

**HAPPY  
 New Year  
 2012**



- **NOT IN A MILLION YEARS ...**
- **I LIVE IN A GLASS HOUSE**
- **THE AGING POPULATION & ITS CAREGIVERS**
- **THE TELLER OF TALES**
- **LESSONS LEARNED AS A MOTHER**
- **THE THYROID GLAND**
- **RENAISSANCE OF IRANIAN ART**
- **SOHRAB'S WARS**



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## Editorial



By: Shahri Estakhry



# Not In a Million Years ...

Not in a million years would I have thought America would be where it is... who would have?

For years now, I have been writing how dangerous it is for our nation that our middle class is shrinking. The difference between wealth and poverty has become so enormous that it can only be called the greatest inequality in the history of this nation. As the social injustices grow, one can see the future of this nation crumbling into a second tier of world leadership in the realms of justice and humanitarian causes. Some of the brightest and the most capable have turned to greed and corruption, taking down with them all the good that symbolized us as a world leader. "According to the law of nature it is only fair that no one should become richer through damages and injuries suffered by another." Marcus Cicero

I remember not long ago when our statesmen and women knew the art of compromise. This gridlock that we are witnessing is so ridiculous and harmful. When a government is dysfunctional, its people will suffer the most. To add to this frightful situation, we keep hearing of the quarterly financial benefits for corporations and executive bonuses, the same that were on the verge of bankruptcy. Not to mention our banking system, where each corporation is happily writing its own checks to success.

Henry Ford said, "It is well enough that the people of the nation do not understand our banking and monetary system, for if they did, I believe there would be a revolution tomorrow morning." Guess what? The people have begun to understand it and it looks like the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement might just be what Ford was talking about!

Today, thousands of young men and women of this nation are sacrificing their lives and future on war fronts. They die by the thousands, they are bodily or mentally harmed by tens of thousands while believing it is their duty to serve us. How do we welcome them back or reward them? No jobs, no future security, no assured health programs...and we wonder why the population of homeless is growing so fast. Families are living in cars, on street corners, sharing motel rooms. Where is the justice in this? How long shall we neglect them?

The homeless shelters are full around the nation, not because all of the people want to be there but because they have no other choice. They have lost their homes, jobs, wealth, security and future hopes. Thus, the sentiment of the 99% has been brewing. People ask what is it that they want? It is the basics of what is the right of all individuals...food, shelter, security, the assurance that they can have a reasonable equal right for their children to live in a better environment than is being offered to them now. Unemployment is very hard and painful for individuals and their families and, as we can see, very destructive to society and the nation.

We need to wake up to the realities of what is happening. 99% of us are part of the 99% movement whether we choose to be vocal or protest at some park or street corner, or not. Profiteers should not be given control over a society. We should also remember that government is a tool for the people to control and if properly designed, then the entire nation will benefit. "People are free if they participate in power, I know of no country where the people are really free." Marcus Cicero

***"The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much, it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little."***

*Franklin D. Roosevelt, 32nd US President*

*Wishing all a better year in 2012!*

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# PCC NEWS

On November 19, 2011, PCC sponsored “Scarlet Stone,” at UCSD’s Mandel Weiss Forum. Based on a poem by Siavash Kasrai about Ferdowsi’s classical tale of Rostam and Sohrab, composer Shahrokh Yadegari, and choreographer Shahrokh Moshkin Ghalam, presented an outstanding evening of dance and music. The performance was followed by a discussion between the performers and the audience about Kasrai’s interpretation of Ferdowsi’s tale and the work’s sociopolitical symbolism. Highly regarded in their artistic fields, Yadegari and Moshkin Ghalam put together a production worthy of national and international acclaim, as evidenced by the enthusiastic audience response and post show comments. We felt extremely lucky to be able to bring this show to San Diego.

On December 16, 2011, PCC held its annual Yalda celebration at Sufi Restaurant. The evening was sold out and greatly enjoyed by all participants. This year we were treated to live Persian Fusion music by Bviolin Studios and dance music by DJ Julius.

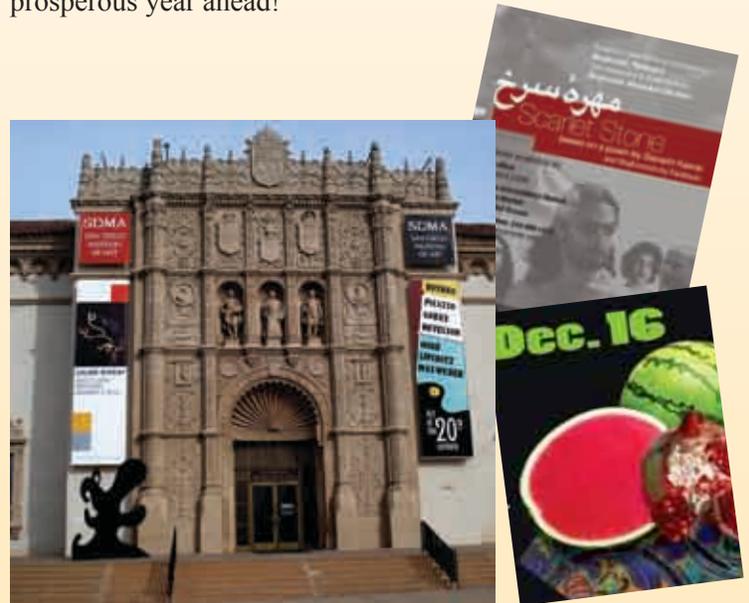
PCC is involved in an exciting collaboration with Two Cats Production which is making a documentary movie called “The Iranian Americans” for PBS. Two Cats has sought footage from the Iranian School of San Diego and information from PCC for inclusion in the documentary. They have previously produced several documentaries that have aired on PBS, including “The Armenian Americans,” “The Jewish People,” and “They Came to America.” We will keep you updated on the progress of this project.

PCC is proud to announce a unique and unprecedented collaboration with three other organizations in town. Along with the San Diego Museum of Art, the San Diego Public Library, and KPBS, PCC will present an evening of Persian based literature, art, dance, and music at the Museum on March 29, 2012. The event will celebrate Zohreh Ghahremani’s book “Sky of Red Poppies” against a backdrop of the Museum’s Galleries and classical Persian music and dance. There will also be catered Persian cuisine and dessert. This is not to be missed! We will notify you when tickets become available.



We have many more events and shows in the works for the coming year. Please visit our website to keep informed: [www.pccus.org](http://www.pccus.org). We will also continue to send out informational emails about upcoming events around town by PCC and others that may be of interest to our members.

Happy New Year to all of you! May you have a healthy and prosperous year ahead!



## Solicitation of Material

Do you have an opinion on something you see here? Have you written an article that you would like us to publish? If so, we would love to hear from you! For directions on how to submit your piece, please contact PEYK- PCC’s office at: P.O. Box 500914, San Diego, CA 92150. You might find your submission printed in the next issue of *Peyk*!

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# "BUILDING THE DREAM"

After 23 years of service to the community, the Persian Cultural Center (PCC) sees this as the perfect time to rally around our community's long-time dream of creating a physical Center to house our current activities and provide further, much needed, community services and programming for the Iranian-American Community.

