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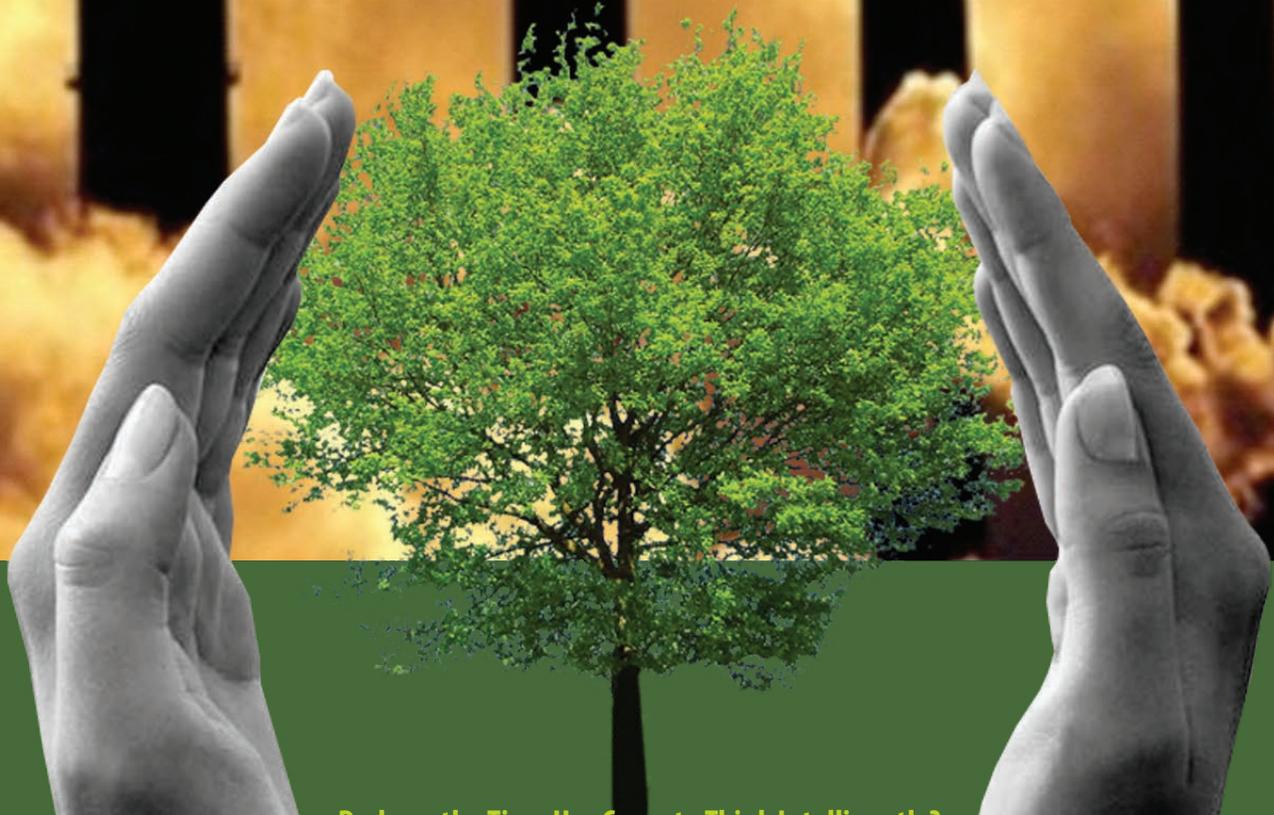


Persian Cultural Center's Bilingual Magazine
P.O. Box 500914, San Diego CA 92150

کانون فرهنگی ایرانیان

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By: Shahri Estakhry



PERHAPS THE TIME HAS COME TO THINK INTELLIGENTLY?

According to all reports, this was the driest and warmest summer in the history of this nation. The most unusual year, to be exact. According to the World Resources Institute, “Stabilizing the global climate is the great challenge of the 21st century. Temperatures have exceeded global averages for 36 consecutive years. The world is already beginning to feel the impacts. Extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and severe. Heat waves and drought plague many countries, destroying agriculture, sparking wildfires, and endangering lives. And rising sea levels threaten coastal communities and infrastructure with flooding and storm surge.” (www.wri.org/our-work/topics/climate)

The time has come for us to understand the facts with regard to climate change, and stop listening to politically insane rhetoric no matter who has a microphone in hand. Trying to converse with climate change deniers is like, as satirist Jon Stewart pointed out, akin to “pushing a million pounds of idiots up a mountain.” The arguments of 15 years ago no longer, under any circumstances, hold true. Any intelligent person can look and see what is actually happening. You don’t need to go far... the challenge is there, just water your lawn as much as you like and then see what kind of fine will arrive at your doorstep! Look at us in California, once the most prosperous state in the nation and among the top 10 economies of the world. The drought is real and the harm that it has brought to our farmers, crops, and livestock, not to mention the resulting decreasing of our purchasing power as prices climb, is devastating. If, by some chance, we are crazier than one would think, we might be thinking that it is going to get better, but it won’t. Wake up folks, scientific research tells different. Stop listening to politics!

One way to stop hanging on the biased words of the media and politicians is to go straight to scientific sources. The U.S. Climate Prediction Center, a division of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), oversees all facts related to our climate, i.e., storms, hurricanes, drought, weather, forecast outlooks, etc. Even a quick perusal of the Climate Prediction Center’s website (www.cpc.noaa.gov/) will show you that persistent drought is what awaits our future! Another scientific organization, climateprediction.net (a climate modeling project from the University of Oxford’s Environmental Change Institute), published very interesting research commentary by two leading scientists, Roberto Mera and Brenda Ekwurzel from the Union of Concerned Scientists, entitled “*Weather@home Climate Accountability: the causes of extreme heat in the Western US.*” The article attempts to calculate the effect of the world’s major carbon producers on climate change, an eye opener of current climate realities with facts that back it up.

Mera and Ekwurzel point out that, “[o]ver the past several years, scientists have succeeded in tracking with increasing confidence the portion of climate change that is tied directly to human activity, especially the burning of fossil fuels. Recently published research documents that nearly two-thirds of the industrial carbon pollution released into the atmosphere since 1854 can be directly traced to the carbon extracted from the Earth by just 90 entities – 83 producers of coal, oil and natural gas, and 7 cement manufacturers.” **Now, please carefully read what follows:** “Building on this research, the Union of Concerned Scientists is now collaborating with leading scientists who study climate change consequences at a regional scale and beyond. For the first time, this research will calculate the contribution of the world’s major carbon producers to climate change (such as increased average temperature, or increased number of days of extreme heat).

The California and Nevada heat wave of 2006, as well as the record-setting heat wave of late June 2013 in the Southwest were both deadly and costly for the local population. Recent research is able to attribute these types of events to climate change. The research shows that heat waves such as those in 2006 and 2013 in the Western U.S. were nearly 5 times more likely during the 2000s compared to the 1960s due to climate change.” (www.climateprediction.net/weatherathome/carbon-majors-project/)

I’m not running for any political office, promoting my agenda at the expense of the safety of my community and my loved ones. At this time and at my age, with all that is going on in the world, I guess only fools would want to be political “know-it-alls.” But I had to write about this urgent matter that affects us all and I have given references to the complete commentary by reputable individuals and a major center that oversees our climate predictions. Take time to review this, please, as our future survival depends on knowledgeable decisions we make now—decisions that should have nothing to do with political parties, but humanity. Our main concern needs to be saving and keeping the earth in a respectable, if not better, atmosphere for our future generations. We owe them this!

