophet Muhammad. His collection of stories won a UNESCO prize in 1966, and was selected as Iran's book of the year in 1967.

Furthermore, a host of other bi-national festivals have been held in Tehran and Moscow this year. In October 2012,

Iranian artists displayed their works in Moscow during Iranian Art Week, showing calligraphy, films, handicrafts, paintings and photos.

The opening event was a public screening of “Days of Life” by the Iranian film director, ParvizTadi. The Russian Culture Minister, Vladimir Medinsky, gave a report about the growing cultural relations between Tehran and Moscow in recent years.

During the last week of November 2012, an Iranian theater group played “Hey Macbeth, only the first dog knows why it is barking,” at the Moscow Nights Festival. This musical comedy, directed by EbrahimPoshtkouhi, blended in the traditional zar dance ritual of Iran’s southern Bushehr Province with William Shakespeare’s tragedy, Macbeth.

Zar rituals originally stem from East Africa, supposedly they began in Sudan, but are popular in the South of Iran as well, especially in the Province of Bushehr, which borders on the Persian Gulf. Zar is an old religious, spiritual custom, involving the possession of an individual by a spirit.

Zar rituals are usually accompanied by percussion instruments. Here, in this play, it was the Persian dammam. Loud and rich rhythm is the hallmark of zar music. The drummers produce the rhythm with great mastery, so the dancers will fall into a trance.

“Our play is rooted in the legends and rituals of southern Iran. I hope I can represent an interesting aspect of Iranian theater,” the company’s director pointed out. The play was accompanied by a blend of African, Indian and southern Iranian music, composed by Reza Abbaspour. Bilateral ties are further boosted by Iranian broadcasting in Russia. In November 2012, the Russian satellite Express-aM22 began broadcasting a package of Iranian TV and radio channels on the territory of the Russian Federation and CIS.

The satellite, owned by the federal state enterprise, Russian Satellite Communications, is now carrying eight Iranian TV channels and eleven Iranian radio stations. The main idea behind broadcasting this package is to provide the Russian audience with more information about Iranian achievements in the fields of culture and research.■

“Embracing Our Differences” Exhibit



In Spite of Every Belief, Next to Each Other
by Mohammad Afshar, Isfahan, Iran

than one million visitors.

The exhibition is an international outdoor art exhibition intended to demonstrate in a positive way that diversity enriches today lives.

The Embracing Our Differences project promotes anti-bias education throughout our community and works to teach everyone the importance of being an “up-stander”, not “by-stander.” The mission of Embracing Our Differences is to use the arts as a catalyst for creating awareness and promoting, throughout our community, the value of diversity, the benefits of inclusion and the significance of the active rejection of hatred

Hatred, bullying and discrimination are all too common in southwest Florida. Southern Poverty 2011 Florida ranked first in the number of hate groups within the state. Embracing Our Differences is an international project to create a vibrant safe and inclusive community that is for all.

The centering Our Differences project is an international project featuring 39 billboards (12.5 feet by 16 feet) created by local, national and international artists, writers and students. The display reflects the artists’ interpretations of the theme “enriching lives through diversity.”

As Embracing Our Differences celebrates its 10th anniversary, our phenomenal growth continues. Beginning next spring, the annual exhibit will not only be on display in Island Park on Sarasota’s bay front but also in Anthony T. Rossi Waterfront Park in downtown Bradenton as well as North Port.

2012 was a very exciting year with Embracing Our Differences hosting 249,000 visitors to Island Park bringing total attendance, since 2004, to more than 1,350,000. Last year’s exhibit featured art and quotations selected from 4,502 submissions representing 53 countries and 40 states including such distant lands as China, Greece, India, Israel, Japan, Philippines, Romania, and Thailand. More than 65% of the submissions were made by students from 127 schools in 14 countries.

Graphic designs by three Iranian artists Mohammad Afshar, Maedeh Mosawerzadeh and Mona Farsi will go on display at Embracing Our Differences, an outdoor art exhibition which will be held in Sarasota, Florida from March 31 to May 28, 2013.

The Island Park of Sarasota will host Embracing Our Differences, which will put on show 41 billboard-size graphic designs. Since 2004, “Embracing Our Differences” has been viewed by more



Making a Beautiful World
by Maedeh Mosawerzadeh, 17 years old,
12th Grade, Fine Arts School of Tehran,
Tehran, Iran, Teacher: Elaheh Moghaddami

ing and discrimina-

mon occurrences in According to the Law Center, in second in the number of active hate state. The Embracing project is working community that is for all.

piece of the Embracing Our Differences project outdoor art exhibit board size images feet) created by local,

The display reflects the artists’ interpretations of the theme “enriching lives through diversity.”



Embracing Our Differences by Mona Farsi Esfahan, Iran

REVIEWS

IRANIAN-RUSSIAN ENCOUNTERS EMPIRES AND REVOLUTIONS SINCE 1800
 edited by **Stephanie Cronin**

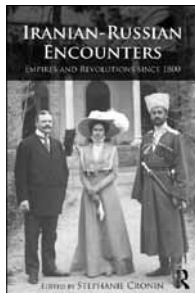
(Iranian Studies Series, Routledge 2012)

This important book has been made possible as a result of the efforts of Soudavar Memorial Foundation and the Iran Heritage. The book has been edited by Professor Stephanie Cronin.

Over the past two hundred years, encounters between Iran and Russia have been both rich and complex. This book explores the myriad dimensions of the Iranian-Russian encounter during a dramatic period, which saw both Iran and Russia subject to revolutionary upheavals and transformed from multinational dynastic empires typical of the nineteenth century to modernizing, authoritarian states typical of the twentieth.

The collection provides a fresh perspective on traditional preoccupations of international relations: wars and diplomacy, the hostility of opposing nationalisms, the Russian imperial menace in the nineteenth century and the Soviet threat in the twentieth. Going beyond the traditional, this book examines subaltern as well as elite relations and combines a cultural, social and intellectual dimension with the political and diplomatic. In doing so the book seeks to construct a new discourse, which contests the notion of an implacable enmity between Iran and Russia.

Bringing together leading scholars in the field, this book demonstrates extensive use of family archives, Iranian, Russian and Caucasian travelogues and memoirs, and newly available archives in both Iran and the countries of the former Soviet Union. Providing essential background to current international tensions, this book will be of particular use to students and scholars with an interest in the Middle East and Russia.



IMAGES OF AMERICA IRANIANS IN CHICAGOLAND

by **Hamid Akbari and Azar Khounani**
 Arcadia 2005

In 1893, Haj Mirza Mohammad Ali Moen-Ol Saltaneh journeyed to Chicago from Iran to visit the World Columbian Exposition. According to his memoirs, the Exposition's Ferris Wheel was one of the first things he saw. He visited the Persian Palace, Iran's exhibit at the Exposition, where he met Iranian workers and several French dancers posing as Persian women. These Iranians were likely the earliest



group of Iranians who came to Chicago. They little imagined that by 2004, at least 10,000 Iranians would live in the city. Authors Hamid Akbari and Azar Khounani present a newly assembled collection of Persian Palace photographs coupled with Moen-Ol Saltaneh's observations of Chicago.