The conditions have never been so favorable and the need never so compelling. Here are just a few reasons why this dream is so important:

- **Members of our aging population and their families need support**
- **The younger generation needs structure, guidance and language skills**
- **Parents will be helped by increased resources and networking**
- **The current real estate market is absolutely encouraging**

Abbaspour, Shirin  
Abolmaali, Arya & Darya  
Aghassi, Sarah. E  
Akashian, Costance  
Akbari, Elham  
Akbarnia, Behrooz & Nasrin  
Akbarnia/Jester, Halleh & Stewart  
Amini, Mojgan  
Assadian, Dr. A. R.  
Ayari, Mohammad  
Bagheri, Rosita  
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Barfjani, Akram  
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Dadkhah, Manouchehr  
Dadkhah, shahryar & Nazi  
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Moalemi, Parisa  
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Nazari, Ghazaleh  
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Nourbakhsh, Farhad  
Pirouzian, Ali  
Pirouzian, Mahmmoud Reza  
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Pirozan, Dr. Amir  
Piryesh, Parisa & Ebrahim  
Promaster Auto  
Radsan, Ramin  
Rafizadeh, Hamid & Parisa  
Sabouri, Faramarz  
Sadr, Ali & Ludi  
Safarian, Dr. Gholamreza & Narges  
Sagheb, Mina  
Salah, Shahla  
Salimi, Abdy & Molok  
Salimi, Rana  
Samimi, Fereidoun & Marie Akbar  
Sammak, Massoud & Pueh  
Shaghaghi, Zarin  
Shamlou, Benny  
Smith, Homa  
Soraya, Golsa  
Tahriri, Hamid & Mataneh  
Zayer, Bijan & Sholeh

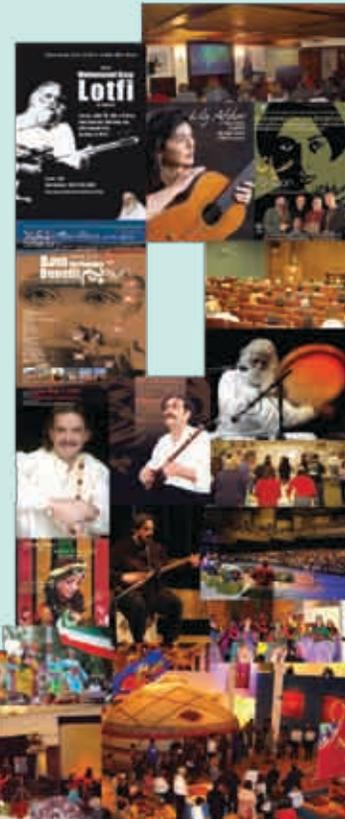


## LET'S KEEP THE DREAM GOING! WE'RE EXTENDING THE BUILDING THE DREAM FUNDRAISING PERIOD!

If you were unable to make a donation last year to the building the dream fund, we have great news! We're extending the fundraising period for another six months! Why? Because we have raised so much so far, the market conditions are still favorable, and popular support demands that we give the dream more time to succeed. We would like to thank all of you who have contributed to the building fund so far; your vision and generosity will serve generations of Iranian-Americans and San Diegans in the future. Let's march forward in this new year and make a renewed effort to spread the word and realize the dream!

All donors' names will be recognized prominently on a plaque posted at the entrance of the Center and entitled, "Founders' Circle." In addition, at certain donation levels special recognition applies as indicated.

This Center will not only serve you, your loved ones, and the community, but it will also benefit future generations and those who want to reach out and learn about Iranian Culture and the Persian language. As an established and respected community, we owe it to ourselves, our children, and the survival of our heritage to achieve this goal.



By Shaghayegh Hanson



## I live in a glass house

This coming year I will turn 45 and again I will make a New Year resolution. This one is a good one, trust me.

It all started with a cringe-worthy scene that took place at one of my son's soccer games. It was me, actually jumping up and down like a demented schoolgirl on the sidelines, as my son bulldozed his way towards the goal. When the ball was taken away from him by the opposing side I yelled--no, growled-- "GET THAT BALL JAMES!" so loudly that even the most usually vocal parents laughed at my outcry. I felt as though I would never live it down—had I seen a 44-year-old mother of two losing physical control and shouting like a sailor, I would have looked upon her with great pity, if not annoyance. Does that mean I'm too judgmental?

Quite probably the answer is "yes." As if to confirm this self realization, I found myself committing multiple acts of judgmentalism at a fancy dance club later that evening as a group of us celebrated a friend's birthday. It had been an eternity since I had been to a club of this nature and I shall pass the rest of my life without ever voluntarily going to one again.

The location was obnoxiously opulent, the drinks accordingly overpriced, the wait staff apparently chosen for their physical allure. Instead of focusing on my companions and the event at hand I watched, like a dogged sociologist, as a group of young men ogled their waitress and made her feel self-conscious about her just-too-low-cut black dress. They took liberties with their eyes and suggestive language as they ordered champagne on ice, and played out their gigolo fantasies in semi-darkness to the hypnotic beat of dance music. I was indignant about their predatory manner; it left me cold and sad. And yet, their methods seemed to work because they were soon in the company of several attractive females. I thought I would rather be thrown into shark-infested waters in the Pacific Ocean than spend one precious second with those guys—what was wrong with those women????

I saw men and women of my age, and significantly older, pathetically attempting to relive their younger glory days by embarking on the latest Beyonce-style bootylicious moves. Their awkward gyrations on the dance floor made me look upon them with disdain (sometimes sticking to the shuffle or the twist is the nobler way to

go). There were men with toupees and women with "I've had too much plastic surgery" written all over them, using their money to defy the forces of nature. Some couples apparently forgot they were not in a private bedroom and satisfied the prurient interest of any regular porn shop visitor.

When I finally felt the pull of a song I liked and went to dance I became immediately paranoid that someone out there was looking at me with a similar critical eye. I thus ruined the moment for myself by extinguishing all abandon and pleasure from my system. As soon as the song was over, I sat back down and wished I was in bed with a good book.

Why was I so put off by these people? Was it so bad that they were enjoying themselves? Was I arrogant enough to think that everyone should be like me? And that being me is better than being them? Ouch, that question addressed a deeper, more ugly issue than gyrating in a toupee on the dance floor. After all, toupee guy, or flirty woman, or predatory gigolo, may go back to being just regular people in the light of day, but I would continue to carry the mark of cynicism and judgmentalism within me; not simply a one-off act but a character trait that could rear its ugly head at any moment.

After wrestling with the question of how I should remedy this internal flaw I realized that, in fact, what I was experiencing was a self-correcting, totally organic mechanism from within. I am the one who suffers most from being judgmental. I made myself feel embarrassed at my son's soccer game. I also lost an evening of fun at the dance club because I focused on everyone except my friends and then became paranoid that others were judging me as I was judging them. I'm realizing that using my judgment is not the same thing as being judgmental; the former is necessary and prudent, the latter is arrogant and self-destructive.

So yeah, I admit it, I live in a glass house...and this year I'm going to learn not to throw stones!

# The Aging Population & Its Caregivers

Minou Sadeghi

I have pondered for a long time whether to take pen to paper and share my thoughts and feelings about the difficult subject of aging parents. I have finally decided that, because it is being written in the most heartfelt of ways, my experience is indeed appropriate to share in the hope that it might help those in similar circumstances.

Much like our parents, who refuse to have strangers in their home to provide care, we too refuse to see what is happening with our aging parents. No article can truly open a caregiver's eyes. Yet, alas, we must face the facts and I have tried to address them with loving care. Often times, our bodies and brains become so tired and fatigued that it is difficult some days to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Until recently, I have been my 94-year-old mother's caregiver, a duty I have been performing for the past 35 years. Although I left Iran at the age of 7, I still cherish a lot of the cultural traditions of our rich nation and perhaps that is one of the reasons that I have been a caregiver for so many years. I always saw it as my responsibility to take care of those who took care of me, regardless of the emotional expense and the toll that it might take - after all, this was my responsibility. Therefore, when the time came that I could no longer emotionally and/or physically take care of my mother, the decision was most difficult and heart breaking, filled with a variety of emotions including guilt, helplessness, and the personal inability to complete my responsibility.