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همیاران گرامی و خوانندگان محترم پیک،

با پشتیبانی مالی خود از راه عضو شدن و یا تجدید عضویت، ما را در پیشبرد اهداف فرهنگی یاری فرمایید. اعضای کانون فرهنگی ایرانیان مشمول تخفیفات ویژه (بلیط برنامه های مختلف کانون، تخفیف از مراکز تجاری) خواهند بود و همچنین مجله پیک نشریه کانون فرهنگی ایرانیان مجاناً در اختیار آنها قرار می گیرد. لطفاً فرم پاکت وسط مجله را پر کرده و برای ما ارسال فرمایید.

لطفاً در نظر داشته باشید اگر تنها مایل به دریافت مجله پیک هستید با پرداخت هزینه پست آن پیک مستقیماً برایتان ارسال خواهد شد.

با سپاس
کانون فرهنگی ایرانیان

Dear Readers and Members:

We need your support. Please become a member or renew your membership. Your financial support is vital to the existence and operation of Persian Cultural Center. Your donation and membership fees are tax deductible and will enable PCC to deliver the high quality diverse programming that you have come to enjoy! In addition, as a PCC member, you will be entitled to special program discounts, six issues of Peyk magazine per year, and discounts to an ever growing selection of businesses, retail stores and restaurants.

The following are businesses from which you will receive a discount with your membership card.

Alex Cleaners	American Security RX	Apadana Cleaners
Asho Fabrics	Balboa International Market	Cal Copy
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International Market & Grill		

Please take time to review our several tiers of membership and support us at the level that is appropriate for you and your family. Please complete the membership application at the desired level and return it to us in the enclosed envelope. Once again, we thank you for your continued support. If you are only interested in receiving Peyk Magazine by mail, please contribute the postage fee, as indicated in the form. We will be glad to mail you your copy.

Respectfully,

Board of Directors of Persian Cultural Center

PCC NEWS

We are proud to present our new workshop for the community entitled "TASNIF KHANI" – Traditional singing with the guidance of Kourosh Taghavi (Setar) and Milad Jahadi (Tonbak). The first session took place on August 22 at the Iranian American Center (IAC). The theme of this workshop was "ISFAHAN" and attendees worked on 3 songs.

The next of the series took place on October 3. The attendees enjoyed the nostalgic and fun atmosphere of the gathering. These workshops are a reminder that the classical music of our homeland is full of joy, soul and energy! We will notify you of the next session by email; if you are not on our email list and would like to be added you can call the PCC office at (858) 552-9355. You can also check our website (www.pccsd.org) for news of all upcoming events and more.

The September 12 session of JONG E FARHANGI was led by Mr. Saeed Nouri Bushehri and was dedicated to the legendary SIMIN BEHBEHANI. The session started with the biography of the poet and continued with a recital of her poems. The music for this program was provided as usual by our friends Kourosh Taghavi and Milad Jahadi. Part two of the session contained a lecture by Mrs. Homa Ehsaan.

The October 10 session of JONG E FARHANGI was led by Mr. Ali Sadr, and focused on the celebration of MEHREGAN. We remembered our history and traditions, read poetry and welcomed the autumn season. The music for this session was performed by Farid Afshari (piano) and Masih Saalafzoon (Daf / Tonbak). The program also contained two interview sessions with Mr. Aram Soltani, painter and graphic artist who has recently moved to San Diego with his family. The second half of the program was allocated to an interview with Dr. Ali Gheissari, the prominent historian and professor at the University of San Diego. The interview was about the effect of the Constitutional Revolution on literature, particularly on the political satire.

Platinum Level, \$1,000 and up

Free admission to all PCC events for 2 plus all the benefits of the general membership

Gold Level, \$500-\$999

Free admission to all PCC events for 1 plus all the benefits of the general membership

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50% off the admission to all PCC events for 2, excluding Nowruz and Fundraisers, plus all the benefits of the general membership

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20% off the admission to all PCC events for 2, excluding Nowruz and Fundraisers, plus all the benefits of the general membership

On second Sunday of each month our Movie Club organizes a screening and discussion of an Iranian movie at the IAC. The movies are selected based on their importance during certain periods of Iranian Cinema. The last two movies screened were "The last curtain" by Varoogh Karim Masihi (1990) and "Hamoon" by Daryoosh Mehrjooei (1990).

Our main collaborative program was with THE SAN DIEGO MUSEUM OF ART at Balboa Park. The Museum, with the help of PCC members, resurrected its collection of PERSIAN ART GALLERY. This was a VIP fundraising event and featured beautiful pieces of art and calligraphy. The event was a great success; however our community support will be needed to keep the Persian Hall Exhibit alive.



Islamophobia is Real and Real Dangerous

By: Shaghayegh Hanson

Bill Maher has nearly killed me. He has literally made my blood pressure rise to an explosive level with his rampant, racist, and ridiculous raging against Islam. He has stirred up such deep-seated sensitivities in me that I find myself having to defend a religion I do not adhere to in order to protect my secular rights. I know...I barely understand it myself! But I will try to make sense as I go along.

These are the things Maher has been saying on his HBO television show *Real Time*:

1. Maher said that Islam is “the only religion that acts like the mafia” and will “f***ing kill you if you say the wrong thing, draw the wrong picture or write the wrong book.” He further stated, with arrogant confidence, that “if vast numbers of Muslims across the world believe, *and they do*, that humans deserve to die for merely holding the wrong view,” then they share the same mentality as ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria). His guest, Dinesh D’Souza, a well-known right-wing conservative, concurred with Maher, stating that “you don’t see a whole lot of Buddhist suicide bombers.” Maher and his audience laughed.

It is really hard to know where to begin. I mean, is Maher really saying he absolutely knows what the majority of the 1.6 billion Muslims in this world are thinking? First of all, if the point is that only Muslims perform suicide bombings, history not only informs that suicide attacks began in eleventh century India, but also that the idea has been taken up by other religious and political groups. A recent example is the Hindu-based Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka, who invented the modern “suicide vest,” and have performed suicide bombings since the 1980s. Second, if the point is that Buddhists would never do this because, unlike Islam, Buddhism is not inherently evil, how do you explain the current anti-Muslim campaign against the Rohingya people of Myanmar, led by Buddhist monks who invoke the demands of their faith? The anti-Rohingya organization is called the 969 Movement, taking its name from the nine attributes of Buddha, the six qualities of his teachings, and the nine attributes of the monks. Their leader is a monk who calls himself the “Burmese Bin Laden,” and he and his monks have led pogroms against the Rohingya which have resulted in hundreds of deaths.

OK, the Koran does say that conversion to another religion should be punished by death, but so does the Torah in the Jewish faith. And, as far as the Bible is concerned, you can be put to death for even less: “Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death” (Leviticus 20:9); “If a man commits adultery with another man’s wife—with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death” (Leviticus 20:10); and “For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day shall be your holy day, a day of Sabbath rest to the Lord. Whoever does any work on it is to be put to death” (Exodus 35:2).

Just because these things are written, does it mean that the “vast majority” of Christians believe people deserve to be put to death for the transgressions mentioned? Does it mean that people in the United States, a Christian-majority country, of which twenty-three percent describe themselves as born again Evangelicals, believe these transgressions deserve death? Of course not. But does it mean that a few “bad apples” might take scripture to its most extreme interpretation? Or that autocratic regimes may use scripture to rule a vulnerable land? Of course.