What a great idea to do this book. In fact it should be the mission of all Iranians to do this in all the major cities in the United States or by state. Who would have known the imprint the Persian community had on Chicago. Well done and definitely worth the read and purchase.

**BOBAK FERDOWSI,
 THE GUEST OF THE FIRST LADY
 AT THE STATE OF UNION**



How will "Mohawk Guy" wear his hair?

That is the question the followers of Boback Ferdowsi had the night before the State of the Union Address.

Mr. Ferdowsi, who is with Jet Propulsion Laboratories, (the company responsible for the Mars Rover mission) with his team successfully landed the Rover on Mars this past summer. He stood out during the event because he donned a mohawk. This caught the eye of the President, who singled Mr. Ferdowsi out, for the hair do and also for his achievement.

When the phone call came in asking him to be a guest of the First Lady, at the State of the Union Address in January, he had no second thoughts, it was a decisive YES. He was picked not only for his accomplishment with the Rover mission but also because of his mentoring and volunteering at robotic competitions.

As to the questions asked above, "how will he wear his hair?" he decided on a perfectly groomed mohawk, accented by the words USA on one side and Mars on the other. The barber who designed the MOHAWK remains unknown. Perhaps it was Mr. Ferdowsi himself. In the end this was an invite that certainly made all of us PROUD.

ADVERTISE YOUR BUSINESS HERE

(973) 471-4283

WWW.PERSIAN-HERITAGE.COM

ISLAMIC ART

the last part

Aryan M. Divan

If narration is the art of weaving convincing connections between disparate events and characters, the body is the center of the narrative strategies established in the visual arts, as the site of sensorial experience that permits the construction and reconstruction of meanings in these works. (Reiman 2001, p.53)

This misnomer category of 'Islamic art' as stated is relatively new, which reminds me of the book *The Invention of Tradition* edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983) in which traditions in Britain are explored only to discover their relative newness and invention.

"Invented tradition" is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tactically accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, the normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past." (p.1)

I found that this quote works well when referring to calling something 'Islamic art' when dealing with non-religious art (secular) and giving it the same category as religious art.

The integrity of states was seen as an antidote to empire building, to the hegemonic reach across the oceans and continents to recover lost splendors of the ancient world in another, more technologically advanced, form. (Niezen 2003, p.131)

Bringing the issue of the usage and term 'Islamic art' to an end, there is no clear hegemony nor homogeneity in the Muslim world. Therefore it develops a problematic issue with defining art of different periods that stem from Iran, Turkey, India, Central Asia and Arab countries as 'Islamic art' that has its own set rules and a hegemonic structure to how it is appropriated and interpreted.

The issue of an official culture shared by people of various faiths and ethnicity who live in lands controlled by Muslims or under Muslim leadership, being one be-

cause of their shared geography, language, ethnicity, and so on, brings the delusion and assumption that because they were subject to Muslims politically and economically, that there is an accretion that their art must also represent Islam.

The West's fascination with the Middle East, stories of romance and poetry of the region as well as philosophy and theologians has often been wrongfully categorised as Arabic in origin. This is no different for the Persian words entering Europe via the Ottoman empire or into English from India. This mislabelling and incorrect categorisation seems out of place. Nor is there a conscious move to correct this mislabelling of definitions by Muslims, Arabs etc. Certainly in the United Kingdom there has been even a passive criticism of this move. One assumes that ethnic identification and religious identification are sometimes similar and varied with multidimensionality to how one identifies with it.

Religious identification is as effective as committing to an identity that one identifies with regardless of actual level of religious belief, culture or ethnicity. One can be secular, orthodox or non-religious and still be identified to a group such as Muslim, or can feel connected to other Muslims or the history of Islam. So some Muslims use this label to signify a heritage and community association and affiliation to an idea of hegemony rather than that of religious belief; for example a Shia or Sunni would unite though they differ in religious doctrine.

...the ordered disposition of a series of works that capture different aspects of the experience of memory, each complementing the anguish produced by the other. The conceptual character of maps, mapping as an impulse to order and control rather than objective description... (Reiman 2001, p.59)

The fictional forms of history, in the sense that it highlights as underlining of subjecting in its narrative constructing forcing subtly the public and art work itself an invented cultural mythology. Amongst this is the cultural, racial continuity in Islam and Muslim countries, in essence homogenising an idea of cultural and ethnic purity, particularly in the Middle East represented by articulating the historiographical treatment of art in the Muslim world. (Reiman 2001)

Thus the marginalisation of the 'other' in the category and definition of 'Islamic art' becomes bias and leaves out

another part of the population. As Reiman's statement explains, there is an order in society and works produced within that society capture aspects of different experiences one has within that society. The geographical differences, ethnic groups, history, art work and literary works are left out with a term like "Islamic art" ignoring the diversity of the region and multitude societies within it. Their unique histories are alienated, downplayed and ignored thus and their individuality assimilated into an imagined collective. Particularly when the essence of anthropological theory does not validate an all encompassing term like 'Islamic art' due to the fact that the very core of anthropology is about definitions and classifications, as well as in pointing out the differences and commonality between cultures. While anthropology generates and perpetuates stereotypes, it also seems that by inventing and using a term like 'Islamic art' we are also inventing false constructs that have implications on creating an imagined perception on history and society. ■

WORK CITED

1. Anderson, Benedict 1983. *Imagined communities*. 2006 revised edition. London: Verso.
2. Baumann, Gerd. 1999. *The Multicultural Riddle: Rethinking national, Ethnic, and Religious Identities*. London: Routledge.
3. Dodds, D. Jerrilyn. 2007. *Blackwell Anthologies in Art History: Late Antique and Medieval Art of the Mediterranean World*. edited by Eva R. Hoffman. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
4. Efraim Karsh, February 27, 2010. *The New York Times* <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/28/opinion/28karsh.html>.
5. Hobsbawm Eric, and Terence Ranger 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge: Press Syndicate.
6. Garcia Canciani, Néstor. 1995. *Hybrid Cultures. Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
7. Lindholm, Charles. 2008. *Culture and Authenticity*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
8. Niezen, Ronald. 2003. *The Origins of Indigenism: Human rights and politics of Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
9. Ramirez, Mari Carmen. 1996. 'Brokered Identities'. In: Greenberg, Reesa, Bruce W. Ferguson, and Sandy Nairne (eds), *Thinking about Exhibitions*. London: Routledge. p.21-38.
10. Rectanus, Mark W. 2002. *Culture incorporated: Museums, Artists, and Corporate Sponsorship*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
11. Rectanus, Mark W. 2007. 'Globalization: Incorporating the Museum'. In: Sharon Macdonald (ed.), *A companion to museum studies*. London: Wiley-Blackwell. p.382-397.
12. Reiman, Karen Cordero. 2001. *The Effects of the Nation: Mexican Art in an Age of Globalization*. Edited by Carl Good and John V. Waldron. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. p.53-72.
13. Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom. 2003. "The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the study of unwieldy field". *Art Bulletin*. March. Volume LXXXV number. 1.
14. Tarlo, Emma. 2010. *Visibly Muslim: Fashion, Politics, Faith*. Oxford: Berg.