Unlike the culture that we live in here in the United States, most Iranian families continue to have their parents cohabit with them until their old age. This is, of course, very admirable if possible. However, such a circumstance also comes with a variety of challenges—some foreseen and some unforeseen. It is quite difficult to have a multigenerational family living under the same roof, not to mention having to deal with the challenges of old age and the elderly.

In most cases, not too many Iranians like to discuss these types of issues—for the most part people “grin and bear” it. However, I think we should learn from our American culture that concerns should be discussed and brought to light and best solutions found for everyone. It is obvious that all this can bring about much undue pressure and stress on everyone involved and yet we are determined to save face and not discuss our issues because that is just not right in most people's eyes.



Well perhaps it is for the fact that I have spent most of my adult life in England and the United States that I am a bit more vocal and upfront about this. I want to write and let you know that those in similar circumstances are not alone and I feel their pain, confusion, indecisiveness, and guilt. As I opened up to several friends about my own challenges, I discovered so many were in the same predicament—all empathize, but most do not even want to open up and speak about it. Those friends are hoping it will just work itself out somehow and, as a result, are ill-prepared to deal with the real circumstances at hand and for the future.

Long-term care is difficult not just for the caregivers, but for those being cared for as well. After all, the elderly were all young and active in their own lives and it is quite distressing for them to realize they are unable to do a lot of the things they used to do for themselves. Often times, the elderly are alone all day, suffering silently from depression and anxiety, waiting expectantly for their children's return at the end of the day. However, most caregivers are themselves too stressed after a day's work that they need time to unwind and have little energy to share with their children left alone their elders.

In light of the difficulties surrounding elder care, here are some practical steps you can take as a caregiver to prepare yourself and your parents about their care:

- 1. Start with a candid conversation.** Talk with your parent(s) about how you will be helping them to meet their needs. It is important that they be involved in their own decisions if mentally feasible. Encourage them to articulate their concerns. Have an open conversation about what role your parents want you to play and establish limits so they do not form unrealistic expectations.
- 2. Set your priorities.** Make a list of what needs to get done and how you plan to do it. An organized approach puts you in control, reduces stress, and ensures that your parents receive the assistance they need. Share plans with family members.
- 3. Build a support network.** In most families, one person assumes the role of primary caregiver. Enlist the help of your siblings if possible, but also consider extended family members and friends.
- 4. Delegate.** Ask friends to pick up groceries or to perform other errands when possible. Accept help.

Continued on page 19

## "The Teller of Tales"

### Contemporary Reflections on Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* by Professor Richard Jeffrey Newman

Professor Newman has recently sent us a copy of his latest work, *The Teller of Tales: Stories from Ferdowsi's Shahnameh* (Junction Press, 2011). We would like to thank Professor Newman and encourage our readers to continue sharing their poetry and translations as well as views and opinions via [af@ariafani.com](mailto:af@ariafani.com) or Persian Cultural Center's mailing address.

**In the name of the Lord of soul and of wisdom;  
Whose throne sits higher than thought can reach**

The *Shahnameh*, written in the tenth century by Abolqasem Ferdowsi (A.D. 940-ca. 1019), is arguably the literary text that has most dominated and shaped the national psyche of Iranians. Documenting their dialogues with the cultural past, contemporary Iranian writers and artists continue to evoke the tales of the *Shahnameh* in their works. One such example is Bahram Beyzai's *A New Prologue to the Shahnameh*, which appears in the collection *Sohrab's Wars: Counter-Discourses of Contemporary Persian Fiction*. Placing the Arab invasion of Iran in A.D. 651 at the heart of its narrative, Beyzai's screenplay depicts Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* as a locus of the Persian language and identity and limns the similarities between the invaders and the current Iranian regime in their rejection of the nation's heritage. Whether the emphasis is on safeguarding the Persian tongue or resisting the loss of identity, the *Shahnameh* continues to inspire those who are willing to listen to its "noble words."

**The world holds nothing worth more  
than noble words**

The nature of the social order is the central theme of *The Teller of Tales*, a new selection of stories from the *Shahnameh* translated by Professor Richard Jeffrey Newman. The tales in this collection include excerpts from the Poet's Preface, as well as stories of the five kings: Kayumars, Hushang, Tahmures, Jamshid, and Zakhak. The concept of social order devolves from the kings as well as from divine approval, known as *farr*, a divine light bestowed on chosen people. The royal throne may be a fated inheritance, predetermined through bloodline, but the monarchs' commitment to values such as justice and selfless righteousness is always challenged in the *Shahnameh*. *The Teller of Tales* fully develops the notion that nobility is earned through action and not gained through station.

**... the world,  
finally, is a tale we're told: the evil in it,  
and the glory, end at the end of the story**

The *Shahnameh* has been previously translated into heroic couplets (*masnavi-e razmi*) and blank verse (*she'r-e bighafiye*), with the latter as the standard for dramatic poetry and widely used for narrative poems. Professor Newman has chosen alliterative verse

(*mesra'-e mo'alla*) to reflect the original's "rich sonic landscape." The standard form of verse in English until the eleventh century, revived again in the fourteenth century, it employs alliteration—the repetition of the same sound—to link lines of poetry. Even though Newman loses the *Shahnameh*'s original rhyme scheme, and does not strictly adhere to the English alliterative form, his translation is creative, smooth, and delightful to read.

**All that I tell here has been told  
all of it gathered in folklore's garden**

The story of Jamshid reflects the character development of a king who gradually loses sight of the virtues of humility and servitude, blinded by self-involvement and self-righteousness. Blessed with divine approval, at first he invests in his people's future. He respects the traditions that predate his rule, and as a symbolic gesture, marks Nowruz (or Norooz) as a day of festivity and rejuvenation. Arrogance gradually comes to dominate his imagination until he proclaims himself as the "Lord." His word becomes *the* word. His popularity fades, even as his egotism distances him from the people's realities. Ultimately, the *farr* departs him and he is left to a "darkened destiny." Modern popular uprisings have doomed rulers to similar fates and brought renewed attention to Ferdowsi's emphasis on wisdom and justice. Professor Newman's *Teller of Tales* offers a compelling look at this aspect of the *Shahnameh*.

### Jamshid

Filled with his father's wisdom, when the world was done mourning the Demon Binder, Jamshid joined the line of men to ascend the throne and wear the crown. Peace spread across his kingdom, And the birds and peris bowed to him too. "I will," he said, "keep evil from evil-doers' hands, and I will guide souls to light. The royal farr rests with me. I rule as monarch and priest."

He turned first to making weapons, paving for his warriors a road to glory and renown. Iron, beneath his farr, softened, became swords and helmets, chain mail and horse armor, and he gave fifty years to training the men he charged with building his armory.

Jamshid devoted the next five decades to clothing, contriving different fabrics—linen and silk, brocades and satin—teaching people to spin and to weave, to dye what they'd woven and then sew a garment

for feasting or fighting. When he finished, divided men by their professions, sending first to the mountains, to worship their Master and live lives of devotion, the Katuzi. Second, he summoned the Neysari, lion-hearted fighters whose luster lit the entire land, whose leadership and courage kept their king secure and whose valor ensured the nation's reputation. Those who farmed the fields came next, the Basudi, who sow and reap, who receive no thanks, but whom none reproach when there's food to eat. Free people who kneel to no one and seek no quarrel, despite the rags they wear, their care makes the earth flourish and nourishes peace. A wise elder once said, "If a free man finds himself a slave, he has only his own laziness to blame."