Dean Obeidallah, a contributor to *The Daily Beast*, noted some mainstream “bad apples” in his article, *The Conservative Crusade for Christian Sharia Law* (published on February 18, 2014). As Obeidallah pointed out, in 2012, Republican presidential candidate Rick Santorum stated that the laws in our country must “comport” with God’s law. Santorum opposed marriage equality, stating that our nation’s values “are based on Biblical truth... And, those truths don’t change just because people’s attitudes may change.” Former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, who is considering running for president in 2016, stated during his 2008 presidential race that our laws should be in accordance with God’s. Huckabee, an ordained Southern Baptist minister, said: “...I believe it’s a lot easier to change the Constitution than it would be to change the word of the living God. And that’s what we need to do is amend the Constitution so it’s in God’s standards rather than trying to change God’s standards so it lines up with some contemporary view...”

What about the renegade Christians? The Ku Klux Klan invokes and uses symbols of Christian identity. Although the Klan’s membership has decreased from millions in the 1920s to mere thousands today, a partial reason for the reduction is that supporters have moved to other hate groups, such as the “Aryan Nations,” a heavily Christian-based group.

In July 2011, Anders Behring Breivik was arrested and charged with terrorism after a car bombing in Oslo and a mass shooting on Utøya Island in Norway that killed 77 people. Prior to these events, Breivik released a 1,500-page manifesto in which he stated that immigrants were undermining Norway’s traditional Christian values, and identified himself as a “Christian crusader.” On May 31, 2009, anti-abortionist Scott Roeder murdered Wichita doctor George Tiller because of Roeder’s belief that abortion is murder under “God’s law.” The group supporting Roeder proclaimed that the force used was “legitimate to protect the life of an unborn child,” and called on all Christians to “rise up” and “take action” against threats to Christianity and to unborn life. In 1996, Christian terrorist Eric Robert Rudolph carried out the Centennial Olympic Park bombing, as well as subsequent attacks on an abortion clinic and on a lesbian nightclub.

In 2010, the FBI infiltrated Hutaree, a Christian militia group based in Adrian, Michigan. A federal grand jury in Detroit indicted nine of its members on charges of seditious conspiracy to the use of improvised explosive devices, teaching the use of explosive materials, and possessing a firearm during a crime of violence. According to Aref M. Al-Khattar, a terrorism scholar, some other terror groups with a Christian component are The Covenant, The Sword, and the Arm of the Lord (predominantly based in Missouri), Defensive Action (an anti-abortion group with local chapters across the U.S.), and The Freemen Community (based in Montana). Now, I have not heard any media coverage about how the actions of





these groups/individuals evidence the violence inherent in Christianity, even though statistics show that these types of extremists have committed far more acts of political violence in the United States since 1990 than American Muslims.

Oh, and what about those pesky Crusades? You know, that time when Christians traveled across Europe and foreign lands to kill God's enemies. They proceeded to massacre Jews who were chopped, burned, or otherwise slaughtered. Those who took refuge in their synagogues would be burned alive. Chronicler Raymond of Aguilers wrote that "It was a just and marvelous judgment of God, that this place [the temple of Solomon] should be filled with the blood of the unbelievers." In Muslim cities, the Christian crusaders summarily killed men, women, and children literally until the streets ran red with blood. Referring to the impaled heads of slain Muslims, chronicles tell of a crusader-bishop who referred to the sight as a joyful spectacle for the people of God. St. Bernard announced before the Second Crusade that "[t]he Christian glories in the death of a pagan, because thereby Christ himself is glorified."

Maher dismisses the reference to history by saying that Christianity was the problem back then, but that Islam is the problem at this point in time. Um, wait a minute, how does this support his stance that Islam is distinguishable from other religions because it is inherently violent? And how does he explain the fact that Islamic extremism is considered as much of a threat in predominantly Muslim nations as it is in Western countries? The Pew Research Center presents statistics that show more than seven-in-ten Palestinian and Lebanese Muslims are worried about Islamic extremists in their countries, as are most Muslims in Egypt, Pakistan, and Turkey, the most common concern about extremism being that it is violent.

2. Maher's empirical evidence draws heavily from a poll that shows the majority of people in Egypt believe the punishment for those who relinquish their Islamic faith is death. Muslims make up twenty-three percent of the world's population. Egypt contains roughly 4.7 percent of that total. You tell me if it makes sense to say all Muslims believe in what Egyptian Muslims believe, especially given the diversity of locations, cultures, and socio-political backgrounds in which Muslims live. I have lived in Iran, England, and the United States, and have yet to meet a single Muslim who actually believes non-Muslims deserve to die. The most devout Muslim I know is my grandmother in Mashhad, Iran, who is still praying five times a day, doing her Yoga-like down, out, and up motions each time, despite her rickety old legs and painful back. She has somehow not committed murder yet despite the fact that four of six of her children rejected Islam, one of her daughters converted to Christianity, and two of her great-grandchildren were baptized in a Methodist church.

3. Maher really feels very strongly that Islam is the worst thing that ever happened to women and women's rights, as a general rule. One of his justifications is, "almost all women [undergo female genital mutilation] in [Somalia] and many other Muslim countries." Well, I was born in Iran and raised there until the age of 6. I did not undergo any such thing and neither did any of my forebears. Although some Muslim countries do perform this terrible practice, it is prevalent mostly in two Christian countries, Eritrea (at a rate of 89%) and

Ethiopia (at a rate of 75%). Having grown up in England, I know that the British do not circumcise their boys because they believe it is barbaric mutilation, and yet the majority of men in the United States are circumcised.

Moreover, the Bible is not exactly in favor of women's rights. Even before Islam made its world debut, stoning was a Biblical punishment: If a woman is found not to be a virgin on her wedding night, "she shall be brought to the door of her father's house and there the men of her town shall stone her to death." Deuteronomy 22:20-21. And here is another nugget: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve." 1 Timothy 2:10-13.

Some would argue that the flip side of the veil comes packaged in Western magazines and billboards glorifying half-naked (or naked), air-brushed female stick insects. It is all objectification of women. And women in the United States, after being given all this secular time to advance, are still not represented equally in the Western workplace or in politics (interestingly enough, there have been seven women as heads of state in Muslim-majority countries).

4. Logically moving on from his point that Muslims all want to kill, torment, or maim everyone else who is not a Muslim or not a "good" Muslim, Maher believes that the recent negative chatter about Islam cannot be described as Islamophobia because, as he puts it, "to be phobic means to be scared of something that you're not usually scared of, like the great outdoors. But to be phobic about honor killings, about throwing acid in girls' faces, or marrying them off when they are eight-years-old [is normal]."

Actually, phobic means that you harbor "a persistent, irrational fear of a specific object, activity, or situation that leads to a compelling desire to avoid it." When you attach phobia to Islam, the issue is not whether it is normal or "usual" for people to avoid marrying off eight-year-old girls, or throwing acid in girls' faces, or honor killings, the question is **whether the fear that Islam actively promotes this and ALL Muslims do this all over the world is irrational**. This small, but crucial, nuance is lost on Maher who thus becomes an unwitting champion of Islamophobia, a post-9/11 preoccupation.