Bilingual Birdies

Sing Praises of Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses
At LaGuardia Community College

Long Island City, NY—December 10, 2012--The saying that nice guys finish last doesn't always prove true. In fact, for Sarah Farzam, founder and owner of Bilingual Birdies in Manhattan, this is exactly how she started a successful business teaching children foreign languages through live music: by being nice to people; through hard work, determination and dedication; and with help from Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses at LaGuardia Community College.

A California native and former Brooklyn high school global studies teacher, Ms. Farzam was spending a lot of time with her young nieces, taking them to the park and to a mommy and me music class in the city.

Though she noted the class was "cute and entertaining," she felt it lacked a more profound educational element. And then this multi-language speaker got an idea: what if she combined music and foreign language to teach children under five not only about other languages but perhaps more importantly about cultural awareness, compassion and curiosity?

Ms. Farzam, who is half Mexican and half Iranian, whose religion is Judaism, and who speaks English, Spanish, Farsi and Hebrew, knows a bit about cross-cultural awareness. "My

goal for my business is really the tolerance piece," she said. "Instead of rejecting differences, we can teach kids to embrace them. This is the foundation of what we do at Bilingual Birdies."

Starting out five years ago by distributing flyers in the park, cold calling and visiting educational and children's organizations door to door, Ms. Farzam's company, which teaches Spanish, French, Hebrew and Mandarin, is now a thriving New York City business.

Ms. Farzam said, "I built this business by being nice to people and making connections one at a time." And it's gotten her a long way. Today, she holds large contracts with the New York Public Library to provide classes in eight locations, and with Head Start, serving 1,700 children at 40 locations in the Lower East Side in Manhattan, all these classes being offered to families free of charge. She has also seen a more than 100% increase in sales and has hired 12 employees in addition to her original eight since July of last year.

So, what helped Ms. Farzam propel her business from the earlier, leaner years to this level of success? Through her affiliation with non-profit Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship's (NFTE) program for entrepreneurs in their 20s, she learned of



10,000 Small Businesses at LaGuardia Community College, applied and was accepted into the program in July 2011. The initiative helps small businesses across the U.S. grow and create jobs through greater access to business education, financial capital, and business support services.

"I learned so much in the program," said Ms. Farzam. For one thing, she explained, the negotiations clinic was the most important takeaway.

"I had the idea that to be a good negotiator you had to be masculine and aggressive. There were no female role models," she said. "My own hang-ups hindered me going into sales meetings. But I was so impressed and inspired by our teacher, who is a professor at Wharton School of Business and a successful businesswoman. I learned how to negotiate and not shortchange myself."

She also pointed out the operations and strategy clinic, which she said taught her how to implement, evaluate and measure operational practices.

One very important aspect of the program that took her by surprise was the peer-to-peer education. "I got invaluable information from business owners whose businesses have nothing to do with early education or what I do at all," she said. "The case studies were very helpful."

And it was refreshing to hear everybody else's drama. It was like group therapy for your business." Noting that she learned much from the experiences her cohorts' shared, she said, "I have a process now for dealing with problems and evaluating them."

A "people person," Ms. Farzam also finds it easy to network with her former classmates. Referrals and personal phone calls made on her behalf helped get Bilingual Birdies into some schools she had not had luck with before. "Sometimes, a personal connection is what it takes," she said.

Lastly, the culminating growth plan (a 10,000 Small Businesses requirement) that encompassed everything she had learned, turned out to be the tool she used to help her win NFTE's inaugural Steve Mariotti Venture Award.

The award, which was given in honor of NFTE's 25th anniversary, came along with a \$25,000 prize to be used as venture capital for a NFTE graduate with a fully operating businesses. From a three-minute video pitch that was based on her growth plan, Ms. Farzam was elected by a panel of judges in combination with a live action vote by the 400-seat audience, which consisted of members of NFTE as well as that of the business community.

"When things like this happen, it proves you're on the right path. It's meant to be," said Ms. Farzam, who is already looking ahead to the next phase of developing her business. While she plans to use some of the prize money for her company's web site and other marketing expenses, she will apply the rest to continuing to expand her class offerings and especially to elaborate the teacher training she does for her current staff in order to market it to other educational institutions. In the future, she said she will also offer an ESL curriculum, based on the Bilingual Birdies curriculum, for educators abroad through partnerships with non-profit organizations.

These are both areas she decided to delve into, thanks to guidance and advice from 10,000 Small Businesses. ■

Achaemenid Engineers Knew the Value of "PI"



Achaemenian engineers had been using pi number in geometry 2500 years ago. They used this mathematical concept in building the conical stone structures and columns in Persepolis. The Achaemenian king Darius the Great (550-486 BCE) founded Persepolis, near Shiraz in Fars province circa 521 BCE. By 486 BCE much of the major structures of Persepolis such as palaces, residences, water canals, etc. had been completed, but in practice continuing work at the site appears to have continued well into the arrival of Alexander in the 330s BCE.

Pi representing the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter is one of the most important discoveries in geometry. Mathematicians today still do not know the exact date when this number was first used. Many people believe that the Egyptians have been the discoverers of this number, and some consider the Greek as its discoverer. But new studies show that the Achaemenians were also familiar with this concept.

Abdol-Aziz Shah-Karami, a geophysics expert responsible for studying the engineering of Persepolis structure, told CHN (Cultural Heritage News).

"New research on Persepolis structures and especially its columns and conical shapes show that the Achaemenians 2500 years ago used the assistance of mathematicians who had solved the mystery of pi for building conical shapes... The precision in building the Persepolis circular columns shows that these mathematicians had calculated pi to several decimal places. The Achaemenian engineers could determine the exact conic section of each circular column, and in order to do this, they had to calculate pi to several decimal places. This helped them calculate the height of columns and the pressure on them, and distribute the tension on the conic section of each column"

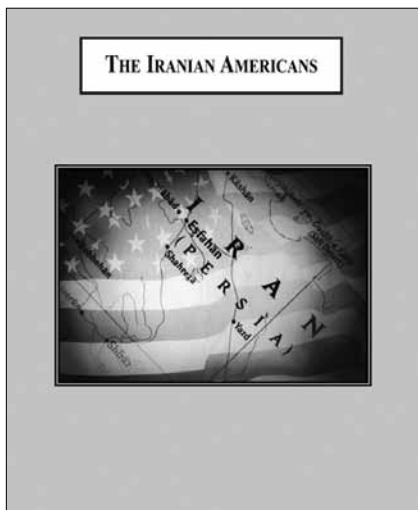
According to historical records, the first person to be able to exactly calculate pi was the Muslim scientist, Ghiyasuddin Mohammad Kashani. He computed pi to several decimal places, and scientists like Pascal followed him with more precise calculations. Referring to conic sections in different parts of Persepolis, Shah-karami said it would have been impossible to measure the area and circumference of these circular and oval structures without knowing pi.