Jamshid gathered the craftsmen last, the insecure and stubborn Ahtukhoshi. Haughty and contrary, they work with their hands, Making the goods sold in the market, and they are always anxious. Fifty years marched by while Jamshid showed each person breathing earth's air his proper place and path, teaching the scope of the life he'd been given to live.

He ordered the demons to pour water over earth, stirring it into clay they filled molds with to form bricks. With mortar and stone, they laid foundations for public baths and beautiful palaces, and castles to protect against attack. From rocks, Jamshid's magic extracted the lustrous gems and precious metals he found hidden there, filling his hands with gold and silver, amber and jacinth. He distilled perfumes for his people's pleasure: balsam and ambergris, rose water and camphor, musk and aloe. He made medicines to bring the sick back to health and to help the healthy stay that way. Jamshid revealed these secret things as none before him had done. No one discovered and ordered the world as he did.

Yet another fifty years saw Jamshid building ships he could sail quickly across the sea, making port in each realm he reached. Then, although he was already great, Jamshid stepped past greatness. He fashioned with his farr a jewel encrusted throne, decreeing the demons should raise it high in the sky, where he sat shining like the sun, and the world's creatures gathered around him, staring in awe, scattering gems at his feet. It was the first of Farvardin, and Jamshid set that day aside, naming it Norooz, "new day," the day he rested, the first of the year.

His nobles declared a feast, a festival of wine and song we will celebrate in Jamshid's memory

For three centuries, Jamshid ruled in peace. His people knew neither death nor hardship; the demons stood ready to serve, and all who heard the king's command obeyed it. The land, filled with music, flourished. Jamshid, however, gave himself to vanity. Seeing he had no peer in the world, he forgot the gratitude that is God's due and called the nobles of his court before him, making his fateful proclamation: "From this day forward, I know no lord but me: my word brought beauty and skilled men to adorn the earth! My word! Sunshine and sleep, security and comfort, the clothes you wear, your food—all came to you through me! Who else ended death's desolation And with medicine vanished illness from your lives? Without me, neither mind nor soul would inhabit your bodies. So who besides me can claim, unchallenged, the crown and its power? You understand this now. So now, who else can you call Creator but me?!"

The elders bowed their heads and held their tongues, silenced by what he'd said. When the last sound left his mouth, The farr left him and his realm fell into discord. A sensible, pious man once said, "A king must make himself God's slave. Ingratitude towards God will fill your hear with innumerable fears." Jamshid's men deserted; his destiny darkened, and his light disappeared from the word.



"When I write my poems, I feel myself talking to you, whoever you are, and when I make my translations, I do so because I think the writers I am translating also have something to say that it is worth your while to hear." Richard Jeffrey Newman is the translator of *Selections from Saadi's Gulistan* and *Selections from Saadi's Bustan*. He is the co-translator, with John Moyne, of the verse selections in the Rumi reader *A Bird in the Garden of Angels*. *The Silence of Men*, his first book of poetry (2006), documents the experiences of the poet with abuse while confronting less commonly discussed issues such as sex and violence. He is Professor of English at Nassau Community College in Garden City, New York. Visit the author's website at [www.richardjnewman.com](http://www.richardjnewman.com). To order *The Teller of Tales*, please visit [www.junctionpress.com](http://www.junctionpress.com).

Please direct your questions and views to [af@ariafani.com](mailto:af@ariafani.com)



Recently while visiting Toronto, Canada we had the pleasure of having the most gracious hosts and we learned some great recipes from our hostess Toba Mohabati, a great cook with an eternal smile ... and here are some of her recipes for your enjoyment with special thanks to her.

### Ash Kadou (Zucchini)

- 1 large onion
- 4 to 5 pieces of garlic
- 4 green zucchini
- 1/3 cup rice
- 1/4 cup split peas
- 2 chicken thighs
- 1 large cup of chopped cilantro
- Salt/pepper to taste
- 6 cups of water



1. Dice the onion and saute
2. Add chicken, rice and peas
3. When chicken is cooked add diced zucchini
4. Put cilantro in the last minute and turn off heat

### Lima Bean Meat Ball (Kofteh Baghela)

- 1 lb of lean ground beef \*
- 2 eggs \*
- 1/4 Cup chick peas flour \*
- 1 lb peeled lima (fava) beans \*
- 1 Cup of chopped dill weed \*
- 1 Medium size diced onion
- 4/5 pieces of diced garlic
- 2 Spoons of tomato paste
- 1 Cup of water
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- Salt/pepper to taste



1. To make sauce – saute the onion, add garlic, tomato paste, turmeric, salt and pepper and water
2. Mix all other ingredients \* well with hand and make to medium size meat balls
3. Put meat balls in sauce and cook on low heat for at least 90 minutes



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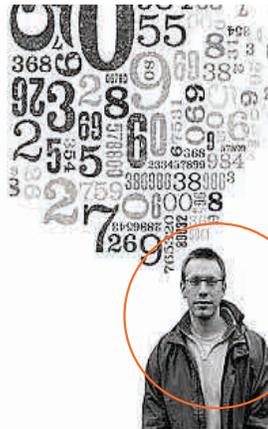
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Family     | <input type="checkbox"/> Donation           |
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By Sheiveh N. Jones, Ed.D.



## Lessons Learned as a Mother Translate to Lessons Learned as an Educator

Being a mother has been one of the hardest jobs I have ever had. Babysitting as a youth and teaching high school mathematics could never have prepared me for the greatest challenge of my life: having a smart son who just does not seem to fit into the traditional educational setting. Throughout the years, I have laid out our many trials and tribulations on the pages of *Peyk* in the hope that readers may gain some insights and learn from my mistakes and my successes. Though I am a public educator, being part of the system, and navigating the system as a parent, are very different experiences. With those trials and tribulations, today we are in a much better place than we were even 18 months ago, when our oldest son was dealing with bullying classmates and intolerant teachers who had already given up on him before he ever had a chance. Though bits and pieces of this success have been shared, I am compelled to share the whole story of where our son is today.

When we abruptly pulled him out of his last school district, our son's teacher reported that he could never finish his work during class. She punished him by keeping him in her class during recess so he could learn to be more focused when there was time in class. Additionally, he had scored *basic* (as opposed to *proficient* or *advanced*) on the California Standards Test (CST). We were even told at one point that he was below grade level in reading. After doing a lot of our own homework and quizzing my colleagues about our options, we finally found a school district we felt comfortable enough with to enroll our son. I spent a good bit of time with the principal to give him a rundown of our son's history and explain what I thought contributed to his struggles. The principal looked at me with a smile and said, "Sheiveh, your son is quirky. Most boys are. I like quirky boys and so does my staff." That was it.

Ashkon entered 5th grade last year at a new school and in a new school district. His principal, as promised, assigned him to a male teacher. The entire staff, from the principal and assistant principal to the teacher and the yard duty personnel, worked to ensure that Ashkon experienced small successes



throughout the year. He was selected to be a peer tutor in a before-school program that worked with struggling readers. He was also student of the month. As the year went by, my husband and I braced ourselves in anticipation of receiving the teacher phone call—the one that had a frustrated teacher on the other end of the phone telling us our child was having problems getting along with his peers and getting his work done. The phone call never came. Ashkon ended the school year with all As and Bs and terrific citizenship grades. This year, we received the CST scores only to find out that he has scored *advanced* across all subject areas.