5. Maher criticizes Liberals for "being cowards" because they will not agree with him and say Islam is inherently violent and/or evil. He attributes this to Liberals just not wanting "Muslims to feel bad." Really? REALLY? How about they do not say it BECAUSE IT IS NOT TRUE!

As Reza Aslan, internationally-renowned religious scholar, said in a recent Salon interview, "There's a difference between criticizing extreme religious beliefs and practices and ascribing those extreme beliefs and practices to an entire people. One is simple criticism; the other is flat-out bigotry." And bigotry is not a liberal notion. Aslan is absolutely right when he extrapolates further that when Maher says "Hey, all we are doing is standing up for basic human rights; we are the champions of liberalism in these comments that we make against Muslims as a whole" really falls flat when you begin to analyze what is actually being said here, what is actually being suggested. It's the opposite of liberalism."

Hot on the heels of Maher's diatribe against Islam, CNN invited Aslan to discuss Maher's statements. Aslan kindly stated that he liked Maher and had been on his show, but that Maher was a comedian and his religious knowledge was not very sophisticated. At this, the anchors fell in with Maher's position, barraging Aslan

Continued on page 17

A celebration of
The Persian Gallery

Thursday, September 18, 2014
6:30–9:00 p.m.

The San Diego Museum of Art
1450 El Prado, Balboa Park



①

Jar with two handles

Iran or Iraq, 15th century
Gift of Mr. K. Demirdjian, 1927.39

Improve appearance of old repairs, clean... **\$625**

Arya & Layla Asgarian Nahavandi



②

Bowl

Iran, 15th–16th century
Museum purchase with funds provided
by the Asian Arts Committee, 1938.189

Clean, possibly stabilize old repairs... **\$875**

Gita Khadiri and Fred Khoroushi



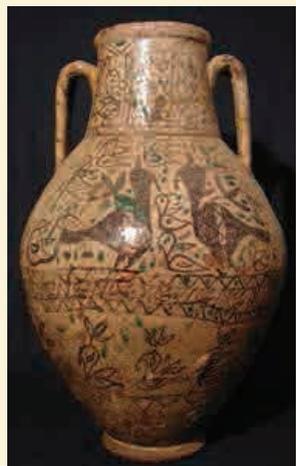
③

Plate with turquoise and black designs

Iran, 15th century
Gift of Mr. Syed Hossein, 1942.19

Remove excess adhesive from old repairs, clean... **\$875**

Gita Khadiri and Fred Khoroushi



④

Jar with bird design

Iran, 14th century
Museum purchase, 1945.64

Clean, technical examination of
previous repairs... **\$625**

Haleh and Massih Tayebi



⑤

*Blue-and-white dish
with an ibex*

Iran, 16th–17th century
Gift of Mrs. Irving T. Snyder, 1954.13

Clean, possibly remove and replace old fill
(visually reintegrate, sculpt and
inpaint)... **\$2,000**

Arsalan Dadkhat
Behrooz Akbarnia and
Nasrin Owsia Akbarnia
Minou Sadeghi
Bahar Bagherpour
Mitch Mitchell



⑥

*Bottle with landscape
and animals*

Iran, 16th–17th century
Gift of Mrs. Irving T. Snyder, 1964.72

Clean... **\$625**

Haleh and Massih Tayebi



⑦

*Plate with black floral
designs under a
turquoise glaze*

Iran, 17th century
Gift of Mrs. Irving T. Snyder,
1964.79a

Clean... **\$625**

Mahasa & Ali Mesri



⑧

*Plate with black floral designs
under a turquoise glaze*

Iran, 17th century
Gift of Mrs. Irving T. Snyder, 1964.79b

Clean... **\$625**

Hamid Ghazi & Fariba Babakhani

BALBOA PARK
THE SAN DIEGO
MUSEUM OF ART



The San Diego Museum of Art is honored to partner
with The Persian Cultural Center to preserve, enhance,
and highlight our Persian Collection.

A Celebration of Art

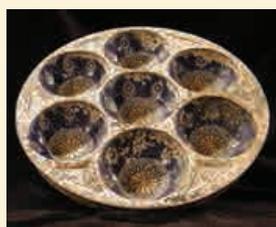
At a very successful event held on Thursday, September 18, the San Diego Museum of Art celebrated three major milestones: the opening of its first-ever gallery dedicated to Iran; the long-term loan of Qajar lacquerwork from the collection of Mr. Dara Rahnema; and the purchase of four important works of art for the Museum's permanent collection. The Museum also announced that starting in May 2016, it will host a special exhibition of Islamic art from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston that includes many masterpieces from Iran.

As part of the event, the Museum presented fifteen ceramics and manuscript pages that need treatment before they can go on display. After inspiring speeches by Museum executive director Roxana Velasquez and Persian Cultural Center co-

founder Shahri Estakhry, the conservation of all of the items was fully supported by members of the San Diego Persian community. While anyone can appreciate works of art presented in pristine condition and in gleaming cases, it takes a discerning eye to find the beauty in objects that show their age—chipped and dirty, their original decoration obscured. That's why the Museum would like to express a big thanks to those who participated.

All of these items will go on view next spring, exact date to be announced. If you would like more information in the meantime, contact Marika Sardar, Associate Curator of Southern Asian and Islamic Art, 619-696-1911 or msardar@sdmart.org.

Marika Sardar



9

Sweetmeat dish
Iran, 13th–14th century
Gift of Mrs. Irving T. Snyder, 1964.131

Clean, technical examination to determine if overpaint present...**\$625**

Sarah E. Aghassi and Shahri Estakhry Aghassi



10

Bowl with black decoration under a turquoise glaze
Iran, 12th–13th century
Museum purchase with funds provided by the Asian Arts Council, 1967.15

Clean...**\$675**

Association of Iranian American Professionals, House of Iran, Persian Cultural Center



11

"Sari" bowl with flowers
Iran, 10th century
Bequest of Samuel Hindel, 2003.287

Clean...**\$625**

Abdollah Katbab & Mehdi and Parisa Naraghi



12

Manuscript frontispiece
Iran, 17th century
Gift of the Trustees of the Estate of Mrs. Julius Wangenheim, 1948.39

Prepare for mounting...**\$275**

Anahita Babaei & Hamid Kalantar



13

Illuminated pages from a manuscript
Iran, possibly Shiraz, 16th century
Gift of Edwin Binney 3rd, 1971.64

Prepare for mounting...**\$275**

Shahri Estakhry Aghassi and Sarah E. Aghassi



14

Preparation for a Feast (The Enthronement of Luhrasp)
Folio from a Shahnama; Iran, 17th century
Museum purchase with funds provided by the Asian Arts Council and the Elsie S. Kimberly Bequest, 1968.5

Prepare for mounting...**\$250**

Ross and Kelly Afsahi



15

An Execution
Iran, possibly Isfahan, ca. 1630
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Edwin Binney 3rd, 1972.230

Prepare for mounting...**\$275**

Dara and Maryam Rahnema

Common Core Education Standards - FAQs

By: Lisa Hildreth



If you have a child who is school age, you are no doubt dealing with the newness of The Common Core State Standards. If you are like most parents, you have either heard or read both very good and/or bad things about the new way of teaching. NPR published a FAQ article this summer highlighting what the basic tenants of the new common core education standards. Here are the answers to some of the burning questions:

What is Common Core? The Common Core State Standards Initiative is the largest-ever attempt in the United States to set unified expectations for what students in kindergarten through 12th grade should know and be able to do in each grade in preparation for college and the workforce.