IRANIAN AMERICANS

A Popular Social History of a New American Ethnic Group

Maboud Ansari

(2013 The Edwin Mellen Press)



First of all I want to thank the author for not hyphenating Iranian Americans. As soon as I read the title I believed it was going to be a worthwhile read. I was not disappointed! It is filled with a tremendous amount of information that would take hours, months, and years to compile. It is now at my fingertips. My only complaint would be a more thorough index because the information within is so valuable.

If one did not know the makeup of an Iranian American prior to reading this book, they will after reading this book. The author Maboud Ansari has painstakingly researched the progress of the Iranian as they made new homes in the United States. Interestingly enough not many outside of the community were aware that Iranians were Iranians because of their unique and deliberate intent and success to blend into their environments. Yet they retained their community among themselves through clubs and social activities.

In reading this book the reader will understand that the Iranian immigrant group, much like others, of course moved to areas, where other Iranians had moved for comfort and familiarity. Unlike others however, their children seemed to become Americanized at faster rate than other communities. According to the book how they socialized and assimilated into their new home was different for each wave of immigrants. If they came prior

to the Revolution it seemed that it was an easy path. Of course after the hostage taking and from hence forward the path has become filled with obstacles. They have been identified as Iranian and such identification carries different agendas.

The first 30 years following the revolution seems to have possessed the most hardships in every avenue professional, personal and social. Today, however, since the younger generations, second generations are confident in who they are, where they came from and where they expect to be in the future, the pendulum is moving back to normalcy and as it swings back it is taking out obstacles.

As he breaks down the topics into sections for example the arts, literature, sports, entertainment etc. you cannot help to recognize that their achievements grow with every year they live in the States. Therefore it is no longer a surprise to recognize a Persian last name in every walk of life. It would be interesting to see Dr. Ansari put this into a graph. You cannot help but burst with pride as you read the amount of accomplishments the Iranian/Persian American has made in such a short period of time.

While one may not always agree with the author's position it is obvious that his research is precise and factual. He has painstakingly separated his research into chapters. Each one is a history book about Iranian American history. Breaking Clearly at the conclusion of the read you understand that the Iranian American is a unique and honorable individual proud in their heritage. With each generation it will be difficult to hold onto all of their culture. This is because unlike other immigrants the educational and professional level of Iranian immigrants in America naturally assimilates them today into mainstream society. This is unlike those of other immigrant groups whose educational levels remain at high school and their language skills remain poor. Whether this is a plus or minus depends on the family and the individual. This could be yet another book and research for the author. One tool for certain to keep their culture and proud history as a constant is this book. A true handbook into the life of the Iranian American.

HOPE

By Majid Naficy

Emily Dickinson calls
"hope" a bird
Who has perched in her soul
And without asking for seeds
Sings incessantly.

I saw it as a cricket
Who appeared
in my childhood dreams,
Grew in my adolescent poems
And disappeared
in the hubbub of a revolution.

Today I am left alone in exile
And yet, when I go to the balcony
To water
the only flower in my house,
I hear the sound of a cricket
Who is calling me
From behind my neighbor's bamboos.



Hurricane Sandy

Chris D. Aechtner

High flying waves
Unprecedented size
Rocking the Atlantic
Raging the East coast
Intimidating ;
Creating a day inside;
A break from the grind
Nature grounds us, tells us,
Everyone unwind
Surge of power
Anything but average
No one will stand alone
Down, but not undone
Yes we will survive this storm

ADVERTISE YOUR BUSINESS HERE

(973) 471-4283

www.persian-heritage.com

Liberation of Tabriz from Ottoman Turks by Shah Abbas I

The Ottoman Turks had defeated the Iranian army of Shah Ismail I (r. 1502-1524) at the Battle of Chaldiran on August 23, 1514. In the disastrous aftermath of the ensuing Ottoman-Safavid wars, much of Iran's Azerbaijan province (including its provincial capital Tabriz), Armenia (known as the Irvan Khanate in Medieval Iranian sources) and the Caucasus fell under the occupation of the Ottoman Turks.

The Ottoman Turks also occupied many of the Caucasian Khanates such as Irvan Khanate (modern Republic of Armenia) as well as much of those Caucasian territories (i.e. Shamakhi, Nakhchevan, etc.) known as the Republic of Azerbaijan since May 1918 (i.e. Shamakhi, Nakhchevan, etc.).

Despite their status as the world military superpower of the day, their deployment of heavy firepower (muskets and cannon) as well as larger numbers of troops, the Ottoman Turks failed to destroy the Iranian army. This was due to important military reforms (especially in the creation and integration of firearms units within the Iranian army) as well as a revived Iranian martial arts tradition (discussed further below). Important military reforms which had begun at the time of Shah Tahmasp I (r. 1524-1576) reached their apogee at the time of Shah Abbas I (r. 1587-1629), especially in the latter's success in fully integrating firearms into the Safavid battle order. The latter task was assisted by the English brothers, Anthony and Robert Sherley.

Vincenzo D'Alessandri a European visitor to Iran arriving in 1571, reported that:



"Persians are tall and strong ... commonly use swords, lances and guns on the battlefield ... Persian Musketeers use their muskets so adeptly... they will draw the sword at times of necessity ... muskets are slung to the back as to not interfere with the usage of bows and swords ... their horses are very well trained and they [the Iranians] have no need to import horses ... " [As cited in Amid, M. (1970). *Safanameye Venezian dar Iran* [The Travelogues of the Venetians in Persia].

Despite fielding smaller numbers of troops, the reformed Safavid armies of Shah Abbas I defeated the Ottoman Turks and liberated Tabriz from Turkish occupation on October 21, 1603 (after 20 days of fighting).

Note that the sources cited in this article thus far are clear that the Safavids are Iranians: they are consistently referred to as "Persians" in reference to their historical and cultural links to the wider Iranian milieu. Therefore, the fact that many of the Iranian Azarbaijanis had become Turcophone was simply another facet of their Iranian identity.

Iranians are not limited to Persian-speakers only, as Iranian culture is multi-faceted and characterized by diversity

and synthesis within an Iranian cultural framework.

Note the observations of a European traveler to Iran named Antonio Teneiro in 1525 and his descriptions of the inhabitants of the city of Tahriz:

"This city [Tabriz] is inhabited by Persians and some Turkomans, white people, and beautiful of face and person" [Ronald Bishop Smith (1970). The

first age of the Portuguese embassies, navigations and peregrinations in Persia (1507-1524). It should be noted that the Turkoman tribes cited above were religious followers of the Safavid dynasty (themselves originally of the Iranian pedigree but progressively Turkicized linguistically, hence of the Persianate civilization realm). These had migrated from the Anatolian regions and became the military backbone of the early Safavid dynasty. It was these same Turkomans who had stood up with Shah Ismail against the Ottoman-Turks in the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514.