Our son is now in 6th grade, which is considered middle school in his current school district. His teachers have expressed such an appreciation for Ashkon's personality and intelligence. He is so serious about school that when he gets home, he refuses to watch TV or play outside until he finishes his assignments.

What I have learned as a mother is that nobody is going to be as big of an advocate for my child as my husband and I will. As a matter of fact, it is our *job* to advocate for him. I have also learned, as I have often trained teachers in this, that when a student has high anxiety, his or her learning quality plummets. High anxiety associated with the learning environment equals low performance. As an educator, I am more aware than ever of ensuring that students' unique personalities are nurtured and viewed as a strength within the classroom and on campus. When we have tolerance for students who are different, we are more open to finding solutions for their best ways of learning. Through those solutions, students become successful.

# Calendar of Events

## Persian Cultural Center

Tel: (858) 653-0336 - Fax & Voice: (619) 374-7335  
Web site: [www.pccus.org](http://www.pccus.org)



## Persian Music Concert

### Jameh Daran

Hamnavazan Ensemble

**Saturday Jan. 14, 2012 7PM**

Forum Hall (UTC)

## Persian Cultural Center Nowruz Celebration March 2012

### Yoga and Meditation for Every Day

At San Diego County Library, 4S Ranch Branch

When: 1st and 2nd Tuesdays of each month

Time: 6:45pm

Where: 4s Ranch Library, Community Room

10433 Ranch Reserve Dr, San Diego, CA 92127

858-673-4697 With: Dr. Afshin Nahavandi

### Setar Workshop by Kourosh Taghavi

Registration and info: (858)-243-6008

**Tar Classes** by Ali Noori (858) 220-3674

**Daf Workshop** with Ali Sadr,

Tuesdays 6 to 7:30 PM at PCC office.

### Iranian School of San Diego

(858) 653-0336

**Branch I: Sundays** 9:30 am- 1:00 pm

**Branch II: Thursday** 6:00 pm - 8:00pm

At . Mt. Carmel High School

9550 Carmel Mt. Rd, San Diego, CA 92129

**ISSD Nowruz preparation,** March 4, 2012 ,10am

**ISSD Nowruz Celebration,** March 11, 2012

### Parenting Seminar

**with Dr. Cyrus Nakhshab**

Sunday January 23, 2011, From 10:00 to 12:00

At ISSD ( Mt. Carmel High School ) Room C-2

\$15 for one parent \$20 for both parents

9550 Carmel Mt. Rd

San Diego, CA 92129

### Persian Dance Academy of San Diego

(858) 653-0336

[www.pccus.org](http://www.pccus.org)

### Dollar a Month Fund

Tel: (858) 653-0336 • [www.dmfund.org](http://www.dmfund.org)

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Dollar-a-Month-Fund>

### Nowruz Bazar

March 4, 2012 from 10am – 12 pm

At Mt. Carmel High School



## Dar Shahr Cheh Khabar?

### Association of Iranian American Professionals (AIAP)

Tel: (858)207-6232 • [www.aiap.org](http://www.aiap.org)

Last Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM

### ISTA (Iranian Student Association at UC San Diego)

visit us at [www.istaucsd.org](http://www.istaucsd.org)

### House of Iran

Tel: (619) 232-Iran Balboa Park, Sundays 12:00-4:00pm

### Iranian-American Scholarship Fund

Tel: (858) 653-0336 • [www.iasfund.org](http://www.iasfund.org)

### Mehrgan Foundation

[www.Mehrganfoundation.org](http://www.Mehrganfoundation.org) Tel (858) 673-7000

### Iranian Women's Study Group of San Diego

Meets: First Sunday of the month • Contact: (858) 952-6713

### PAAIA

Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian American

[www.paaia.org](http://www.paaia.org)

### NIAC

National Iranian American Council

[www.niac.org](http://www.niac.org)

### Book Club Meeting

Last Sat. of each month

Sufi Mediterranean Cuisine

5915 Balboa Ave, San Diego, CA 92111

### On January 29, 2012,

### PAAIA's signature event

"Passing the Torch of Success," will be held at University of California, San Diego's (UCSD) Mandeville Auditorium from 3:00 to 6:00 pm.

### Mingei International Museum

FAMILY SUNDAY

Sunday, January 15, 2012 Noon - 4 pm , Location: Balboa Park

Special Family Sunday admission, from noon to 4 pm:

Information: Johanna Saretzki, 619.704.7506

Email: [jsaretzki@mingei.org](mailto:jsaretzki@mingei.org)

### Holiday LEGO Train Exhibit 11/22/11 – 1/14/12

San Diego Model Railroad Museum

Location: Balboa Park

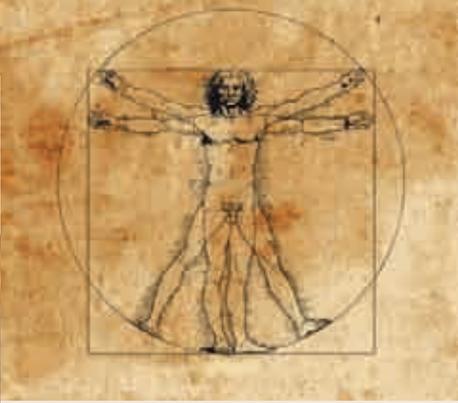
Description: San Diego Model Railroad Museum celebrates its annual Lego Train Exhibit.

### Phenomenal: California Light, Space, Surface

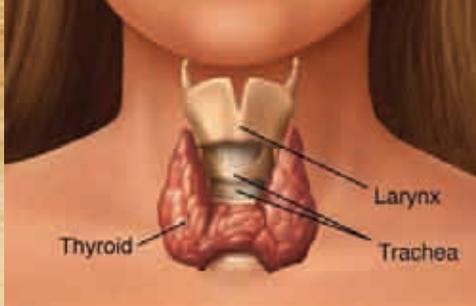
9/25/11 – 1/22/12

Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, Downtown

Location: Downtown



By Sanaz Majd, MD



## The Thyroid Gland

The thyroid gland seems to really confuse many patients – mostly because the lab tests may be a tad tricky to interpret. But thyroid problems are very common, and it is important for all of us to be aware of what the thyroid gland really does and how it affects our bodies when it malfunctions.

### What is the Thyroid Gland?

The thyroid gland is a small organ that sits in the middle of the neck and is typically not visible. You may be able to feel yours by gently placing your fingers around the mid-center of your neck and then swallowing. The thyroid gland moves upward with swallowing. The thyroid gland releases two types of thyroid hormones, “T3” and “T4.” The thyroid gland is regulated directly by another small organ in the lower brain called the “pituitary gland.” This gland releases a hormone called “TSH,” or Thyroid Stimulating Hormone, that tells the thyroid gland what to do and how much hormone to release.

### What Does the Thyroid Gland Do?

The thyroid gland is such a small but very significant organ in the body because it regulates our “metabolism.” This means it can affect our entire body and all of the chemical processes that need to occur in order for us to function and survive. This includes how our other organs function, how we process food, how we burn energy, and how we feel overall.

### Lab Results: What Do They Mean?

The easiest and most common way to test our thyroid is by checking our TSH levels, and this is perhaps the cause of the confusion for many patients. When the thyroid gland fails to produce enough thyroid hormone, the pituitary releases *more* TSH in order to stimulate the thyroid gland to produce more thyroid hormone. And when the thyroid releases too much thyroid hormone, the pituitary does the opposite and actually *backs off* on releasing TSH. Therefore, when someone has low thyroid levels, the TSH comes back *high*. And when there are high thyroid levels, the TSH is actually *low*. It may initially seem counterintuitive, but now that you recognize the physiology of the pituitary and thyroid, it hopefully makes more sense.

