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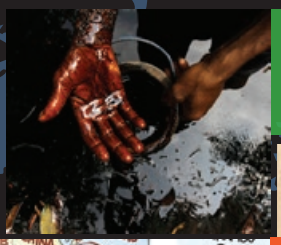

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Editorial

By: Shahri Estakhry

Destruction Never Justifies Action

Of all the nations that were holding elections, the only one left is Germany to determine who will be chosen to lead that nation.

The people, mostly the young generations in Austria, Holland, France, and Iran turned out with overwhelming millions to speak with their votes. Their collective voice was for moderate leaders to chart their paths to a more progressive future. Those who went to the polls have expressed the desire for global unity through peaceful means. Resolutions to solve conflicts not start wars. Enough killings, enough loss of young and innocent lives sacrificed in the name of liberty and justice. I doubt very much that any country can bomb another to promote "liberty" or "justice." The power and the ability to destroy do not and will never justify the action taken.

Every person killed creates a family of enemies. Some people ask, "Why don't they like us?" SERIOUSLY? Think about it again and reverse the situation. How would you feel losing a beloved in the same manner? At what point in your life would you forget? Never. One can never forget and this experience fosters a vicious desire for revenge.

On May 20th I witnessed something that brought a ray of hope and gladness to my heart. Del Sur Elementary School in 4S Ranch in San Diego held its annual Heritage Night. Around 20 or so nations hosted booths displaying handicrafts, another section showed exhibits, and yet another section had food from the different countries for people to taste. Children and their parents, community members, as well as organizations were all involved. I loved seeing the great diversity of nationalities that exists in this school. Children and many parents came in their native costumes and many performed on stage representing their cultural heritage. The atmosphere of the school was one that embraced global harmony. A beautiful banner in the hallway emphasized, "Let learning take you around the world."

Every person is a global child and we are all a family. Can we not resolve our differences by discussion and respect for each other? Can we not bring more and more Heritage Nights for our children to learn from an early age how important every culture and heritage is, and how necessary it is that we all strive to preserve the rights of others?

I am an immigrant and I chose to be here because this country offered me a life of liberty and justice through the democratic process. I have worked hard for my life here and have tried to represent my heritage and culture with the utmost dignity that it deserves. From life's experience I say to my new homeland:
"Building a fighting army can never be the resolution for peace."

Persian Cultural Center

Peyk 170

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PCC (Persian Cultural Center):

PCC NEWS

Jong-e Farhangi Report

Jong-e Farhangi is a cultural variety show that has been a monthly program on the IAC stage for almost three years. It took some time till Jong found its own audience and followers but find it did. Jong emphasizes on arts and culture. The program guests use Jong›s podium to share their views on a variety of subjects with an eager audience. Jong-e Farhangi is on the second Friday night of the month.

San Diego Jong-e Farhangi

May 12, 2017

The May program, hosted by Reza Khabazian, featured two guests. The first guest was Dr. Mosavar Rahmani, discussing Iran›s culture and civilization from a different angle. The second guest was the music group «In Chand Nafar», a group of three musicians on piano, daf and violin, performing Persian music for the audience.

San Diego Jong-e Farhangi

June 9, 2017

The June program, hosted by Ali Sadr, featured two guests. The first guest was Iranian writer and journalist, Ebrahim Nabavi, introducing his new biography «Kelk-e Khialangiz». The second guest was Dr. Nooreddin Zarrinkelk, Iran›s famed children›s author and animator discussing the book from his angle.

Mother's Day Concert

May 14, 2017

Faraz Minoui and Behfar Bahadoran took to the stage for an original performance of Persian classical music on poems by Ahmad Shamlou.

Movie and Discussion

May 7, 2017

For the month of May, the Movie and Discussion group of the Persian Cultural Center of San Diego screened the movie "Inja Bedoone Man" or "Here without Me" is a 2010 production directed by Bahram Tavakoli. It received 6 prizes from Khaneh Cinema in Iran and Fatemeh Motamed Aria received the Best Actress Award for it from the Montreal Movie Festival. Ali Pirouzian gave an introduction about the movie, the director and his works and mentioned that the movie is an adaptation of Tennessee Williams' (The Glass Menagerie). The screening was followed by a group discussion by the audience.

PCC Annual Meeting and Election

May 21, 2017

The Persian Cultural Center held its annual meeting and Boeard of Directors election at the Mount Carmel High School. The PCC annual report was given, the new candidates were introduced and elected and, the mmeting was adjourned following the announcement of the results.

Movie and Discussion

June 4, 2017

The Movie and Discussion group of the Persian Cultural Center of San Diego screened the movie "Saadat Abad", produced in 2010 is the fifth long movie directed by Maziar Miri. Saadat Abad with Leila Hatami, Hengameh Ghaziani, Mahnaz Afshar, Hamed Behdad, and Hossein Yari is a star studded production. The screening was followed by a group discussion by the audience led by Movie and Discussion's own Milad Jahadi.

House of Bernard Alba

May 20, 2017

A new play reading adaptation of the House of Bernard Alba by Federico Garcia Lorka, directed by Mahmoud Behrouzian, went on stage at the Iranian American Center.

Sibarg Ensemble

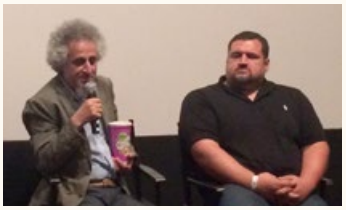
June 24, 2017

Sibarg Ensemble went on the stage at IAC (the Iranian-American Center) on June 24, 2017 to perform a Persian/Jazz Improvisation. Niloufar Shiri, Kamancheh, Kyle Motl, Double bass, Josh Charney, piano, and Hesam Abedini, vocalist. The program was met with a warm reception by the audience.

Docunights #38 and #39

May 3, 2017 and June 7, 2017

Docunight is a documentary screening program held in more than twenty cities across the North American continent, concurrently on the second Wednesday of the month. The documentaries are either made by Iranian film makers or are about Iran and Iranians.The documentary "Bozorgtarin Jashne rooye Zamin" or "The Grandest Festival on Earth" (2016- 75 mins) was about the celebration of the 2500 years of Monarchy, directed by Hassan Amini. The documentary "Chenarestan" or "The Sycamores" (2015- 91mins) directed by Hadi Afarideh tells the story of Valiasr Ave (formerly Pahlavi and Mosadegh) and its connecting neighborhoods. It won the Documentary Award of the Haghighat Film Festival in 2014.