What do “standards” mean? Are they the same as curricula? No. Standards set goals for what students should know and be able to do. For example, the first goal for kindergarten math in Common Core is to “count to 100 by ones and by tens.”

A curriculum describes in much more detail how students and teachers should interact with specific content, in a specific sequence, over the course of a year in order to achieve a set of goals. Curricula may be adopted at the state level or by local school boards. Supporting materials such as texts, workbooks, computer programs, and tests are produced by commercial vendors and nonprofits, and districts, states, and sometimes individual teachers purchase them.

Working from a curriculum and associated materials, a teacher then creates individual lesson plans with learning goals and activities for each year, semester, unit, week, day, hour, and even minute in the classroom.

What do the standards mean for math? The slogan of the Common Core is “fewer, higher, deeper” — a smaller number of more rigorous standards with a focus on both understanding and application. In math, the standards are designed to be coherent and connected in a consistent sequence, with concepts that build on each other from grade to grade. Grades K-2 cover addition and subtraction; 3-5 cover multiplication, division, and fractions; and 6-8 cover ratios, proportions, and algebraic concepts.

The standards set a floor, not a ceiling. The Common Core sequence does not completely tackle algebra until high school, and the standards don’t fully prepare students to take calculus even in college (a common criticism of the Common Core math standards). In 2009, the most recent year for which statistics were available, 15.9 percent of high school graduates had already taken calculus.

Who is making money off Common Core? Potentially lots of people. The size of the K-12 instructional materials market in the U.S. was estimated at \$20 billion in 2012. By comparison, the size of the trade publishing market was \$6.53 billion in 2012. According to a survey last year, 68 percent of school districts planned to purchase new materials aligned with Common Core.

The transition to Common Core coincides with the ongoing transition to digital educational materials like apps and e-books. That means that it’s not just the traditional textbook publishers and test makers, like Pearson and CTB/McGraw-Hill, that are lining up to create Common Core-stamped products. Big technology companies like Apple and startups like Amplify — a brand owned by News Corp. that produces a tablet designed for classroom use and a multimedia Common Core-aligned curriculum—are also looking to cash in on the Common Core.

Other potential profit centers from the Common Core will be in professional development for teachers to prepare them to teach the standards, and extra tutoring and test prep for students to help them learn the more rigorous standards and pass the new, harder tests. Parents already spend an estimated \$11 billion on tutoring, test prep, and counseling services.

Who is against the Common Core standards? Who is for them? As implementation progresses, the standards have stirred up more and more controversy. Much, though not all, of the most organized opposition comes from conservative groups wary of a growing federal role in education. In April 2013, the Republican National Committee adopted a resolution calling the Common Core “an inappropriate overreach to standardize and control the education of our children.” The Eagle Forum has called the Common Core “federal ... control by Obama administration left-wing bureaucrats.” And a Republican lawmaker in Florida has stated that the Common Core will “attract every one of your children to become as homosexual as they possibly can.” Then again, the standards enjoy strong support from business leaders and a pair of high-profile conservative backers, former Florida Governor Jeb Bush and former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee

In February 2014, the head of the National Education Association, the nation’s largest teachers union, called for a “course correction” on Common Core. The union didn’t reject the use of the standards, but said, “[t]he implementation has been completely botched. Seven of ten teachers believe that implementation of the standards is going poorly in their schools.” This was significant because the NEA had initially endorsed the standards and helped develop them.

In many states — including Alaska, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Indiana, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Utah — parents, teachers, and activists have created groups “against the Common Core.”

Conversely, besides the endorsers named above and many influential education reformers, the Common Core standards are strongly backed by the federal Department of Education. Secretary Arne Duncan got in trouble in 2013 for characterizing the opposition to Common Core as “white suburban moms.” In addition, ALEC, a political group made up of large corporations, endorses the standards. One of its members, Exxon Mobil, has conducted its own high-profile public relations campaign in support of the Common Core.

Lisa Hildreth is a licensed Psychotherapist working with children at a local elementary and middle school. She currently serves on the Persian Cultural Center Board of Directors and is active with the Iranian School of San Diego where her daughter attends.

Events in San Diego

Persian Cultural Center

Tel: (858) 552-9355 Fax & Voice: (619) 374-7335
www.pccus.org



Dornab Concert

Sunday, Nov. 16 6:30-9:30 at Iranian American Center

Yalda Celebration

Saturday, Dec. 20, 2014 • 7:00pm to 12:00am
Sufi Restaurant • Tickets: 858-552-9355

Asian Film Festival

Nov- 6-15 • Festival.sdaff.org/2014

Cross Cultural Event

Sat. Nov. 15, 2014 • 12:00-3:00pm
Balboa Par Patio B

Art Exhibition

Open to Public From 9:00 am to 3:00 pm (Monday to Friday)
Iranian- American Center • 6790 Top Gun St. #7, San Diego, CA 92121
Info: 858-552-9355

Movie Nights

Screening & Discussion
Every First Sunday of the month at 5:30 pm
Iranian- American Center • 6790 Top Gun St. #7, San Diego, CA 92121
Info: 858-552-9355



Jongeh Farhangi

Every Second Friday of the month at 7:30 pm
Iranian- American Center • 6790 Top Gun St. #7, San Diego, CA 92121
Info: 858-552-9355

Nava Yoga Class every other Tuesday at IAC at 6-7:30 pm

Presented by Dr. A. Nahavandi
858-552-9355 • 6790 Top Gun St. #7, San Diego, CA 92121

Setar Class by Kourosh Taghavi

Registration and info: (858) 717-6389

Tombak Class by Milad Jahadi

Registration and Info: (858) 735-9634

Daf Workshop with Ali Sadr,

Mondays 6 to 7:30 PM at The new Iranian-American Center (IAC)

Santour Class by Arash Dana

Registration and Info: (619) 278-1851

Piano Class by Farid Afshari

Registration and Info: (858) 349-1913

Iranian School of San Diego

858-552-9355

Branch I

Sundays 9:30 am-1pm

Mt. Carmel High School

Branch II

Thursdays 6-8pm

Mt. Carmel High School
Mount Carmel High School

9550 Carmel Mountain Road • San Diego, CA 92129



Persian Dance Academy of San Diego

(858) 552-9355 www.pccus.org

Dollar a Month Fund

Game Night at Iranian American Center

Nov. 22, 2014 at 8:00-12:00

Tel: 858-552-9355 • www.dmfund.org
www.facebook.com/DollaraMonthFund



Association of Iranian-American Professionals (AIAP)

Tel: (858) 207 6232 • www.aiap.org
Last Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM
at Sufi Mediterranean Cuisine
5915 Balboa Ave, San Diego, CA 92111



ISTA (Iranian Student Association at UC San Diego)

www.istaucsd.org



House of Iran

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



Iranian-American Scholarship Fund

Tel: (858) 552-9355 • www.iasfund.org
www.facebook.com/IranianAmericanScholarshipFund



Mehrgan Foundation

www.Mehrganfoundation.org Tel (858) 673-7000

PAAIA

Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian-Americans
www.paaia.org



NIAC

National Iranian-American Council
www.niac.org



Book Club Meeting

Last Sat. of each month

Iranian-American Center (IAC)
6790 Top Gun St. #7, San Diego, CA 92121
Tel (858) 552-9355