It is also now possible to test the occurrence of T3 and T4 in what is called their “free form,” which is when the hormones are not bound to any proteins in the blood and are therefore “free” in the bloodstream. However, this is typically not necessary as the initial screen when testing someone for thyroid disorders.

### What is Hypothyroidism?

Hypothyroidism is diagnosed when there are *low* thyroid hormones, hence the prefix “hypo.” It is the most common problem associated with the thyroid. Those with hypothyroid may experience the following symptoms:

- Fatigue
- Depression
- Constipation
- Hair loss
- Weight gain
- Dry skin
- Irregular menstrual cycles

Hypothyroidism is typically easier to control, and treatment is with thyroid hormone supplements in a pill form. Initially it may take your doctor several trials to find the right dose that works to regulate your specific thyroid gland, and after that it requires a yearly blood test to make sure your thyroid continues to be regulated with the same dose.

### What is Hyperthyroidism?

In hyperthyroidism, like the “hyper” prefix indicates, there is an *elevated* thyroid hormone level. The most common cause of hyperthyroidism is an inherited disorder called “Graves Disease” in which the body produces certain proteins that attack the thyroid gland and tell it to increase hormone production. Symptoms are typically the *opposite* of hypothyroidism:

- Increased energy
- Anxiety
- Tremor
- Elevated heart rate
- Heart palpitations
- Diarrhea
- Weight loss
- High cholesterol
- Bone loss or osteoporosis

Hyperthyroidism may be a tad more complex to treat with the goal of destroying the overactive thyroid gland. Treatment can consist of an oral medication, surgery, or radiation using radioactive iodine. Those who have surgery or radiation to treat their hyperthyroid often become *hypothyroid* afterwards and require the supplemental pill needed to treat it for lifetime.

# PAAIA and ISTA Carry The Torch to San Diego



On January 29, 2012, PAAIA's signature event, "Passing the Torch of Success," will be held at University of California, San Diego's (UCSD) Mandeville Auditorium from 3:00 to 6:00 pm. UCSD's Iranian Student's Association (ISTA) has collaborated with the San Diego Chapter of PAAIA to produce this inspiring event, which is the seventh of a series previously staged in Los Angeles, New York,

Orange County, Berkeley, Houston, and Washington D.C.

Co-hosted by Maz Jobrani, actor/comedian and Shally Zomorodi, San Diego's Fox news anchor, "Passing the Torch of Success," spotlights

Iranian-Americans who have distinguished themselves in their discipline, and gives them the stage so they may pass their life and career experiences to the next generation of Iranian-Americans.

Speakers represent a wide range of professions, including:

**Firoozeh Dumas:** nationally acclaimed humorist and author of "Funny in Farsi" and "Laughing Without an Accent" will be talking about keeping our heritage alive.

**Hamid Biglari:** Nuclear Physicist turned finance guru, Vice Chairman of Citicorp will share his lessons from his climb of the corporate ladder.

**Vali Nasr:** Former senior Advisor to the Obama administration, author and Professor at Tufts University will share his career path on how he came about influencing and advising world leaders on Middle Eastern policies.

**Kamran Elahian:** Veteran entrepreneur, international philanthropist, and the Chairman and Co-founder of Global Catalyst Partners will share his life stories on business and international philanthropy.

**Dr. Shahram Daneshmand:** CNN Hero nominee who is a young San Diego obstetrician and founder of the non-profit organization, "Miracle Babies," will share his philanthropic vision.

The program will also feature two musical performances by:



**Tara Kamangar:** a world class pianist and composer who excels at blending the best of Western and Persian compositions. Tara is an honors graduate of Harvard University as well as London's Royal Academy of Music.

**Sharam:** an Iranian-American progressive Grammy winning DJ, formerly part of the Deep Dish duo.

The event will begin at 3:00 p.m. (Doors open at 2:00 pm) at UCSD's Mandeville Auditorium. Tickets are \$30 for general admission and \$15 for students with valid I.D. and free for UCSD students.

Tickets are available for purchase online:

For additional information regarding the upcoming "Passing the Torch of Success," please contact: [www.sandiegoptt.com](http://www.sandiegoptt.com)

ABOUT PAAIA and ISTA:

**ISTA at UCSD** is a non-profit student organization and independent of any political or religious beliefs and/or organizations. ISTA strives to promote Iranian and Iranian-American community and culture, foster friendship among different cultural groups, provide support for Iranian community at UCSD and help new Iranian students get settled at the university. Learn more about ISTA at UCSD at [www.istaucsd.org](http://www.istaucsd.org).

**PAAIA** ~ The Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans (PAAIA) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonsectarian organization dedicated to advancing the domestic interests of Iranian Americans and bringing them together as a collaborative community in service to each other and to society at large. To achieve its mission, PAAIA focuses on connecting and strengthening our community, our youth, and our voice. Please visit [www.paaia.org](http://www.paaia.org) to learn more about PAAIA.

## IRANIAN ART SERIES: SAFAVID ART BEFORE 1600: RENAISSANCE OF IRANIAN ART

In the early sixteenth century, Iran was united under the rule of the Safavid dynasty (A.D. 1501–1722). The Safavids were the greatest dynasty to emerge from Iran in the Islamic period and descended from a long line of Sufi shaikhs who maintained their headquarters at Ardabil, in northwestern Iran. In their rise to power, they were supported by Turkman tribesmen known as the Qizilbash, or red heads, on account of their distinctive red caps. By 1501, Ismael Safavi and his Qizilbash warriors wrested control of Azerbaijan from the Aq Quyunlu, and in the same year Ismael was crowned in Tabriz as the first Safavid shah (ruled A.D. 1501–24). Safavid declared Shi'i Islam as the official religion of the Safavid state, which at the time consisted only of Azerbaijan. But within ten years, all of Iran was brought under Safavid power. While Shi'i was the dominant religion in the region under Safavid rule, throughout the sixteenth century, two powerful neighbors, the Shaibanids to the east and the Ottomans to the west (both orthodox Sunni states), threatened the Safavid empire.

In the Safavid era, manuscript illustration was prominent with a good number of royal patrons. Ismael's son, Tahmasp (ruled 1524–76), who had been trained in painting at an early age, was an active patron of book illustrations. Artists from the Qara Quyunlu, Aq Quyunlu, and Timurid courts were brought together and their different techniques and styles helped the formation of a new Safavid style of painting. One of the most renowned manuscripts from the period is the *Shahnama* epic, which is now dispersed. Safavid miniature is famous for its elegant lines, the vivid colors, and the attention to details of textile and plantation. While there is no sign of one-point linear perspective, the artist creates a sense of space by overlapping, and counts on the viewer's pre-knowledge of the story. (Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.)

In *The Feast of Sada*, the first kings of Iran contribute to the civilization of humanity by introducing a variety of activities and crafts. Fire, however, was an accidental discovery. According to legend, one day King Hushang saw a hideous monster hiding behind a rock and tried to scare him by throwing a stone at him. Hitting a boulder, the rock produced sparks, and fire was discovered. The shah interpreted this as a divine gift and decided to celebrate the event on that same night with a great gathering. Hereafter, the feast of Sada as the commemoration of the discovery of fire became a customary celebration. (Figure 1.)