Radio Dreams

June 11, 2017

The movie Radio Dreams, directed by Babak Jalali and depicting Mohsen Namjoo as Hamid, an immigrant Iranian writer, was screened at the Angelika, Carmel Mountain. The screening was followed by a Q&A session with Mahmoud Reza Pirouzian from PCC and Mohsen Namjoo and Kyle Kernan.

29 Years of Service

Report of the Persian Cultural Center's 2017 Annual General Meeting and Election

The PCC's annual meeting took place on May 21, 2017, at the Iranian School of San Diego (ISSD), located at Mt. Carmel High School in San Diego, California. The annual report was presented and was followed by the election process for new Board of Director members. The past year's activities were presented by Mrs. Fariba Babakhani-Ghazi (PCC's chair), the *Peyk* report was presented by Mr. Sadr (ISSD Principal of Iranian School of San Diego and editor –in chief of *Peyk*), the ISSD report was presented by Ms. Rosita Bagheri (ISSD's vice principal), and PCC's financial report was presented by Mr. Hamid Rafizadeh (PCC's treasurer). A summary of PCC's annual report is as follows:

Board of Directors

Sara Alaghehbadn, Nikoo Atefi, Fariba Babakhani, Anahita Babaei, Bahar Bagherpour, Farideh Fazel, Gity Nematollahi, Farhad Nourbakhsh, Mahoud Reza Pirouzian, Hamid Rafizadeh, and Golsa Soraya.

Executive Board

Fariba Babakhani-Ghazi - President
Anahita Babaei - Vice President
Hamid Rafizadeh - Treasurer
Farideh Fazel - Secretary
Ali Sadr - ISSD Principal

Advisory Board

Shahri Estakhry, Saeed Jalali, Rosita Bagheri, Shahla Salah, Shaghayegh Hanson, and Abdy Salimi.

The Board of Directors had twelve meetings in the past year. Sub-committees held meetings as needed. At their first meeting, BOD elected its Executive Board and established the following committees:

Committee Members for the past year were as follows:

Arts & Culture Committee: ***Mahmoud Reza Pirouzian*** *(lead), Anahita Babaei, Sara Alagheband, Bahar Bagherpoor,Farhad Norbakhsh, Ali Sadr, Abdy Salimi, Golsa Soraya, and Nikoo Atefi.*
ISSD Committee: ***Ali Sadr*** *(lead), Fariba Babakhani, Rosita Bagheri, and Ms. Ahmadian.*
Membership Committee: ***Sara Alaghband*** *(lead), Fariba Babakhani, Farideh Fazel, Nikoo Atefi, Shahrzad Julazadeh, and Farhad Noorbakhsh.*
PR Committee: ***Bahar Bagherpour*** *(lead), Mahmoud Reza Pirouzian, Anahita Babaei, Fariba Babakhani,* Shahrzad Julazadeh , *Sara Alaghehband, and Ali Sadr.*
Peyk* Committee**: ***Ali Sadr *(lead), Saeed Jalali, Shahri Estakhry, Bahnam Hedari, Shaghayegh Hanson, Anahita Babaei, Lisa Hildreth, Shahrzad Julazadeh, Reza Khabazian, Aria Fani, Rachel Tait, and Saeid Nouri Boushehri.*
Grants Committee: ***Hamid Hafizadeh*** *(lead), Shaghayegh Hanson, Rosita Bagheri, Shahrzad Julazadeh, and Fariba Babakhani (+ Grant writer).*
Finanace Committee: ***Hamid Hafizadeh*** *(lead), Shahrzad Julazadeh, Fariba Babakhani, and Bahar Bagherpoor.*
Fundraising Committee: ***Farideh Fazel*** *(lead), Fariba Babakhani, Anahita Babaei, Bahar Bagherpoor , Nikoo Atefi, and Shahrzad Julazadeh.*
Charity (PCC Foundation): ***Gity Nematollahi*** *(lead), Fariba Babakhani, Farideh Fazel, Nikoo Atefi, Shahla Salah, Shahri Estakhry, and Shahrzad Julazadeh.*
Building Committee: ***Fariba Babakhani-Ghazi*** *(lead), Ali Sadr, Abdy Salimi , Hamid Rafizadeh, Mahmood Pirouzian, and Shahrzad Julazadeh.*
Nowruz Committee: ***Nikoo Atefi*** *(lead), Hamid Rafizadeh, Bahar Bagherpoor, Sara Alaghehband, Farhad Noorbakhsh, Shahla Salah, and Shahrzad Julazadeh.*

Summary of Cultural Activities

During 2016-2017, PCC was not only active in organizing traditional celebrations and programs for the Iranian-American community, but also collaborated with other organizations to reach out to the community at large. PCC also continued, and will continue, to raise funds for expansion of Iranian-American Center in San Diego that serves the entire community.

The PCC sponsored and co-sponsored the following programs:

A-PCC and ISSD Events:

1- Rebirth Concert with Shahrokh Moshkingalam and Shirin Majd
2- Story Writing Workshop with Hossein Mortezaeian Abknar
3- Setar Rehearsal with Kourosh Taghavi
4- Reading of play written by Dario Fo (*Can't Pay, Won't Pay*), Directed by Mahmoud Behrozian
5- Sibarg Ensemble Concert
6- Collaboration with San Diego Museum of Art and Balboa Park to celebrate Mehregan
7- Screenings of "Salam Bombay," "Parental House," "I am not Angry," and "Nardon" in collaboration with Sheed Film
8- Filmoween (Film + Halloween)
9- Collaboration with Asian Winter Film Festival- PAC Art
10- Yalda Celebration at Sufi Restaurant with Badeh va Taraneh Group
11- Universal Children's Day Celebration in collaboration with Child Foundation and Dollar a Month at ISSD
12- Iranian Music Improvisation
13- Ali Azimi Concert in collaboration with Gramophone
14- Namad Concert (Hengam)
15- PCC Annual Charity Bazaar
16- Family Game Night
17- Nowruz Preparation at the Iranian School of San Diego
18- Nowruz Celebration at the Iranian School of San Diego
19- Chahârshanbeh Soori with AIAP and HOI at NTC Park
20- Nowruz Celebration at Marriott Hotel
21- Nowruz Celebration at 4S Ranch Library
22- Sizdeh- Bedar with AIAP and HOI at NTC Park
23- Presentation of Haft-Seen along with literary, cultural, and historical exhibits in seven public libraries throughout San Diego
24- Harmony Festival at Balboa Park
25- Multicultural Festival at Mira Costa College
26- Monthly Movie Night on every first Sunday of the month at IAC (12 Events)
27- Monthly Jonge Farhanghi on every second Friday of the month at IAC (11 Events)
28- Monthly Art Exhibition at the Center
29- Daf classes with Milad Jahadi
30- Setar classes with Kourosh Taghavi
31- Tonbak classes with Milad Jahadi
32- Collaboration with Docunight to show a documentary movie first Wednesday of the Month
33- Multicultural Festival in Linda Vista
34- Collaboration with ISTA and UCSD, Ms. Parisa's Lecture
35- Hamed Nikpay Concert in collaboration with C Minor & Zang Records
36- Collaboration with Asian Spring Film Festival- PAC Art
37- Mother's Day Concert with Faraz Minouei and Behfar Bahadoran
38- Multicultural Festival in Del Sur
39- Reading of play written by Fedrico Garsia Loca (*The House of Bernarda Alba*), directed by Mahmoud Behrozian

B-ISSD:

This year, both branches of ISSD were held at Mt. Carmel High School. The academic year 2016-17 was ISSD's 29th year of operation. 240 students attended both branches of ISSD in the past year. The school's Nowruz program was held on March 12, 2017,

and was attended by 500 parents, students, and family members. A variety of dance presentations, plays, music recitals, and songs were presented. Students received awards for their academic achievements. ISSD's end of year event was held on June 11, 2017.

ISSD's first branch offers 17 classes on Sunday mornings, which are separated into six levels. ISSD also offers two Persian classes for adults and two classes for Kindergarten and preschool. Extracurricular classes such as Dance, Theatre, Orff Music, and Tombak have been offered as well. The second branch is held on Thursday evenings and has a total of 6 classes.

ISSD's Persian language program is **accredited by all local School Districts as well as WASC** which means that high school students can fulfill their second language requirements by taking Persian language courses at ISSD. ISSD provides Daf classes for adults. The PTA of both branches worked very hard and cooperated successfully with the teachers and administrators on issues such as curriculum and extracurricular activities. The PTA was also instrumental in helping to raise funds for the school. Students at ISSD raised approximately $3,000 in collaboration with Dollar a Month Organization for the street children of Iran.

In addition, ISSD is working with a network of Persian schools in the U.S. and other countries to exchange experiences and educational materials. ISSD has a new website (issd.pccsd.org) and is also active on Facebook.

C- Persian Dance Academy:

More than 45 members of the Persian Cultural Dance Academy met on Sundays at ISSD Branch I. The dance students performed in the following programs:

1- PCC Nowruz Event
2- ISSD's Nowruz Event
3- 4S Ranch Library Nowruz Event
4- House of Iran Mehregan Event

D- Building:

The Iranian American Center (IAC) has been hosting a variety of cultural activities for the Iranian community (such as IASF and DMF, Mehregan Foundation). The IAC has a library with more than four thousand books. MARKAZ is publicly available for cultural activities.

E- Public Relations and Community Outreach:

During the 2016-2017 operating year, PCC used its bi-monthly publication, *Peyk*, to reach thousands of readers. *Peyk* is a bilingual publication published in Persian and English. Its circulation includes San Diego, Orange County, Los Angeles-area counties, the Bay Area, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Maryland, Dallas, and many other cities. *Peyk* is also available and read via the internet on PCC's website (www.pccus.org/peyk or www.pccsd.org/peyk).

In addition, the PCC worked with SDG&E's "Energy Solutions Partners" campaign. As an "Energy Solutions Partner," PCC has joined other nonprofits and environmental groups in a collaborative effort to make all of California's consumers aware of how they can save energy and money through energy efficiency. PCC was chosen as a partner because of our ability to target a specific demographic and translate important emergency news alerts into Persian as necessary.

Membership: During the 2016-2017 year, PCC continued placing advertisements on our website; the goal was to increase our membership. PCC issued a membership card to its members, and managed to continue getting discounts from various Iranian businesses for its members.

Public Outreach: PCC has a new website (pccsd.org) which is visited by thousands of people throughout the world. PCC issues a weekly electronic newsletter that is sent to several thousands of people. In the past year, a number of PCC events were featured on KPBS radio in San Diego, KIRN Radio Iran in Los Angeles, Chekhabar.com, Kodoom.com, and on the San Diego Arts and Sol website. These programs not only reached the Iranian-American community, but other communities who attended our featured programs. PCC also used various social media outlets to make sure that our events were well publicized to a larger audience.

Website: Our website has been upgraded and, as a consequence, our reach and exposure have increased in the last year. PCC website provides quick access to our bi-monthly, bi-lingual magazine, our ongoing programs and activities, as well as other cultural information and events. Please refer to our website to read about PCC's many activities to renew your membership and make your tax deductible contributions online.

The PCC Foundation-A charitable organization:

The foundation continues to raise funds for two young students who lost their parents and needed help, a long-term project in addition to the money PCC raised to help Persian Homeless Family and also Syrian refugees.

Special Thanks:

In closing, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the following board members who are leaving us. We are grateful for the time, energy, and talents they generously gave to the PCC and our community. We look forward to having them back on the PCC Board again.

The members who are leaving due to term limits are: Bahar Bagherpour, Anahita Babaei, and Farhad Nourbakhsh.

We are continually looking for volunteers and sub-committee members. Please step forward and GET INVOLVED with various groups to HELP OUT.

Election

After the board of director's report, candidates to fill the vacancies in the board introduced themselves and presented their plans for joining the board. The ballot was secret. Ms. Susan Missaghieh-Motlagh, Mr. Mahmoud Maheronaghsh, Dr. Hossein Motlagh, and Ms. Ludi Sadr observed the election. After counting the ballots, including the absentees and electronic votes, the results was announced.