Iranian-American Life Science Network (IALSN)

www.ialsn.org

Art Bazaar to Benefit Omid e Mehr

Sunday March1, 2015 1:30- 5:30
Sage Canyon Elementary School
5290 Harvest Run Dr. San Diego, CA 92130

Grand Opening Burlington Charity Day

Nov. 20, 2014
5405 University Ave, San Diego, CA 92105

Balboa Park December Nights

House of Hospitality San Diego, CA 92101
www.balboapark.org/decemberevents
December 5 - 6, 2014 Time: 12:00 PM to
11:00 PM
Friday's fun starts at 3:00 PM. Price: Free

San Diego Bay Parade of Lights

www.sdparadeoflights.org
December 14 - 21, 2014, 5:30 PM to 7:30
PM

2014 Mother Goose Parade

619.444.8712
www.mothergooseparade.org
www.mothergooseparade.org/
November 23, 2014, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Our web site at www.pccus.org

A warm welcome to a new organization

Interview for Peyk by Shahri Estakhry

I recently spoke with Sara Agahi to discuss the formation of an exciting new group at the County of San Diego. Sara is a Senior Civil Engineer in the Department of Public Works at the County and also is the proud mother of one recent graduate and one current student at the Persian Cultural Center's language school, The Iranian School of San Diego.

Q. Please tell me about this group that you all have started.

This all began out of an idea that several of my co-workers and I had this past Noruz. We had planned on setting up a *Haft Seen* at the office. As more people got involved in organizing the festivities, our concept expanded to a catered lunch, music, and displays about the rich and enduring cultural history of Iran and the many contributions that Iranians have made to the world. The Noruz event was open to all and we had over 100 people attend both Iranians and non-Iranians. Afterwards, people kept approaching us, thanking us for introducing them to another culture and asking us to plan more events.

A few of us started meeting regularly to discuss forming a group to plan additional activities and continue the cross-cultural dialogue. We also came to the conclusion that expanding our scope from one country to the entire Middle East could greatly increase our collective impact. Now we have representation from Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Israel, Eritrea, and Turkey, in addition to Iran. We also have representation from areas outside of the Middle East, from people who have Middle Eastern friends and family to people who know very little about the Middle East and want to learn more.

There is a formal process to forming this type of group at the County – writing a Mission Statement, writing a Charter and By-laws, filing paperwork with the state to become recognized as a non-profit organization, and more. As we have been discussing our goals and writing these documents it has been absolutely thrilling to watch people come together and give freely of their time. We are still in the process of deciding our name, but right now we go by the Middle Eastern Employee Resource Group.

Q. What was the purpose for establishing it?

The County of San Diego has five established Employee Resource Groups (ERGs): the first of which, the San Diego County Latino Association (SDCLA) dates back to 1983; the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender & Allies Association; the San Diego Filipino-American Employees' Association; the African-American Association of County Employees; and the Asian Pacific Alliance of County Employees were formed afterwards. Currently, three new groups are in the process of forming: Modern Professionals, Veterans, and Middle Eastern.

The ERGs sponsor wonderful events at the County and in the community – events that raise awareness about diverse cultures and experiences, provide training to staff on skills to advance in their jobs and careers, and events that support community service. So many people have come up to me and said that they have really enjoyed the other ERGs' events and have always wondered why there wasn't a Middle Eastern ERG.

Q. Why are groups like these important?

By saying that it is important for us to expose others to diverse cultures, histories, and experiences, we are starting from the position that diversity and inclusion improves the strength and quality of our community. That is when we are truly a reflection of our community that we serve and are a part of. There is an abundance of research on this topic that supports this statement. Given the challenges that we as a county (or nation or world) face, experience has shown that we cannot just "keep doing business as normal" or "as we have always



Photo by Robert Feuerstein at the San Diego County Operations Center.

Top row, left to right: Vincent Kattoula, Denbigh Dickson, Moe Zarabi (Vice President), Nassrin Samii. Seated, left to right: Mandana Beheshti, Sara Agahi (President), Tamara Murphy (Treasurer), Leila Attar. Not pictured: Sheri Shahri (Communications) and Oscar Talaro

done in the past". When we seek solutions with teams of people who look just like ourselves and have shared backgrounds, although this may be comfortable, we tend to come up with the same answers that we have seen in the past, business as usual. However, when we gather a diverse group of people with varying backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives, we start to see the really creative problem solving occur. This is what we need to address today's challenges.

Aside from the diversity contribution, the ERGs benefit the County by serving as a social and professional network for employees and assisting the County in achieving its strategic goals. The work of the County is to promote safe communities in environments that foster viable, livable communities while bolstering economic growth. We work every day to make it easier for people of all ages to lead healthy lives. The County understands that ERGs are partners in this endeavor, as voiced recently by Helen Robbins-Meyer, the County Chief Administrative Officer when she said, "The value of Employee Resource Groups cannot be underestimated. They foster a shared sense of interconnectedness at work, infuse employees with energy, and increase collective impact towards shared goals that support the County's initiatives. The Middle Eastern Employee Resource Group will add another important perspective to the conversation about diversity and inclusion in our policies, recruitments, employee development, workplace satisfaction, and customer service."

Q. Who is involved in these groups?

The ERGs are non-political, non-religious, and non-profit groups that are open to everyone at the County and in the community.

Q. How many people work for the County and is the City of San Diego the same as the County?

San Diego is the second most populous county in the state of California and the fifth in the U.S. The County of San Diego employs approximately 17,000 people and is the fifth largest employer in the region. The County provides a full range of public services to our residents, from law enforcement to protecting open spaces, from emergency response services to protecting and improving air and water quality. We protect consumers from fraud, provide health and human services, inspect restaurants, maintain libraries and parks, and provide disaster assistance during floods, fires, and earthquakes. We maintain roads, abate mosquitos and other vectors, certify farmer's markets, and insure new buildings are safe. The County also serves as a delivery channel for many State services, such as foster care, public health care and elections.

The County and the City of San Diego are not the same entities. The City is incorporated and although it relies on the County to provide some services (like holding elections) the City provides certain services for residents within its boundaries, by its own employees. There are 17 additional incorporated cities located within San Diego County that also provide services for their residents.

Q. How can people learn more and/or support this organization?

Please e-mail us at MEERG@sdcounty.ca.gov to find out about planning meetings and events. The ERGs rely on membership enrollment and nominal charges for events.

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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The Festival of "Yalda": Winter Solstice Celebration

By Mojgan Amini



In Iran, **Yalda** is celebrated on the first day of winter, the Winter Solstice, usually around December 21st. It's the longest **night** of the year, and from that day forward, the nights get shorter and the **days** longer. **Yalda** means the birthday or rebirth of the sun.

Yalda is based on the ancient Iranian belief of light vs. dark, good vs. evil. Since the days start getting longer and the nights shorter, this day marks the victory of light over dark, and good over evil.

It is thought that on the longest night, the sun needs help to overcome darkness. In the eve of **Yalda**, bonfires are lit outside to encourage the sun to rise. While inside, family and friends gather together all night long around the *korseh*. A *korseh* is a very short square table with a source of heat underneath, covered with a super-sized comforter covering the whole table and most of the room. Everyone sits around it, under the cover and enjoys the cozy, warm experience while listening to poetry, playing music, telling jokes or telling stories.