Figure 3. *A Princely Hawking Party in the Mountains*, A.D. 1575, Safavid, attributed to Mirza Ali.

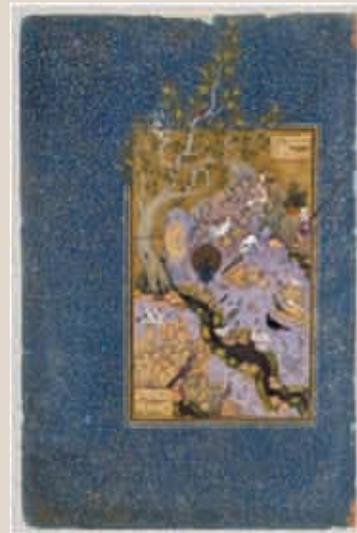


Figure 5. *The Conference of the Birds*, page from a manuscript of the *Mantiq al-Tayr* (The Language of the Birds) by Farid al-Din Attar, A.D. 1600, Safavid.



Figure 1. *The Feast of Sada*, from the *Shahnama* (Book of Kings) of Shah Tahmasp, A.D. 1525, attributed to Sultan Muhammad.

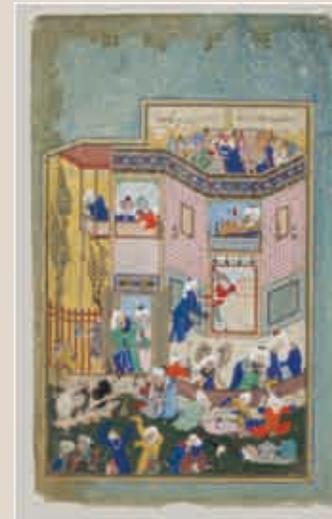


Figure 2. *Allegory of Worldly & Otherworldly Drunkenness*, from the *Divan of Hafiz*, A.D. 1526–2, by Sultan Muhammad.

Sultan Muhammad is probably the most visionary painter of sixteenth century Iran. He bravely presented the mystically and morally ambiguous verses of the poet Hafiz (circa A.D. 1315–1389). In the example here (Figure 2), the book of Hafiz is dedicated to the mystically inclined, but also sensuous ruler, Shah Tahmasp. Mystical wine, symbol of heaven's divine light, pours into the receiving cup that signifies the devotee's heart, the Sufi dervishes. They sing, dance, and faint in mystical ecstasy. The inspired poet is Hafiz himself, who meditates in visionary rapture, suspended between the higher world that only he sees clearly and the devotees who yearningly hear their beloved poet's flying words down in the world below.

The exuberant quality of this composition has long been associated with the style of Sultan Muhammad, a major artist of the early Safavid period and the director of the manuscript project for several years. The scene develops around its main protagonist—fire, surrounded by a lively and colorful crowd of humans and animals. The gathering is framed by iridescent rock formations hiding monstrous shapes, which could be interpreted as entrapped spirits, perhaps a visual pun by the artist meant as a reminder of the unwitting cause of Hushang's discovery.



Figure 6. Maidan-i Shah (Royal Square), Isfahan, Iran.

In architecture, the Safavids commissioned mosques and palace complexes, restored major shrines, and contributed to sites of pilgrimage. Though Shah Ismael is known to have commissioned construction throughout the empire, only modest buildings survive from

his reign. Text references and scattered remains indicate that Shah Tahmasp also sponsored numerous building projects, mostly in Qazvin, his capital after 1555, but very few of these buildings survive today.

The most distinguished of Safavid rulers and the greatest patron of the arts was Shah Abbas (ruled A.D. 1587–1629). His time in power was recognized as a period of military and political reform as well as of cultural florescence. It is due to Shah Abbas' reforms that the Safavid forces were finally able to defeat the Ottoman army in the early seventeenth century. Shah Abbas reign brought stability to the empire. During 1597–1598, Shah Abbas transferred his capital to Isfahan, in southern Iran, where he built a new city alongside the old one. The centerpiece of his capital was the new Maidan-i Shah (Royal Square), which was conceived and constructed initially for state ceremonies and sports. Over the next several decades, major monuments were erected on three sides of the Royal Square by Abbas and his successors. Shah Abbas encouraged trade with Europe—at the time silk was Iran's main export. Carpets and textiles were also important export items. The art of painting continued to flourish, with single-page paintings. Artistic and architectural developments under Shah Abbas continued into the early seventeenth century. (Figure 6.)

Continue from page 9



5. **Offer alternatives.** With family members, do not accept excuses for not helping without offering alternatives. A sibling who lives far away, for example, can help with paying bills, contacting doctors' offices, or seeking support from local agencies.
6. **Hold family meetings.** Schedule them regularly, and bring in distant family by phone. Choose a neutral party to moderate if necessary.
7. **Involve your children.** When you have parents and children who need your time and attention, you may feel pulled from both sides. Be honest with your children about the situation, and listen to their concerns. Encourage their questions, and answer them thoroughly. Carve out time for fun activities, and request your children's help.
8. **Talk to your spouse/partner.** Have a discussion with your partner about your caregiving responsibilities. What role do you expect him or her to play? Suggest specific ways your partner can help. Recognize that your responsibilities affect your significant other also and encourage discussions about any frustrations.
9. **Determine housing options and preferences:** With your parents, discuss whether they want to continue to care for their home or whether they have considered living elsewhere. Depending on their health and well-being, they can either stay in their home with some changes and additional help or consider other options such as an assisted living residence or a continuing care retirement community.
10. **Research helpful services:** Consider home care, adult day services, meal delivery, and help with everyday activities such as preparing meals and doing laundry.

I wish I had known a lot of the above information ahead of time, but it was a learning journey and I was most encouraged by my friends who asked that I write this article. My mother is now in a wonderful independent facility called Atria in Encinitas and I would like to make myself available via phone and/or email to respond to any questions that anyone may have about this facility or the above article. Be assured that it will all be kept in confidence. I learned the power of sharing and of support—it is priceless—so, I too encourage communication and hope that I can be of help in some small way.

minouesadeghi@me.com

Cell: 619-723-9566

# The End of “The History” the Beginning of Histories:

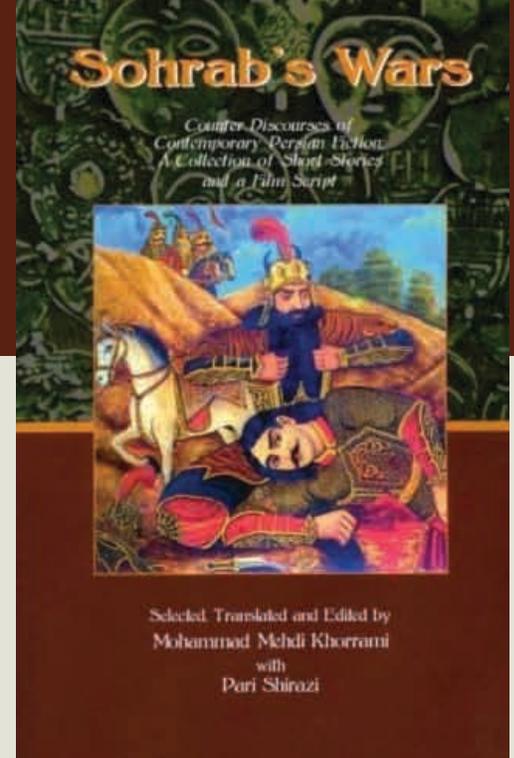
## Sohrab’s Wars

### Contemporary Reflections on Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh

Mohammad Mehdi Khorrami, professor of Middle Eastern studies at New York University, is an expert on contemporary Persian fiction. *Sohrab’s Wars: Counter-Discourses of Contemporary Persian Fiction* (Mazda Publishers), which he selected and translated with Pari Shirazi, is an exciting collection of short stories and a film script originally written in Persian. *Sohrab’s Wars* fills two important gaps: first, it addresses the relative dearth of Persian fiction in translation, and second, it sheds light on a largely overlooked body of work that deals with the discourse of war in Iran and Afghanistan. Khorrami’s endeavor contributes to a deeper understanding of postwar societies at large while it also challenges the strict monopoly that state authorities attempt to exercise over the publication and interpretation of alternative narratives.