Election Results:

The following were elected as voting members of the board of directors:

Fariba Babakhani-Ghazi
Amir Farshad Babakhani
Gity Nematollahi
Golsa Soraya

The following members were announced as alternate members of the board of directors:

Venus Safaei
Marjan Doustdar

These new members will serve along with the current board members: Farideh Rasouli-Fazel, Mahmood Pirouzian, Sara Alaghband, Giti Nematollahi, and Hamid Rafizadeh.

The first meeting of the board of directors was held on June 14, 2017. In that meeting, the following members were elected to serve as the executive committee of the PCC for one year:
President: Fariba Babakhani – Ghazi
Vice president: Nikoo Atefi
Treasurer: Hamid Rafizadeh
Secretary: Farideh Rasouli – Fazel
Other members of the board of directors will be leading various committees such as Art and Cultures, Education, Charity, Building, Nowruz, Grant, PR, and Membership.

Committees and assigned Committee Heads

Education Committee, ISSD: Ali Sadr
Art & Culture Committee: Mahmoud Pirouzian
Peyk Committee: Ali Sadr
Membership Committee: Farideh Fazel
Grant Committee: Hamid Rafizadeh
PR Committee: Sara Alaghehband
Fundraising Committee: Marjan Doustdar
Charity Committee: Gity Nematollahi
IAC/ Building Committee: Hamid Rafizadeh
Nowruz Committee: Nikoo Atefi

If you wish to participate in any of the committees, please contact the PCC and ask for the head of the committee.

Aria Fani

Divided by a Common Tongue:
Is there a Persian literary heartland?

The endonym for the Persian language, *Farsi,* has gained currency in English in the latter part of the twentieth century. Many institutions and scholars have strongly objected to this usage. The term Persian, many argue, is loaded with such associations as Persian poetry. *Farsi*, on the other hand, sounds "foreign" and is allegedly void of cultural or historic referents. There is another argument against the usage of *Farsi*: the variants of Persian used in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Iran are mutually intelligible yet they are identified by three distinctive names in English: *Dari, Tajik,* and *Farsi.* To reflect and honor their common literary heritage, one should refer to all three only by one name in English: Persian. I am not concerned with what is the "proper" name of our language in English. Instead, I will take to task the notion of a "shared literary heritage," a problematic rubric that normalizes and overlooks the domination of Iranian literary institutions and their claim to Persian as the sole national patrimony of Iran.

It is by now common knowledge that languages in the era of nation-state are codified to fit into a national mold, primarily to invent a sense of distinction. Such a project, inevitably oppositional, aims to amplify Dari's difference from Farsi or Tajik on the one hand and pit it against Pashto on the other. Not only are such tensions unique to our time, they are also ahistorical to the trajectory of Persian and its interplay with other literary cultures. In other words, the linguistic difference between *Dari, Farsi*, and *Tajik* is often magnified in the service of national (and postcolonial) politics. Beyond where the language is spoken today, its literary culture echoes in such lands as Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, India, Pakistan, Kashmir, Bangladesh, and the Balkans where Persian was either one of the languages of political administration, cultural importance, or literary production for many centuries. Like native speakers of Persian, these cultures too rightly lay claim to the polycentric and cosmopolitan world of Persian. Efforts to provincialize and arbitrarily fragment this literary tradition into distinctive and separate canons, as it may be evident in their distinctive names in English, have been interrogated by different scholars, more recently in *The World of Persian Literary Humanism*. Less interrogated, however, is the rhetorical posturing of unity that fails to critically reflect on the state of Persian literary studies and pedagogy.

While many insist on the mutual intelligibility of *Dari, Farsi*, and *Tajik* and their common literary register, few Persian-language textbooks, if any, ever go beyond a brief mention of Tajik and Afghan speakers in their English-language introductions. These textbooks make no effort to cover any aspects of Afghanistan or Tajikistan. Herat and Bukhara are not mentioned alongside Shiraz and Mashhad as Persian-speaking cultural hubs. Afghan and Tajik artists are not introduced alongside their Iranian counterparts. Such patterns are no longer due to the authors' geographic illiteracy or lack of awareness. The introduction of the *Routledge Persian Course* states: "considerable overlap in written Iranian Persian (*Farsi*) and written Afghan Persian (*Dari*) is so great that Persian learners intending to use their language within a formal Afghan context will also find this coursebook of benefit." However, this gesture appears to be of marketable value only as the book chooses not to capitalize on this "considerable overlap," particularly in its intermediate edition. Drawing from a wealth of Dari sources could have introduced students to the cultures of contemporary Afghanistan. Furthermore, showcasing different literary registers of Persian can be a productive pedagogical and cultural exercise, particularly in higher levels. We will return to the question of pedagogy.

Even if a textbook introduces an Afghan or Tajik figure, they are often marked as non-default, cast as the other. *Persian in Use,* an elementary textbook, has admirably incorporated a poem by Mohammad Kazem Kazemi (*Peyk* 140), a Persian-language poet, literary critic, and book editor from Herat. While the nationality of no other poet in the textbook is stated, Kazemi is introduced as "the Afghan Poet residing in Iran." If Persian indeed transcends the political borders of Iran today, as many scholarly introductions remind us time and again, why is there a pattern to mark the identity of non-Iranian Persian-language poets as the other? One also cannot but wonder would Kazemi have been incorporated in the textbook if he were still residing in Herat instead of his adopted city of residence Mashhad? Herat and Mashhad may only be 197 miles apart (less than the driving distance between San Diego and Santa Barbara), but the power relations that marginalize Kazemi remain wide-reaching all over Iran and beyond. The history of Persian, as with many other traditions, is distinctly marked by travel and shifting centers of patronage. Kazemi is a most normative case within this historic paradigm only rendered an anomaly by Iranocentric views.

The Iranocentric disposition of Persian Studies goes above and beyond language textbooks. Two years ago, one of my students at U.C. Berkeley returned from Dushanbe where she had spent the summer learning Persian through the Critical Language Scholarship (CLS). Throughout the program, her Iranian instructors had blatantly corrected her Tajik-accented pronunciation and asked her to speak "pure Persian" (read Tehrani). I must bizarrely emphasize that she was living in Tajikistan where she stayed with a Tajik family. To her dismay, the linguistic scope of the program hardly celebrated that of her host country. Given the lack of academic ties between North American and Iranian universities, the Persian-language program in Tajikistan has offered an alternative to many students who may have otherwise wished to study in Iran. But one wonders where such students, particularly interested in Tajikistan, can gain a culturally balanced education?