The most typical foods served on **Yalda** are a hearty noodle-bean soup (*ashe reshteh*), pomegranates, and fresh and dried fruit and nuts. Summer fruit are preserved throughout the year where they are served with winter foods to symbolize the balance of seasons. These include grapes, honeydew melons, watermelons, pears, oranges, tangerines, apples, and cucumbers.

This festive gathering of storytelling, music and food lasts all night until the sun triumphantly appears in the morning.

برای درج آگهی لطفا با تلفن
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تماس حاصل فرمائید.
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By Sanaz Majd, MD

Understanding the Flu

With the unusual 80 degree weather we've had in Southern California so far this fall season, it's difficult to fathom that flu season has begun. But there's no doubt that winter's here, even in this global warming heat. Although the common cold virus is...well, more common...the flu virus tends to be nastier and riskier, and is already spreading. So let's find out what the "flu" is all about.

What is the Flu

The flu is a virus (not a bacterium) that spreads mostly from person to person, and typically from the fall through the spring. There are various types of flu, depending on the type of protein that the virus carries on its capsule, or outer covering:

- Influenza A: a type of seasonal flu that occurs in birds and some mammals.
- Influenza B: a type of seasonal flu that occurs mainly in mammals and seals.
- Influenza C: A much rarer type of seasonal flu that can create local epidemics.
- Avian Flu: Spread from birds to humans in Asia, Africa, and Europe.
- Swine Flu: Otherwise known as H1N1, and spread from pigs to humans in the U.S.

The flu doesn't typically have long-term consequences in most people, and often resolves on its own. However, in a few cases, it can be fatal and typically causes anywhere from 10,000 to 50,000 deaths a year, and for that reason it's important to prevent it from spreading as much as possible.

Symptoms of the Flu

More common symptoms of the flu:

- Fever
- Body aches
- Malaise
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Dry cough

Nasal symptoms (runny and stuffy nose) are a less common symptom of the flu, in comparison to being the most prominent symptom in the common cold.

Who Gets the Flu?

Both children and adults are affected by the flu virus, and it is often transmitted from person to person (and in rare instances, from animals to humans). It is spread either by direct contact (from touching someone who is suffering from the flu) or from respiratory particles breathed in the air. It takes up to four days

for symptoms to start to develop. Adults are contagious from one day prior to when symptoms develop until 5-10 days after symptoms develop.

Patients with the following risk factors often suffer more serious complications from the flu virus and should be more careful:

- Smokers
- Kids less than 2 years old
- Adults over the age of 65
- Pregnant women
- Those who suffer from chronic lung, heart, kidney, and liver problems
- Diabetics
- Asthmatics
- Those with neurologic disorders
- Those who have suffered one or more strokes
- Those with HIV or other immune-compromised conditions
- Those on medications that suppress the immune system (like for Rheumatoid Arthritis and those with organ transplants)

How is the Flu Treated?

The flu virus, like other viral illnesses, is often self-limiting and resolves on its own within 7-10 days. Antibiotics don't work for viruses, only for bacteria, and therefore no cure exists for the flu. There are anti-viral medications that are infrequently prescribed, and are typically recommended only for patients being hospitalized for flu complications, for those with severe and progressive illness, or for those with higher risk of complications. But antiviral medications need to be started within 48 hours of when the symptoms begin, or they don't work very well.

Otherwise, we treat the symptoms by taking over-the-counter medications to reduce the fever, headache, and body aches (like with ibuprofen), decongestants for nasal symptoms, and lozenges for sore throat. Like with other illnesses, lots of fluids and some rest are key. Most people are contagious until 24 hours after the fever breaks.

Flu Prevention

To this day, there is no cure for the flu, unfortunately. But there is a good way to prevent it – by getting the flu vaccine every fall. The flu vaccine is created every year in the lab by studying the different types of the flu that are headed towards us, and then inactivating those viruses and then giving them through an injection. Your body then mounts an immune response to those particles and if it ever sees the virus itself it will attack and eradicate it before it manifests. There is no live virus in the vaccine, and therefore cannot give you the flu, contrary to popular belief. The flu vaccine is recommended for those aged 6 months and older.

Here are some handy tips to follow every cold and flu season to prevent the cold and flu virus:

Wash your hands often, for at least 20 seconds, with soap and water.

Don't touch your face, and if you do, immediately wash your hands and face right after.

Dr. Sanaz Majd is a board-certified family medicine physician who podcasts and blogs at <http://housecalldoctor.quickanddirtytips.com>.



Noush-e Jan

Fall is here and it's a good time for soothing and nourishing food to keep us warm and healthy. These are two different types of soups that are delicious.

We always welcome your recipes for our readers to enjoy.

Thank you!

Noush e Jan Editor

Cauliflower Soup:

Recipe from Toba Mohabati - Toronto, Canada

Makes 4-6 servings

Ingredients:

Chopped cauliflower (about 2 lbs); 2 stalks celery, diced; 1 onion, chopped; 3 potatoes, diced; 2 large carrots, chopped; 2 cups chicken broth; 1 cup water; 2-1/2 cups milk; ground nutmeg, salt and pepper to taste; 1-1/2 cups shredded cheddar cheese

Directions:

1. In a large pot, combine the seven first ingredients, cover, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat until the vegetables are soft, then purée the vegetables in a stand blender (or using a hand-held blender) until smooth.
2. Heat the milk over medium heat in a separate pot, along with the nutmeg, salt, and pepper.
3. Add the warm milk mixture to the vegetable puree and heat over medium about 5 minutes, then add 1 cup of the shredded cheese.
4. Pour the soup into bowls and sprinkle with remaining cheese.



Pomegranate Thick Soup (Aash):

Recipe from Roxana & Farzin Mokhtarian

Makes 4-6 servings

Ingredients:

Basmati or long-grain rice, 200 grams; Assorted herbs (parsley, mint, coriander, spring-onion ends, etc.), 1 kg; Ground lamb or beef, 500 grams; Split peas, 3 table spoons; Pomegranate paste, one cup; Marjoram, 2 table spoons; Mint, one table spoon; 4 large onions; Cooking oil; Salt and black pepper to taste.

Directions:

Peel and slice two onions and fry in oil until slightly golden. Add 4-5 glasses of hot water, split peas, salt, and pepper, and cook over low heat for about 10 minutes. Wash rice and add to the aash. Cook for another 15-20 minutes.

Peel and grate two onions. Add the grated onions to the ground meat with salt and pepper, and mix well by hand. Shape into small balls and add to the aash. Wash herbs, chop finely, add to the aash, and cook for another 15-20 minutes. Add in the pomegranate paste and marjoram (if fresh marjoram is used, it should be finely chopped). Mix well and cook for a few more minutes.

Saute the mint in oil for a few minutes, but keep an eye on it as it burns quickly (if fresh mint is used, it should be finely chopped before). Add mint on top of the aash and serve with some toasted lavash or pita and indeed Noush e Jan!

TAKE A STAND: NONVIOLENCE!

"If one has no affection for a person or a system, one should feel free to give the fullest expression to his disaffection so long as he does not contemplate, promote, or incite violence." -Statement during Gandhi's trial for "exciting disaffection toward His Majesty's Government as established by law in India" (March 18, 1922)

Do you know Gandhi?

Experiments with Truth: Gandhi and Images of Nonviolence at the Menil Collection in Houston is one of the largest projects to explore the resonance of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's (1867-1948) principles of non-violence in the realm of art. The collection contains more than 100 works in a variety of media (painting, video, sculpture, etc.) and from several centuries responding to Gandhi's methods of resistance and peaceful struggle against oppression.