It is clear that the Ottoman Turks had intended to hold Tabriz and all of Azarbaijan under permanent occupation. In a letter written by Shah Abbas to Jalal e Din Mohmmad Akbar (the powerful emperor of India and contemporary of Shah Abbas, whom the Iranian king always addressed as father) after the liberation of Tabriz, he had noted that the Ottomans in Tabriz had:

"... 200 cannon, 5000 musketeers ... supplies lasting for ten years and much equipment for the holding of fortresses ..." [Falsafi, N. (1965). *Zendeganiye Shah Abbas Avval* (The Life and Times of Shah Abbas the First).

**Advertise
Your
Business
or
Services
in**

Persian
Heritage

CALL

(973)

471-4283

Fax:

973 471 8534

persian-heritage.com

An Interview with

Susan Pourfar

Actress

Persian Heritage



Susan it gives me great pleasure to interview you for Persian heritage readers. I have been following your career for years and much to my surprise one night while watching television I saw your face on one of the hottest new television series: Scandal. But I do not want to talk about that just yet.

Let's start at the beginning of your life with some background.

I want to thank you for this opportunity. My Persian heritage is very important to me. My father as you know is Iranian from Iran, but my late mom's heritage was probably Russian or Austrian-Hungarian. She grew up in Brooklyn and that is where she and my dad met.

Any siblings?

Yes a wonderful brother!

When did you actually decide you wanted to be in the performing arts?

I think at an earlier age than I can even remember.

Tell us about your journey to stardom.

Well let me first say I am far away from being considered a star, but I am grateful to be a working actress and it is a privilege to be part of the acting community. I believe at the age of nine is when I started to actually perform and study theater. I studied it in school and over the summers. When I entered college it was my declared major.

How did your parents handle this career choice?

This is a very interesting question! My brother and I were very lucky. We had parents who would literally go to the ends of the earth to support us in our interests. (On a side note, my brother was very interested in the visual arts and I in the performing arts) It was the norm for my parents to get into a car and drive me hours to see a performance of a play that I wanted to see, after reading a review. But as supportive as they were in our interests growing up, when it came to a career things were different. You see my dad did not come from a family that would have ever considered acting as a career. It took some convincing. I can still remember, however, the performance that changed his mind about my career choice. I was in a play called PROOF in St. Louis, Missouri. My dad came to see me in that production and I believe something clicked for him; after that he realized that this was going to be my career and I think he became more supportive about that decision.

Your mother passed away she was an extraordinary woman, even more Persian than some Persians by birth. Would she have been happy about your direction?

You are right my mom was extraordinary and I know that she would be proud of both mine and my brother's achievements.

When she would take me to a show I would save the Playbill from it. Well the box became quite big, and quite heavy, and I was moving around quite a bit; at one move I finally realized that I had to get rid of it. I was sad about that because it was filled with such wonderful memories of time we spent together. But I also realized that her memory would live on forever in my heart and I didn't need to carry the actual physical reminders of it.

One thing that I am sure my brother and father would concur with is that when she loved you she would learn everything she could about your interests in order to show full support. Perhaps that is why she was more Persian than some Persians.

That is a beautiful memorial about her. When did you become a professional actor?

My first equity job, hmmm I was probably in my mid twenties, which is a bit later than many people start working professionally. But the "formative years" or the years leading up to an Equity performance were a learning experience, one that helps you evolve as a performer. You learn about the highs and lows and what it is to work hard. In acting you have to wait for

the right role. It is not just about talent; it is about finding the role that is a match for you.

Does an agent help?

Oh yes; a good agent is a great asset to you.

You have moved on from theater to television, how did that happen?

I haven't moved on! I still love theater and my first opportunities were in theater in New York. Having said that I always wanted to work in all mediums; Working as an actor on television is an entirely different experience – and one I was eager to learn about. It just took some time to bridge the gap between theater and television. For instance, when you are selected to play a role in the theater you know your character's entire story, you are given a full script, so you have the whole arc of your character in your mind. In a television series, however, you are only given one episode at a time; sometimes you do not see the scripts to follow until a few days before you shoot. The character you play can change from one script to the next.

As long as we are talking about television performances let's talk about your most recent job, as an assassin in ABC's Scandal. Can you talk about your character?

Confidentiality wins out here for sure, but I will tell you that the cast and show are fabulous. I am so happy to be part of the guest cast.

You mentioned the word "guest" on the show can you explain this?

The best way to explain it is through a metaphor. I meet you, and you are having a dinner party and I am invited as a guest. I come and while there I meet your other friends who come to your house for dinner every week, we would in the acting business call them the "regular cast." They are the ones that are on the set week after week. I on the other hand am invited only when my character is part of the episode. It may not be every week, hence "the guest appearance."

I think I understand. In other words in a television series the actors do not know how the story will unfold when the series begins.

Precisely. It is of course to prevent any leaks in the story line and potentially ruin surprises for the viewers. Getting back to Scandal for a second: the writers, producers and acting ensemble are extremely talented.

How did you audition for the part on Scandal?

In a television series if you are , as I mentioned earlier, you are given a scene and often you are given a brief character description. You come up with your own take on the material and then you "read" (audition) for a very small group made up of the casting director, director and producers. It is your opportunity to develop the character, as you personally relate to it, and share

with the writers what you as an individual actor will bring to that character. Then they make their choice!

It is far more extensive than I ever knew. What is in the future for Susan Pourfar, more television, movie theater?

My goal is to do it all and all in the same year. It would be amazing to be on television the same year you are in a movie or on Broadway. I want to continue to work all venues because the more you work the more comfortable or confident you become ... and often, the more comfortable you become in any medium, the more of yourself you share, the better your performance will be.

Is being on Broadway more important than being in a movie?

No not really it is again about what character is the best fit for you and your ability to develop and make your character real and believable to the audience.

I know the name Susan Pourfar will be a household name in the future. Is there anything else you would like to say to our readers?

Yes there is, I want to say how proud I am of my Persian roots as well as the roots of my mother. If you look at my wrist you can see a bracelet that I got from the Persian bazaar when I visited Iran as a kid; I never take it off. It is like a reminder to me!

Thank you Susie.

Thank you for your support and this wonderful opportunity.

LOVE

A poem by: Nicholas Gordon

*Although we have to be apart,
We'll always be together,
Close enough in mind and heart
To manage any weather.*

*Reality is often bleak,
But love remains inside
A glass house on a mountain peak,
The wintry world beside.*

*Love can build its own four walls
And heat its own small room.
Through icy winds and blinding squalls,
Love can be in bloom.*

*Though continents drift far downstream
And mountains disappear,
And life dissolve into a dream,
Our love will still be here,
You'll turn, and I'll be here.*

Sa'adi

Translated by Davood Rahni

The following is an English translations of the famous original poem by the 13th century poet Sa'adi, on Camaraderie and Peer Influence in Life!