It goes without saying that this troubling trend is about much more than one student's interest in Tajikistan. It is about a language program, sponsored by the U.S. government that consciously privileges Iran and unabashedly erases Tajik, its accent, and contributions to Persian literary culture while being in its territory. Sadly, this is the norm abroad and here at home. All too often one hears of Afghan heritage students in the United States who are regularly corrected by their Iranian instructors for their Dari parlance. Such issues are almost nonexistent from conferences and publications, yet many academics still find it urgent to caution against the use of *Farsi* for the sake of what they deem a

"proper" presentation and promotion of our cultural heritage. No one institution or figure may speak on behalf of this shared heritage and no one region may claim to be its sole literary heartland.

The role of nation-states in institutionalizing what is excluded or included in language programs (and literary canons) cannot be underscored enough. For instance, before the occupation of Afghanistan, most if not all Persian-language classes had a decidedly Iranian focus. It was only well after October 2001 that there was growing interest in Dari-language classes. Once primarily serving the U.S. military, the Dari-language program now caters to all who are interested in Afghanistan and has developed its own pedagogical design. In a similar vein, the field of Persian Studies would not be the same today if U.S. foreign policy were focused on Central Asia, as it was after the invasion of Afghanistan, or if the Tajik government were to invest in the teaching of the Tajik language, similar to the way many affluent and philanthropic Iranians have contributed to the field of Iranian Studies.

Boxing up Persian literary culture as a national Iranian heritage is not only visible in language classrooms and textbooks, but also in translation and works of scholarship. Afghan and Tajik writers and poets are regularly excluded by anthologies of Persian literature in translation. A recent study, *The World of Persian Literary Humanism*, admirably critiques the Iranocentric domain of Persian Studies, but its critical posturing hardly materializes in its own literary purview. The final chapters of the book treat Persian's encounter with Europe, the subsequent formation of the nation-state and its impact on the patterns of circulation and patronage in Persian poetry. In the last chapter, the author does not include a single non-Iranian writer and scholar whose life is marked by traveling and traversing national borders. One such example is Mawlana Khal Mohammad Khasta, who moved to Balkh from Bukhara after his birthplace fell to Tsarist Russia. In Mazar-i Sharif, he edited the literary magazine *Bidar*. He later settled in Kabul and anthologized the works of Persian-language poets in Afghanistan. A generation of Afghan writers and literati considers itself his student. *Mu'asirin-isukhanwar*, one of his anthologies, was published eight years before Forugh Farrokhzad's anthology of contemporary Persian poetry, *AzNima ta ba'd*, was posthumously printed in Tehran in 1968. Unlike Farrokhzad, there is little or no scholarly work on Khasta in English.

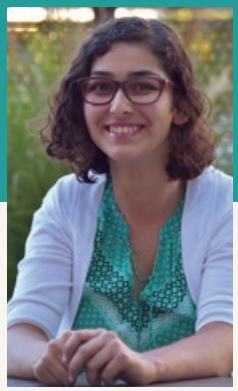
Overall, in spite of the self-declared non-nativist framework of *The World of Persian Literary Humanism*, there is no mention or meaningful engagement with the Persian literary production of Afghanistan or Tajikistan in the latter part of the twentieth century. The author's militant mission to categorically reject what he deems "nativist" and "Orientalist" modes of historiography leaves very little room to critically engage with primary sources from Afghanistan and Tajikistan (or anywhere else for that matter). The author's criticism of Persian Studies' Iranocentrism hardly transcends mere rhetoric as he goes on to enshrine the same canonized Iranian figures of contemporary Persian literature (and arts and cinema) while relegating Afghan and Tajik writers and literati to the status of curious endnotes.

One question remains: is there a national Tajik and Afghan canon? I certainly do not intend to reject or define its existence. But as with the question of a shared literary heritage, it should be interrogated. If there is a national canon, what are the institutions and contexts that have shaped and sustained it? What does this canon mean to the Afghan and Tajik people? These are questions many studies leave unaddressed. The Iranian national canon, whatever it means to different people, is primarily studied as a continuation of the "Persian literary canon" while Afghan and Tajik literatures are treated as a divergence, and consequently lose the Persian qualifier. Perhaps it is partially due to the fact that all students of modern Persian literature in the West are trained in Iranian literary works while any knowledge of Afghan or Tajik literature is merely seen as a bonus. One can get a Ph.D. in contemporary Persian literature in Iran and abroad without ever reading a page written outside of Iran. Persian literary production outside of Iran is essentially treated as an exotic object in an uncharted terrain.

These trends, increasingly self-aware of their Iranocentrism, persist in spite of recent groundbreaking studies that return Persian literary culture to its greater geography. It is vital to lay bare any politics that aims to provincialize the transnational routes of Persian. But such effort is bound to be naive at best and misguided at worst if it fails to address the prejudices of its own paradigm. An academic posturing that insists on the unity of *Dari, Farsi*, and *Tajik* does not mirror the realities of a divided field where the pedagogical purview of Persian-language textbooks hardly goes beyond the borders of Iran while Dari- and Tajik-language textbooks are focused on their own parlance and national geography. No posturing of solidarity will automatically challenge Iran's domination of the field of Persian Studies. As mentioned, recent works in Persian literature and pedagogy clearly point to their blind spots yet ultimately hide behind their own acknowledgement, their academic jargon. We are aware of the pain, but where is the cure?

This is a vastly neglected gap that a few scholars cannot be expected to address across so many disciplines. So where do we go from here? In the field of pedagogy, we need not look any further than what our Arabic-language colleagues have done. Variants of Persian are arguably far more homogenous than different dialects of Arabic. Yet, there have been meaningful efforts to integrate variants of spoken Arabic (*'ammiyya*) side by side while there are no integrated textbooks of Persian dialects (or integrated accounts of literary history for that matter). The third edition of *Al-Kitaab*, which incorporates both Levantine and Egyptian Arabic, like all textbooks, has been subject to criticism. But it has certainly added to the conversation on the pedagogical possibilities of including more of Arabic's linguistic diversity in the classroom. In pedagogy and beyond, we can no longer romanticize and boast of the vast diversity of the Persian-speaking world while ignoring and reproducing the same power relations critiqued here. Perhaps we can take the first step by committing to an open and self-reflective conversation, one that will hold such notions as "shared literary heritage" to a critical consideration at last.