*Sohrab’s Wars* highlights the power of storytelling as a social act that stands against the grand narrative of the state, which attempts to unify and mobilize the masses behind a particular ideology and agenda. The single divine truth promoted by the power discourse is decomposed into myriad truths—each story conveys its own personal identity and in the eyes of the reader each perspective carries equal gravity. Thus *the* history is replaced with histories. In the past three decades, efforts to overemphasize politicized religiosity while annihilating Iran’s literary and cultural identity have not been limited to intellectual censorship. Even historic statues that evoke the figures and tales of Persian mythology have been vandalized or entirely destroyed. It is against this backdrop that the significance of *Sohrab’s Wars* needs to be understood. The stories in this collection constantly evoke and reference classical Persian literature to reflect on Iran’s modern history, in particular the tales of the *Shahnameh*, which have often been used as a means to challenge and reject the forced loss of identity.

Khorrami writes, “After the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the Islamic Republic, in addition to its efforts to eradicate voices of the Other, began producing narratives which were intended to define the past and the current history in the image of the new discourse in power.” A new generation of Iranian writers, with a personalized definition of history, has connected past and present in their narratives. Using classical Persian tales that still resonate meaningfully



with Iranians, they make sense of present events. The language of classical tales may not be entirely accessible to many Iranians today, but their sociocultural relevance, as demonstrated by these stories, is timeless.

One such example in which personal history confronts the state-authorized version is Marjan Riahi’s “Eight-thirty in the Morning,” featured here. In this short story about isolation and personal autonomy, the brevity of each sentence conveys a sense of disconnection from the world, a narrative in fragments, a life torn by war. Farzaneh, like thousands of other women during the interminable conflict with Iraq, anticipates the arrival of her fiancé. Unlike conventional war narratives, Riahi’s brief tale does not delve into concepts of heroism and martyrdom. In Farzaneh’s world, soldiers are not holy warriors; they are simply men in boots. War is not about victory and defeat determined on the fronts of right and wrong; it is a “red stain” on a letter.

The story does not concern itself with the portrayal of war by the state authority. The grand narrative is minimized to the radio program and televised footages. Farzaneh is increasingly isolated. She is imprisoned in her house, increasingly alien to the outside world. But out of this isolation, a personalized narrative is born, one that concerns itself with the grievances of Farzaneh, one that views war through her lens, through her experiences.

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### Eight-thirty in the Morning

Marjan Riahi

I was seventeen. I stood in the middle of the courtyard, on the edge of the small pool. My cousin came in. I had no time to reach for my chador. The sleeves of my flower-patterned dress were short. I blushed. He turned his face away. It was the first time he was

returning from the war<sup>1</sup>. Everybody was whispering behind our backs. My cousin had said, Engagement means *mahramiat*. He had said that he wanted to be able to sit somewhere with me and talk.

We sat in the park. It was early evening. He spoke to me: “Farzaneh!”

I said: “Hmm!”

He said: “Don’t say, ‘Hmm’; say something beautiful.”

I said: “Hello.”

He laughed. He recited a poem. He liked poetry. I didn’t know any poems. He said, “What do you like?”

I said: “Eight-thirty in the morning.”

He said: “Why?”

I said, “At this hour everything is alive.” I said, “Every day, I ask the teacher for permission to go to the bathroom, but then I go to the courtyard, among the flowers. When the Vice Principal sees me, I say I’ve lost my keys.”

He said: “How long will you tell lies?”

I said: “Forever.”

He said: “Then what about the Vice Principal?”

I said: “Some days we look for the keys together.”

I looked at him. The sun went down. Then he went back to war. Every day I went to school. I kept telling myself, “One of these days, school will end!” I said to myself, “To hell with school!”

He was at war, his footprints in the park and the trace of his eyes on the Si-o Seh Pol<sup>3</sup>. I remembered every word he had said. Every day I repeated them so I wouldn’t forget. Once he called. I said, “Hello”, but we were cut off. Once he sent a letter. There was a red stain on the letter. Mother said: “It is blood; go clean your hand.”

I kissed the letter.

I looked in the mirror; I was seventeen. The white dress was becoming to my skin. Mother was buying me my trousseau. Everything was ready, to be with him. He came back from the war. Unannounced. Suddenly. I came back from school. There was a pair of boots behind the hall door. He had left with two of his friends. He had come back alone. He looked out of it. At eight-thirty in the morning, near the Zayandeh Rud<sup>4</sup> he seemed sharp. Coffins were passing over the bridge, and he was crying. His crying saddened me.

He told me: “I am sorry.”

I said: “Why?”

He said: “I am making you sad.”

I said: “No.”

I was lying. His eyes were puffy. His beard was untrimmed and the collar of his shirt was perfectly clean.

He said: “How do I look?”

I said: “You look like eight-thirty in the morning.”

He laughed. Then he went back to war. The radio was talking about the war. Whatever he said I accepted. But I wanted to tell him not to go to war. I was walking along the Zayandeh Rud and he was walking, perhaps, along the Karkheh<sup>5</sup>. In the evening on television they showed footage of the war. I was looking for him. Everybody had a gun but nobody was him. Aunt said that last time she had boiled his clothes. Insects were everywhere inside them. I said, “Certainly he has stayed among the bullets for a long time.”

Then everything collapses. I didn’t go to school either. People were not in the city. We were in the basement at Aunt’s. The ground was shaking. The windows were jingling. His letter was not coming. He didn’t call either. Every time a missile hit, Mother fainted. Cousins screamed. I was afraid. But I was happy. Now I had something to tell him. In the mornings, at eight-thirty, Mother said, “Don’t leave the basement.” Aunt said, “Don’t look at the garden from behind the glass.” Cousin said, “If it breaks, it will fall in your eyes.” I sighed.

We stayed in the basement for a few weeks. We were gradually forgetting there was a Zayandeh Rud outside. Then someone rang the doorbell. He said something. Mother sat down. Aunt sat down. Whoever was standing sat down. I stumbled. We waited for him. Many people were waiting. And they came, being carried on the shoulders. Nobody’s shoulders were empty.

In the morning, at eight-thirty, they buried him.

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1. Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988).
2. *Mahramiat* (or being *mahram*) is a religious term. According to the traditional interpretation of Islamic laws, individuals of the opposite sex may see and interact with each other only when they are *mahram*. Other than members of one’s immediate family, they may become *mahram* to each other only through marriage or after conducting specific religious ceremonies.
3. A famous historical bridge in Esfahan.
4. The river that runs through Esfahan.
5. A river in southern Iran.

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# Dear Readers:



As a part of our community services, we have approached some of the Iranian medical specialist in various fields to send us their information to share with the community. We appreciate the work of Dr. Reza Shirazi who spearheaded this effort. The following list is not complete by any means. If you are a Medical Doctor and would like to be added to this list, please send your information to Dr. Shirazi or directly to *Peyk*.

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