*Once upon a time, I was serendipitously bestowed with a most fragrant crimson flower.
From a beloved plutonic companion in a Persian garden,
When I asked her whether she was of paradise musk or jasmine essence
by which her heavenly aroma and the natural beauty had intoxicated me,
She humbly whispered, "I was also once a negligible mud-pie in the universe then,
I fortuitously hang out with a divine flower for a while,
It's that flower's perfect state of being which has eternally elevated my stature,
Otherwise, I am still in essence the same mud-pie as before.*

Here it is-the original phonetic Persian version of the poet:

Goli Khosh Booy Dar Hammam Roozi,
Resid Az Dzste Mahboobi Be Dastam,
Be Oou Goftam Ke Moshki Ya Abiri,
Ke Az Booye Delavuze To Matam,
Begofta Man Geli Nachiz Boodam,
Valikan Moddati Ba Gol Neshastam,
Kamale Hamneshin Dar Man Asar Kard,
Vagarna Man Hman Khakam Ke Hastam.

As inscribed on the arch entrance of the UN Headquarter in Geneva, perhaps no one has ever articulated the true essence of humanity as Sa'adi, the 13th century Persian Poet:

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

WASHINGTON REPORT

On Middle East Affairs

28 Years of Telling the Truth



P.O. Box 53063

Washington, DC 20009-9063

Telephone: In Washington, DC:

(202) 939-6050

OR

(800) 368-5788 (ext. 1)

Fax (202) 265-4574

e-mail: circulation@wrmea.com

WEBSITE: WWW.WRMEA.ORG

SUBSCRIPTIONS

	1 year	2 years	3 years
U.S	\$29	\$55	\$75
Canada	\$35	\$65	\$85
Overseas	\$70	\$125	\$185
Digital	\$29	\$55	\$75

(U.S. Funds only, please)

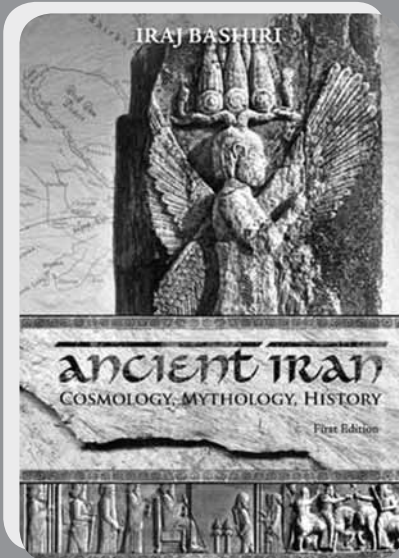
ANCIENT IRAN: COSMOLOGY, MYTHOLOGY, HISTORY

By: Dr. Iraj Bashiri

COGNELLA PUBLISHERS, INC.

ISBN: 978-160927521-1, PAPERBACK, 186 PAGES

© 2012



Ancient Iran: Cosmology, Mythology, History presents Iran's pre-Islamic history within the context of both its complex cosmology and rich mythology. The book uses the concept of *farr* to show how authority, finding guidance in the cosmic realm, organized the lives of Iran's hero-saints in the mythic realm. It also discusses how historical monarchs organized their hierarchical societies according to the dictates of *Ahura Mazda*.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part examines cosmology, concentrating on *Ahura Mazda* and the *Ahuric* order that emanates from him. The next section addresses mythology and describes how the rulership of hero-saints promoted the *farr*, culminating in the unique creed of Zoroaster. The final section tells the history of pre-Islamic Iran. It begins with a study of life on the plateau, moves on to the stages of empire and concludes with the rule of the Parthians and Sassanids.

Additionally, through a new interpretation of Firdowsi's *Shahname*, the volume shows how the prophet Zoroaster reorganized Mazdian cosmology to fit the ethical, philosophical, and sociological dynamics of Achaemenid and Sassanid Iran.

www.cognella.com

800.200.3908

Iraj Bashiri received his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. He is a Professor of History at the University of Minnesota, where he teaches Ancient Iran among other courses. His published works include:

The Ishraqi Philosophy of Jalal al-Din Rumi

The Fiction of Sadeq Hedayat

Prominent Tajik Figures of the Twentieth Century

Samanids and the Revival of the Civilization of Iranian Peoples.



TOO MUCH Is Never Enough: MAKING Ghelye Mahi

Redefining “leftovers,” “hot,” and “cold,” and more lessons from the Iranian kitchen.

Every time we had people over for dinner, my husband would say to me, “Tori, we didn’t make enough food.” “How can that be?” I’d ask. “There are leftovers.” It wasn’t until we moved to Iran in 2003 for a four-year stay that I understood what he meant. A chicken leg or two is not leftovers. It’s *ta’rof*—good manners. It’s what the guests leave behind so you won’t think you served them insufficiently. “Enough food” means that another party can be fed with what is left over at the end of the evening.

The first time we were invited out in Iran, we were served omelets, fish, whole roasted chicken, yogurt and cucumbers, yogurt and spinach, tomato, cucumber, and onion salad, salad with iceberg lettuce and Thousand Island dressing, spring chicken kebabs, and chopped lamb kebabs. All of this was brought to the table just before midnight. Kamran whispered, “Do they think we’re cows?”

I tell you this so you won’t balk at the amount of food my friend Zohreh Sanaseri (pictured) prepared for our dinner of *ghelye (ghalieh) mahi*—a stew of fish, herbs, and tamarind paste. She invited three others to share the stew with us, but made enough for at least ten people.

In four years of living in Iran, I never once encountered *ghelye mahi*. In fact, it wasn’t until a night out at a Persian restaurant in Amsterdam that I ate it for the first time. The flavor was surprising: sharp, sour, sweet, and fishy all at once. It was made with many of the ingredients found in other stews I’d eaten in Iran, but tasted nothing like them. I searched for recipes and tried making it a few times before giving up. None was as good as my first time...

And then I ate *ghelye mahi* at the home of my friend Zohreh, who hails from the city of Abadan in southwestern Iran. “It was the Paris of Iran,” the eldest of her two daughters, who were born in the Netherlands, tells me. “Was,” Zohreh emphasizes. “Before the war.”

It was the war with Iraq that drove Zohreh and her family out of Iran. She settled in the Netherlands with her husband when she was just 25. “I had never cooked before in my life,”



she says. “I learned everything here.”

“My father tells us she used to burn food all the time and that her cooking was awful,” her daughter adds. This seems impossible now because Zohreh’s “cooking hand” (*dast poch*) is renowned among friends and family. Like many migrants, she learned cooking by calling her mother long-distance and working at her side during extended visits. “For me, *ghelye mahi* is the most important dish. This is our dish. It is the dish of Abadan and the one food that makes me feel connected to my family and my city.”