The title is inspired by Bernard Shaw's oft-cited observation: *England and America are two countries divided by a common language.* This essay first appeared on *Ajam Media Collective*. For the essay's references, email Aria at ariafani@berkeley.edu.



The Resource Curse in Developing Nations

By Leily Rezvani

From fisheries in Norway to the oil war in Nigeria, the elements of earth have begun to turn into the elements of war. In the time it takes to read this essay, four-hundred football fields' worth of the Amazon forest will be cut. However, bulldozers and chainsaws are not to blame. Many government officials in developing nations corrupt their people's standard of living by permitting resource exploitation. These actions continue to fuel the resource curse: health risks, poor sanitation conditions, poverty, crime, discrimination, climate change, and lack of biodiversity in all regions of the world. The resource curse, also referred to as the paradox of plenty, is when countries with an abundance of natural resources have a decrease in economic and social growth.

Corruption takes a serious toll on the environment. A number of sectors are particularly vulnerable, including forestry, endangered species, water supplies, oil exploitation, fisheries, and hazardous waste management. Corruption also makes it possible for environmental and social issues to be ignored by governments and leaders of the international community. This negligence also impacts the livelihood of local communities, whose existence is tied to the environment. Additionally, corruption leads to the loss of resources and habitats, which many people around the world rely on, and causes both the environment and societies to suffer. Considering the harms, corruption is detrimental due to the fact that it affects billions of people, destabilizes economies, and leads to habitat destruction.

While strong governments are able to recover from the resource curse, others are not as fortunate, leading to a lack of governmental control. One example is Norway in the 1970s, when oil became a curse as opposed to a blessing. In addition, animal habitats are endangered by increasing equipment use in their areas and the possibility of oil spills that devastate their environment. Norway's economy transformed from an economy based on fish exports when they began drilling oil from the North Sea. Stable political and economic institutions, a methodical macroeconomic policy, and a well-developed judicial system aided Norway in its recovery from the resource curse.

However, most countries are not as resilient. Currently, Nigeria, the fourth largest supplier of oil for the United States, is engaged in an unofficial war with U.S. companies Shell Oil and Chevron. In addition to the fact that seventy percent of Nigerians live off less than a dollar a day—many of them without clean water due to Shell's oil drilling—rebel insurgents are also menacing the state. Nigeria's government denies any claims of accepting personal funds from Shell in exchange for forcing people off their land. Niger Delta residents feel entitled to the oil owing to the fact that they have received little to no reparation for the decades of oil spills on their land. Shell Oil, Chevron, and Nigerian government officials blame ecosystem decline and the oil spills on rebel insurgents. Each year, one oil tanker is being spilled into Nigeria's eco-system. That is the equivalent to one aircraft carrier full of oil. These spills have injured and killed many residents as well as corrupted their environment by devastating biodiversity and agricultural production, which is the main income for many families in Nigeria.

In addition to the curse in the Niger Delta, resource extraction in the Amazon is also destroying the environment and devastating the lives of the native people. Due to the lack of government control of Latin American governments, the Amazon is gradually turning from a rainforest famed for its biodiversity to a system of monoculture crops. By cultivating a single crop, many organisms are being forced to relocate to condensed areas. Furthermore, natives who call the rainforest home continue to be removed from their homes to urban communities due to monoculture crop planting which causes poverty and segregation. When moved to urban areas, Amazonian natives are forced to get jobs without the required work experience and education. Without proper means of living, work, education, or housing, Amazonians are forced out of their homes into poverty. Moreover, the once-Amazonians are often discriminated against due to their socioeconomic status and segregated within their society. There is a direct link between the health of the Amazon and the health of the planet and the people who reside on it. The Amazon, which currently contains over one hundred-forty billion metric tons of carbon, aids in the stabilization of both local and global climates. Deforestation may release significant amounts of the stored carbon, which will have catastrophic impacts and consequences not only in South America, but around the world as well.

From a societal perspective, a review was conducted on the annual cost per life saved in the United States for changes in the environment. Regulations with a cost per life year saved, of less than or equal to zero, cost less to implement than the value of the lives saved. Therefore, reducing pollution by reducing resource extraction saves lives and maintains low costs. Entirely, local and federal policy makers cannot justify immoral principles to companies and developed nations, they must do what is the in the best interest of their people and their environment to protect their states from economic collapse, social segregation, unpredictable weather patterns, unsanitary conditions, and corruption. There are as many examples of the resource curse devastating developing governments, people, and their environment as there are elements on earth.

Leily Rezvani is a senior in high school and the Youth Outreach Director of License to Freedom, a nonprofit that provides free legal services for refugee and immigrant victims of domestic violence.

Events in San Diego

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

Writing Workshop with Mr. H. M. Abknar
858-552-9355
From July 17 to July 21 6-9 pm at IAC

Tasnifkhani with Kourosh Taghavi
Saturday August 25 at IAC 7pm
858-552-9355

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 and Discussion,
First week of the month at the Center
Iranian-American Center • 6790 Top Gun St. #7, San Diego, CA 92121
Info: 858-552-9355

DOCUNIGHT
First Wednesday of the month
at the Iranian-American Center (IAC) at 7 pm
Documentary films about Iran or by Iranians

Jong-e 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

Setar Class by Kourosh Taghavi
Registration and info: (858) 717-6389
Tombak Class by Milad Jahadi
Registration and Info: (858) 735-9634
Daf Workshop
Sundays 11am-12 at Iranian School of San Diego (ISSD)

Piano Class by Farid Afshari
Registration and Info: (858) 349-1913

Iranian School of San Diego
858-552-9355

ISSD Registration
Branch 1: Sunday August 27, 2017 10am-12 noon
Branch 2: Thursday August 31, 2017 6-8pm

Branch I, Sundays from 9:30am-1pm
Mt. Carmel High School

Branch II, Thursdays from 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
Tel: 858-552-9355 • www.dmfund.org
www.facebook.com/DollaraMonthFund