More than the artworks exhibited in the show, *Experiments with Truth: Gandhi and Images of Nonviolence* creates a setting for transnational and intercultural conversations around violence and nonviolence in all fields of human experience, from global environmental global concerns to local human rights issues in the world.

The exhibition provides an array of works from several countries, from China to the United States. Among the diverse artworks on view are photographs by Henri Cartier-Bresson from India's independence and partition in 1947, along with another group taken just before and immediately after Gandhi's assassination in 1948. Archival documents and pictures of Gandhi's contemporaries (Ruskin, Thoreau, Tolstoy, etc.) as well as other sociopolitical leaders of reform and human rights are part of the exhibition.

Gandhi's methods of nonviolence are the core of the exhibition and multifaceted aesthetic representations of non-violence are presented. Works by modern and contemporary artists echo Gandhi's vision and meditate on the issues of violence and ways of overcoming it. In order to understand nonviolence, one must first understand violence.

The legendary photograph of Gandhi's last possessions, a "still-life" of the few objects he owned at the time of his death (two dinner bowls, a wooden fork and spoon, porcelain monkeys, his diary, watch, prayer book, spittoon, letter openers, and two pairs of sandals), was the spark for the exhibition. The sincerity of this photograph, whose author remains anonymous, emphasizes the significance of these items. These are symbols of Gandhi's simple lifestyle and his conviction that any reform must begin from within the individual.

The exhibition includes works by living artists, namely Marlene Dumas, Suzan Frecon, Robert Gober, Shilpa Gupta, Ai Weiwei, and Zarina.

The exhibition opened on Gandhi's birthday and will close on the day he was assassinated, ____.

Passing through the galleries, you may still not know Gandhi, but you would know of one thing, his assassination was not an end to his existence. It was his beginning.



"Nothing is impossible for pure love."
-from *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Mahatma Gandhi (1927)



Ai Weiwei, *Buddha Feet*, Northern Wei-Dynasty (AD 386 - 534), 2003.



Zarina, *Gold Scarf*.

Islamophobia is Real and Real Dangerous

with questions and statements about “Muslim countries.” Among other things, they stated that in Muslim countries there is stoning and female genital mutilation (FGM) and that there is “sharia” law that subjugates women. Aslan said practices such as FGM, stoning, and honor killings should be condemned but that to assign them to “Muslim countries” as a generalization is incorrect. He said, “to say Muslim countries as though Pakistan and Turkey are the same, as though Saudi Arabia and Indonesia are the same, as though extreme forms of autocratic countries are representative of what’s happening in every other Muslim country is frankly, and I use this word seriously, stupid.”

And now we get to why I feel so upset with Maher. I have always championed him as someone who calls out the bigots and racists... and now here he is saying bigoted and racist things! Let me be clear, I am an agnostic, that is, I am a person who claims neither faith nor disbelief in God. Further, I have a very strong cynicism towards organized religion of any kind. If anything, many of we Iranians who have been uprooted from our country of birth have a pretty severe bone to pick with Islam. But Maher is fanning the flames of prejudice against me, my children, my family, and my culture, just because Iran is one of the “Muslim countries” that he and others are vilifying.

Look, those of us who have been around Muslims all our lives know that Islam is no more or less evil than any other religion. At the heart of every conflict are socio-political roots and people ready to use religion as a battle cry. There are 49 Muslim-majority countries in this world spanning different continents. If you ascribe the actions of Islamic terrorists to the religion itself, you are pronouncing all of these countries guilty by association, overlooking the real causes and remedies, and certainly fighting the wrong demons.

The meaning of Islamophobia is “a hatred or fear of Islam or Muslims.” (www.merriam-webster.com.) My five-times-a-day-praying-no-pork-eating-Haj-completed grandmother has never forced Islam on me or my mother or anyone else. She has never condoned the political use of Islam. She rejoiced when her agnostic daughter married a Christian Englishman and converted to Christianity; sitting in the church she said, “Thank God my daughter has found a path to God.” When I think of her donning her colorful, flower-printed chador, laying out her prayer mat and quietly asking God for love, peace, harmony, and good health, I become defensive of an innocent soul who is being unfairly portrayed by a flippancy media that profits from scape-goating rather than fact-finding. And because the innocent must be protected, this agnostic, anti-religious, secular woman must defend Islam.

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BACKPACK SAFETY

by Dr. A.R.S. Parvini, D.C., C.P.T.

For all the parents out there, you are well aware that “back to school” is in full swing. But is your child properly carrying his or her books, notebooks, folders, etcetera?

Many parents do not realize that the sum total of a child’s books and other aforementioned items, along with his or her personal items, such as lunch, tablets, and/or laptops, can weigh nearly 35 to 40 pounds. The average school aged child in America weighs anywhere between 80 and 100 pounds.

That’s correct, the sum total will usually be one-third of the body weight of the average child under the age of 15!

According to the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission, at least 14,000 children are treated for back-pack related injuries annually, 5,000 of whom visit the emergency room. The human shoulder was not designed to “carry things.” The back will compensate for any load applied to it for an extended period of time. Therefore, heavy weight carried in backpacks can distort the natural curves in the middle and lower backs, causing muscle strain and irritation to the spine joints and the rib cage, leading to “rounding of the shoulders.” A heavy backpack can also cause a child to lean forward, reducing balance and making it easier to fall

So how do we adequately protect our children from the damage heavy backpacks can cause their bodies?

Take the following steps to ensure that your child does not needlessly injure his or her back or cause strain overload on his or her growing body:

- Ensure that no more than 10-15% of the child’s weight is in the backpack
- Make sure the child wears the backpack with **both** straps. Many children do not. Lugging the backpack around by one strap can cause a disproportionate shift of weight to one side, leading to neck and muscle spasms, as well as low-back pain.
- Wide, padded straps are very important. Non-padded straps are uncomfortable, and can dig into your child’s shoulders.
- The shoulder straps should be adjustable so the backpack can be fitted to your child’s body. Straps that are too loose can cause the backpack to dangle uncomfortably and cause spinal misalignment and pain.
- Make sure the material is designed for children as children’s backpacks are generally made of a lighter weight fabric. The backpack itself should **never** weigh more than 10% of the child’s body weight.
- Have children carry excess weight in their arms, close to their chest, which will keep the centerline balanced. If there is 15 pounds of weight in a child’s backpack, he or she should have at least half of that weight in his or her arms.
- The backpack should never hang more than 4 inches below the waistline. A backpack that hangs too low increases the weight on the shoulders, causing your child to lean forward when walking.
- Bigger is not necessarily better. The more room there is in a backpack, the more your child will carry and the heavier the backpack will be.
- If the backpack is still too heavy, talk to your child’s



teacher. Ask if your child could leave the heaviest books at school, and bring home only lighter handout materials or workbooks. Ask the teacher for a set of text books to keep at home.

With all these numbers thrown out at you, it may be a bit overwhelming. As a simple rule of thumb I also advise my patients the following: “If your child grunts while picking up the backpack, it is too heavy. Period.” Another piece of advice, given by the American Chiropractic Association’s Pediatric Council, is to consider shopping for a child’s backpack at a sporting goods store, as its employees generally know how to properly fit backpacks on children.

If you have any further questions, comments, or would like more advice, you can reach me at: salardc@yahoo.com.

Public Announcement



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