For our dinner of *ghelye mahi*, Zohreh had assembled the following ingredients:

- 6 pounds of cod (**Salmon is a better choice-BN**)
- A colander full of fresh cilantro
- The peeled cloves of a large head of garlic
- 4 chopped yellow onions
- Turmeric
- Fresh tamarind paste with the pits in
- Jarred tamarind paste
- Fresh fenugreek leaves (dried will do if you cannot find fresh)
- Black pepper
- Red chili pepper

1. Zohreh covers the frying pan with oil and when it’s hot adds the four chopped onions. Then she lowers the flame so the onions cook slowly. Her pan was not large enough to hold the entire stew in the end, so she had to divide it into two pans. If you have it, use an extra large sauté pan with deep sides.

2. While the onions are cooking, she puts the peeled cloves of an entire head of garlic into a mortar and smashes them with plenty of turmeric. While doing this, she takes an occasional break to stir the onions.

3. When the onions are soft and a tiny bit brown at the edges, she adds the paste of garlic and turmeric, stirs once or twice, and then turns off the heat. “You don’t want this to get too cooked yet.”

4. Zohreh takes the cilantro out in bunches, chops it into pieces and places it in the frying pan with the onions and garlic,

turning the heat back on to simmer. “I use the whole cilantro, stems and leaves.”

Because she is making a huge amount of *ghelye mahi*, she adds the cilantro in batches, letting each handful simmer down before stirring in the next.

“It seems like a lot, but when it is cooked it’s not so much.”

5. Zohreh pulls out a bag of fresh fenugreek she sautéed earlier in the day and gives it to me to smell. “Oh, so that’s the key to the dish,” I say. The fenugreek is, how can I describe it? Fragrant, musky, sweet, bitter. All of those. As the cilantro is cooking, she adds one spoonful of cooked fenugreek. “This is very important. Don’t add too much. Too much fenugreek and the dish becomes bitter.” Even in small amounts, fenugreek is the secret to this recipe. It can be hard to find fresh, but is available dry at most stores specializing in Middle Eastern foods.

6. Zohreh cuts off a chunk of tamarind paste and adds it to a bowl of water. The chunk is about the size of your average candy bar. She squeezes the paste with her hand until it is mixed well with the water and the pits are loose. Then she strains it into the greens using a ricer. She also adds a spoonful of prepackaged tamarind paste.

“The tamarind already has salt, so I don’t add any salt to the dish. If you don’t have fresh tamarind paste, you can just use the paste in the jar. But the fresh paste is better.”

7. While this is all simmering, she cuts the fish into large chunks. We are using cod. You have to use a tough, flavorful fish that can be cut into thick pieces. Don’t use fish that can’t stand up to stewing. Salmon, for instance, would be a bad choice. Aside from cod, monkfish works well.

8. Before adding the fish, Zohreh tastes the stewing greens several times, adjusting as she goes. She adds a bit more fenugreek (not too much) and a bit more tamarind. She adds water a little bit at a time, telling me, “It shouldn’t be too thick or too thin. It is not a porridge and it is not soup.” She asks me to stir it a few times so I can get a sense of the proper thickness.

9. Zohreh takes an extra step, one in no recipe that I found. She coats the fish in flour and turmeric. “It keeps the fish to-

gether.” She cooks it quickly in oil.

Zohreh adds a bit more sunflower oil to the greens before adding the fish. “The oil brings all the flavors together. In total this dish has about half a glass of oil in it.” As she delicately places the fish in the stew, she tells me, “Be very careful adding the fish. It should not break apart.”

10. As the flavors come together, we sit and talk. A neighbor brings over matzoh ball soup left over from a Passover seder. Zohreh’s daughters and their friends tease each other and then head off to McDonald’s because, perversely, they “hate fish.” After about 30 minutes, Zohreh adds a liberal amount of black pepper to the stew. “It should be a bit spicy,” she says. “The pepper is important.” Thirty minutes later she asks, “Is it okay for me to add chili pepper?” When I agree, she puts it into the mix.

11. The fish simmers in the greens for a total of 90 minutes. Before we are ready, Zohreh lifts the lid from the pot to show me the way the oil has risen to the top. I feel like I’m looking at an algae-filled swamp with stones peeking above the surface. “When the oil floats to the surface, you know it’s ready,” she tells me. “This only happens when you simmer it slowly.”

12. Serve the stew in the pan. “Don’t put it in a serving dish, because the fish will break apart.”

What you serve with *ghelye mahi* adds to the whole experience. It needs rice. (If you want to cook rice as well as your Iranian friends do, I recommend the instructions in *Food of Life*, by Najmieh Batmanglij.)

“You never eat salad with *ghelye mahi*,” Zohreh explains. “Salad is cold. Fish and cilantro are cold. Garlic is warm; that’s why we use so much garlic in the dish, to balance it. Instead of salad, we eat *torshi* [pickled vegetables, often garlic, or fruit].”

Zohreh, like most Iranians I’ve met, divides foods into categories of hot and cold. What’s cold or hot has nothing to do with temperature: it’s a way of categorizing food that is supposed to lead to a healthful balance. Many Iranians I know swear by the method, claiming that when they eat too many foods of one type they end up sick.

Ghelye mahi is a balance of hot and cold. The garlic, fenugreek, and turmeric are hot. The fish and cilantro are cold. The *torshi* is hot. Together the flavors are perfect.

Trust me. It’s delicious, and when we are finished eating there is enough left over for five more people. In fact, writing this piece has made my mouth water. I just might call Zohreh to see if she still has any left. Hmmm...



Don’t Forget Your
Persian Heritage!
Subscribe Today!

THE DEADLY HISTORY OF PERSIA'S ANCIENT ASSASSINS



The Assassination of Nizam al-Mulk

In the year 1090, a charismatic man by the name of Hasan-i Sabbah used his popularity to gather together a small but devout following of Ismaili Muslims.

Sabbah single-handedly molded his following – known as the Order of the Assassins, or Hashashin – into a fighting force capable of bringing down the most well-guarded leaders of the day.

Zealous and disciplined, this force would strike terror into the hearts of caliphs, viziers and sultans for the next 200 years.

Sabbah's Order of the Assassins fought for power against Christians and rival branches of Muslims. The Order was outnumbered and scorned by the Sunni majority.

But despite this, as Jefferson M. Gray of Historynet.com says, "Hasan-i Sabbah and his successors were brilliant practitioners of asymmetric warfare.

They developed a means of attack that negated most of their enemies' advantages while requiring the Assassins to hazard only a small number of their own fighters."

The Order was strictly hierarchical, with only the lowest level, the fida'is (or Fedayeen), serving as assassins.

The fida'is were taught everything they needed to know to blend in with the enemy and avoid detection.

They learnt foreign languages, culture and philosophy. According to Gray, "The best of the Assassin fida'is

combined the self-sacrificial zeal of kamikaze pilots, the close-quarters combat skills of special operations troops, and the ability of deep-cover intelligence agents to work undetected for months or even years."

The fida is killed with daggers in public places, where hundreds of witnesses could see for themselves exactly how dedicated they were to their cause.

People came to believe that, once marked for extermination by the assassins, no man could live, no matter how many armed men he had around him.

The reputation of the assassins spread so much that soon many assassinations were attributed to Sabbah and his fida'is whether they were respon-

sible or not.