July 19th all day fundraising event at Kabob Lounge
Carmel Valley to benefit our global children
11375 El Camino Real #170, San Diego CA 92130

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
House of Iran Balboa Park
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/Iranian-AmericanScholarshipFund

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 Saturday 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

for latest Events in San Diego visit:
www.chekhabar.com

Annual LGBT Pride Parade
San Diego LGBT Pride
619-297-7683
Jul 15, 2017

Comic-Con International: San Diego
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Festival of the Bells
Free
619-281-8449
Jul 15 - Jul 16, 2017

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Helping Syrian Refugees

By Gity Nematollahi

Never believe that a few caring people can't change the world. For, indeed, that's all who ever have. -Margaret Mead

San Diego County has welcomed hundreds of Syrian refugees out of the ten thousand allowed in the country this past federal fiscal year. Because of the high number of refugees who arrived in San Diego in such a short time, the resettlement agencies were not able to provide for their basic needs as they usually do.

In mid-November 2016, the Persian Cultural Center's board of directors learned about the Syrian refugee families who had just arrived in San Diego and were housed in one-bedroom motels in El Cajon. As soon as we informed our community, we received an overwhelming response to help. The Persian Cultural Center, Dollar a Month fund, AIAP, License to Freedom, Ethnos Community Church, Bright, and Bridge played important roles in informing the community and raising funds for the people in need. This was a community effort. Almost everyone who heard the news was on board to help out.

On Thanksgiving, we joined a group of amazing people to serve lunch to the Syrian refugees who were still living at the motel at the time and to some of the families who were resettled in El Cajon. Since then, we have conducted several fundraisers to collect donations, groceries, and goods to be delivered to the families. Many of our community members adopted families and have become their mentors to assist them with their transition to living in San Diego.

Thanks to the generosity of our community, we were able to gather all needed items and deliver them to the refugees. These donations included, but were not limited to, hundreds of towels, bed sheets, dozens of tea pots and cups, portable stoves, rice cookers, crock pots, water boilers, toys and books, soccer balls, blankets, clothing, over one hundred pairs of shoes, hygiene products, bikes (very useful in assisting refugees in transportation), groceries, and other household items, as well as monetary donations for more than 50 families (who typically have many children).

During the past few months, I have experienced an overwhelming myriad of emotions. Knowing the harsh living conditions and the trauma that the refugees had endured broke my heart; on the other hand, it was heartwarming to watch how a community has come together, regardless of differences, to offer support to people in need. We have had donations and gifts coming to us from all over California and even other states. I've witnessed how our community members opened their hearts to serve the refugees; they volunteered to deliver donations, offered their home as a collection point, cooked meals and delivered to the families in the motel, and sat down with them, listened to their stories and needs, and became friends. One friend insisted in giving her only warm nice jacket to make sure the refugees are warm; another friend's children shared their toys and bikes with Syrian refugee children. All of us in the community came together to support and to make sure that all newly-arrived refugees were being properly housed, provided the necessities, and made to feel welcome.

For Christmas, we visited about 20 families and delivered gifts and goods to them, sat down with them at their new barely-furnished houses, drank coffee and, with the limited Arabic we knew, tried to express to them that they are welcome and safe here. This was another heartwarming experience. The Syrian families were all so friendly and gracious.

One of the amazing projects that has been done during the past months is the backpack drive. The Dadkhah family, as usual, took the lead in this humanitarian project. They raised enough money to purchase backpacks and school supplies for more than 240 Syrian refugee school children. They spent countless hours to prepare the backpacks and to deliver them to each of the children in a very organized manner.

I'd like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who has been volunteering their time and has supported this project. This could have not have happened without the help, support, time, and effort of all the generous, loving people in our community. May God bless you all richly and abundantly. Thank you!

Gity Nematollahi is a member of PCC Board of Directors

We need your help!

Dear Loyal Readers:

The first issue of *Peyk* was published over 25 years ago in the form of a two-page black and white newsletter. What a long way we've come since then! With the help of a growing number of talented writers, editors, and an amazing graphic designer, our newsletter has transformed into a beautiful magazine filled with original, unique articles and interviews. The *Peyk* staff is comprised solely of volunteers, working purely for the love of the publication and for an extraordinary commitment to community-building.

Did you know that the Library of Congress is a subscriber to *Peyk*? *Peyk* readers span the nation and spread into Canada and Europe, too! We also have a steady following of online readers. Because we value our intelligent and diverse readership, we endeavor to maintain high quality content with expansive coverage of topics. We strive not to overload our pages with advertisements out of respect for you, our devoted readers.

Our goal is to make Peyk sustainable. However, due to the ongoing increase in price of paper, printing, distribution and mailing, this goal is becoming less attainable.

Fortunately, there is something that you can do to help! You can either renew or begin a membership with the Persian Cultural Center (PCC), which comes with a free subscription to *Peyk,* or you can subscribe to the magazine for an annual cost of $25. **You may even consider giving *Peyk* a monetary donation. All contributions are tax-deductible**.

Please join us in our efforts to keep our valued publication alive. Please help us save *Peyk*!

Respectfully,

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EDUCATIONAL SERIES

The **Science** of

Nutrition

Vitamin D and your health

By Mohammad Ahrar, Ph.D.

Introduction

Vitamins are essential for the normal growth and development of the body. They cannot be synthesized by the body in sufficient quantities, therefore, they must be obtained through diet. General characteristics of vitamins, and the importance of vitamin A was discussed in *Peyk* 169. In this article, we review the health benefits of vitamin D.

Vitamin D as a hormone

In spite of the name, vitamin D is considered a pro-hormone and not a vitamin. The reason is that vitamins cannot be synthesized by the human body, but vitamin D can. It can be produced in the body through the action of sunlight on the skin. The chemical structure of this vitamin is also more like steroid hormones.

Forms of vitamin D

Two forms of vitamin D are commonly found in nature. One form is found in some plants, mushrooms, and fish such as salmon, and sardines. This form of vitamin D is known as ergosterol (vitamin D2). The other form of vitamin D, is a cholesterol-based provitamin known as dehydrocholesterol, which is found in human skin. Both forms when irradiated by sunlight will be converted to Vitamin D, which in turn need to be converted to metabolically active form by the body to be useful. Vitamin D1 is not very common.