Most terrifyingly of all, the assassins were adept at gaining the trust of their targets. Fida'is of The Order infiltrated their enemies as grooms in the stables of the

Seljuk vizier, bodyguards to the Turkish emir of Damascus, and Christian Arab monks in the company of Crusade leader Conrad of Montferrat.

All of these target leaders died once they let their guard down and allowed the assassins close enough access.

In the case of the Turkish emir, it took two years of cold, calculated waiting before he was successfully murdered.

Yet despite their savagery and highly successful intimidation tactics, the assassins did not target civilians. And they did not always kill their enemies.

Sometimes, all that was necessary was to leave a knife beside their enemy's bed while they were sleeping to send a very clear warning. According to Gray, "The Assassins targeted killings of hostile political, military, and religious leaders eventually produced a stable and lasting balance of power between them and their enemies, reducing the level of conflict and loss of life on both sides."

The Fortress of Alamut: The remains of Hasan-i Sabbah's stronghold, in present-day Northern Iran



Meet Cameron Rafati,



Let's first get the housekeeping done. Please introduce yourself to our readers. Where were you born?

In Denver, CO

Where were your parents born?

My father was born in Tehran. My mother is American born in Salt Lake City, UT.

My father came over on the Shah's

bill because his grades were so high in school. They met as hospital workers in college at the University of Utah.

Your education?

I graduated with a Bachelor in Business from USC in Los Angeles.

What sparked your interest in music?

My Uncle Amo's dusty guitar in his storage unit.

Who influences you now artistically and personally?

I love music from the 60's. I cannot get enough of Soul and Rock from that time period.

Does or did your Persian heritage influence you?

I love how old school Persian music is so full of great beats and long drawn out notes. You could really feel the pain in the voice of the singers. These people influenced me and so did the ancient instruments. The Daf is my favorite drum instrument. I'm looking to incorporate the Santoor and the Daf in my new upcoming songs.

Are you a fan of Persian music? If so who, old and new?

Yes, I am a big fan! It doesn't get better than old school Googoosh from the 70's. That's my blood! My favorite song is Baba Keram. That's my Jam! I loved Siavash growing up too. That "Pedar" album reminds me of my childhood. The new Persian music is Ok just like the new American music is Ok. Club beats and synthesizers chase away the "feel" sometimes of the music. I want to bring the organic back.

Was it difficult to convince your family to allow you to pursue music as a career rather than a traditional line of employment?

Oh my God, are you serious? Try convincing a tough as nails Persian engineer father that was raised in the hard streets of Tehran that you want to become a singer! He now is my biggest supporter though!

Do you think it is important to remain connected to your heritage or more important to develop your own identity?

Yes and yes. What I've realized is that heritage and identity are one on the same. We are part of the first generation

of Iranians born in the US after that great post-Shah exodus from Iran. It is our responsibility to add to the collective heritage of Persians by advancing into a new western era of Persian influenced art and communication. The only way we can do this is by assimilating to the times and appealing to non-Persians as well. The people of every new generation should add to the collective heritage of the prior generations.

Did you ever consider trying out for one of the talent shows?

No way! I like doing things the hard way. I guess I'm just a thick headed Persian man!

What was your first success in the business?

My first real breakthrough was two months ago when the famous boxer Manny Pacquiao walked in to his latest fight to my song "Face your Destiny."

I sang and wrote this song with not only Manny Pacquiao, but with Randy Jackson (American Idol) and Chad Hugo (The Neptunes).

My voice filled the Arena as he walked in. It was broadcasted to over 100 million people! It was the greatest night of my life so far!

Where do you hope to be in the next 12 months?

I don't know what is in the cards for me but I promise to keep playing for anyone who listens.

When are you due to launch a CD?

I just released a single called "Broken Door." It talks about the journey starting at our darkest hour. It's my favorite song out right now.

Are there any venues where you can be seen live?

Right now we are booking out tours for 2013 but I will be performing and showcasing at the SXSW music festival in Austin this year.

Heralding the Arrival Of Spring in Iran

BY JUNE D. MCMILLAN

In Iran, the snows are melting on the Elburz Mountains and Mount Damavand, bringing floods of water through the *ganots* (underground water tunnels) and into the villages and cities of the country. The Persian winter will soon be over and the buds on the almond, pistachio, pomegranate, apricot, and peach trees will be heavy with blossoms; the meadows and plains will be brilliant with wildflowers. And families are beginning to prepare to celebrate Noruz Jamshidi, the New Year, a universal holiday. The words mean: No – new, ruz – day, and Jamshidi - the Persian name for the first legendary king of Iran. For the Iranians, spring begins at the exact moment of the vernal equinox when the sun passes into the zodiac sign of the ram. At that moment, be it midnight or dawn, cannons in each city and town signal the start of celebrations.



For 13 days, families and friends visit and exchange gifts, and are consumed in celebrations. Everyone must wear something new, at least one thing must be brand-new; and dressed in their best, on the first day they go to the head of the family and offer greetings; the traditional greeting is "May you live a hundred years," or "May your shadow never grow dim," that is, may you keep your good health.

Fifteen days before March 21, households begin preparation of plants that are often given as gifts to family and friends. Grains of wheat, lentil, or barley are germinated in water. Porous clay jars are filled with water and then the grain is bound to the outside of the jars with absorbent cotton material. Within a few days, the grain begins to sprout and cling to the jar and the cotton cloth can be removed.

The sprouting grain grows upward to the light of the sun, and by Noruz a delightful mass of fresh green blades heralds the spring. In some homes the germinated seeds are put on a simple plate. In whatever form, this is a beautiful symbol of new life. This gift is kept until the 13th day of Noruz and then disposed of and thrown into running water, if possible. With this tradition, the household throws away all misfortune. While the seeds are germinating, the households are busy intensely preparing to celebrate family and friends. Persians love food and hospitality and have raised these graces to the level of an art. A special feast table of Haft-Sin is prepared: a collection of seven things all beginning with the letter S in Farsi (the language of Iran). Sib, apple; sabze, a green vegetable; sumac, a spice; seekrkeh, vinegar; samanu, a sweet-tasting pudding prepared with green wheat; senjed, an olive; and sonbul, a hyacinth. Also laid out on the table are a mirror, a clock, and a copy of the Koran.

At the moment of the sun's entry into the sign of the ram the festivities begin, and in many homes when the head of the family reads verses from the Koran. Candles are lit, one to represent each member of the family. These are placed in front of the mirror where their reflections symbolize a bright future. In some families, a coin prepared by the Iranian mint each year for this purpose is given to each family member, including little children.

Sizdah, the 13th day after Noruz, is spent out-of-doors; a happy prelude to the business of settling down to another year's hard work! It is a day to go out to the countryside for a picnic; or if that is not possible to go out into one's garden. On Sizdah the countryside around the large cities is filled with people gathered around their rugs and samovars, drinking tea, telling stories, or walking around the tombs of their eminent poets, Hafiz or Sa'di in Shiraz.