How human body produces active form of vitamin D?

Exposure of sunlight (especially UVB) to the skin, converts dehydrocholesterol into cholecalciferol (vitamin D3).This form of the vitamin, and vitamin D from dietary sources, enter blood circulation, where they will be converted into another form (calcidiol) in the liver. Calcidiol will then be converted into the active form of vitamin D, called calcitriol (1,25-hydroxyvitamin D3) by the enzymes in the kidneys. Calcitriol circulates as a hormone, in the blood, entering the targeted cells and activates the genes responsible for regulation and control of calcium and phosphate concentration in blood, the immune system, cancer proliferation, muscular function and endothelial cell (lining of the blood vessels) proliferation. Sensible sun exposure on skin, for 5-10 minutes, 2-3 times per week, allows the body the ability to produce sufficient vitamin D. Research shows that a fair-skinned person with full body exposure to the sun can synthesize up to 20,000 IU* of vitamin D3 in about 20 minutes, which is more than the daily requirement for this vitamin for the average person.

Possible health benefits of vitamin D

- Effect on bone - The primary role of Vitamin D is to support the development and maintenance of bones and teeth. Vitamin D is necessary for the absorption of calcium and phosphorus by the small intestine, and to reclaim calcium from kidney tubules, that would otherwise be excreted in the urine. Thus, vitamin D maintains the normal level of calcium in the blood. Calcium is a major component of bones, and is also essential for regulation of muscle contraction, heart functions, and blood coagulation. Vitamin D also affects parathyroid hormone, which in turn affects the metabolism of skeletal mineralization and calcium homeostasis in the blood.
- Effect on blood vessels - Vitamin D reduces atherosclerosis (stiffness of arteries), and lowers blood pressure. Research conducted on children who were at high risk of vitamin D deficiency, showed that when the experimental group members were given 2,000 IU/day of vitamin D for two weeks, they had significantly lower arterial wall stiffness compared with children who were given only 400 IU/day for the same length of time.
- Effect on the heart - Studies with patients with chronic heart failure, concluded that daily supplementation of vitamin D-3 has improved heart function.
- Effect on the immune system - Vitamin D has been shown to influence immune system-related cells, such as B and T lymphocytes, neutrophils, and macrophages. Vitamin D also may influence human genes that control the immune system. Researchers from Boston University School of Medicine found that higher vitamin D levels in healthy individuals, have a significant impact on the genes controlling illnesses such as cancer, autoimmune diseases and cardiovascular disease (2, 5).
- Effect on viral infection - Supplementation of 1,200 IU of vitamin D per day to the diet of a group of children during winter, reduced the risk of influenza infection in the experimental group by more than 40% (1).
- Effect on diabetes - Several studies have shown a relationship between blood concentrations of vitamin D and risk of type 2 diabetes. In one study, infants who received 2,000 IU/day of vitamin D, had an 88% lower risk of developing type 1 diabetes by the age of 32. Poor vitamin D status in the pregnant mother, on the other hand, was associated with gestational diabetes mellitus, and some other complications such as high blood pressure.
- Effect on cancer cells - Some studies have suggested that calcitriol (the hormonally active form of vitamin D) can reduce cancer progression by slowing the growth and development of new blood vessels that feed the cancer cells. As a result, cancer cells die faster and are less likely to spread to other tissues. Preclinical studies have shown an effect of vitamin D on a variety of cancer cell lines, including cell cycle interruption, apoptosis (cell death), and disrupting the progression of low-grade prostate tumors.
- Effect on MS (Multiple Sclerosis) - According to new research published in the journal Neurology, Multiple Sclerosis patients may benefit from vitamin D supplements. The results of another study, published in the Journal of American Medical Association, in 2006, suggest that high circulating levels of vitamin D are associated with a lower risk of multiple sclerosis.

Deficiency of vitamin D

Although the body has the ability to make and store vitamin D, this vitamin has a short half-life, meaning the stores in the body can run low, especially in the winter. There are many reasons deficiency of this vitamin can occur.

- Dark skinned people have less ability to absorb ultraviolet radiation B (UVB) rays required to produce vitamin D. Dark-skinned people living in low sunlight areas are at a higher risk of vitamin D deficiency than white skinned people living in the same area. However, dark-skinned people have some advantage; the abundance of dark melanin pigment in their skin works like sunscreen and makes them less vulnerable to skin cancer.
- Use of sunscreen can significantly decrease the body's ability to absorb the ultraviolet radiation (UVB) rays required to produce vitamin D.
- As people age, the level of vitamin D in the blood decreases accordingly. Deficiency of this vitamin could be attributed to 80% of hip fractures in older people.
- People who cover their whole body with clothes (and are therefore less exposed to the sunshine), are more at risk for vitamin D deficiency.
- Deficiency of vitamin D in children can cause rickets, a disease characterized by a severely bow-legged appearance, triggered by impaired mineralization and softening of the bones. In adults, vitamin D deficiency (in conjunction with inadequate calcium intake), manifests as osteomalacia (poor bone density) and osteoporosis which is a more serious problem when bones lose mass and texture and become porous and fragile.
- Medical reports indicate that production of vitamin D3 can be affected by some Medications, such as barbiturates, isoniazid and statin drugs that inhibit cholesterol synthesis, may also impair liver or kidney functions to synthesize vitamin D3.
- Multiple studies have shown that vitamin D deficiency is associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, hypertension, multiple sclerosis, autism, Alzheimer's disease, rheumatoid arthritis, asthma severity and swine flu (4).

The symptoms of a vitamin D deficiency in adults may include: tiredness, aches and pains, a general sense of not feeling well, and severe bone or muscle pain. However, the mentioned symptoms may not always be due to vitamin D deficiency, and you need to consult with your doctor.

Recommended daily intake;

The recommended intake of vitamin D throughout a person's lifetime was updated by the U.S. Institutes of Medicine in 2010, and are currently set at:

- Infants 0-12 months - 400 IU (10 mcg)
- Children 1-18 years - 600 IU (15 mcg)
- Adults to age 70 - 600 IU (15 mcg)
- Adults over 70 - 800 IU (20 mcg)
- Pregnant or lactating women - 600 IU (15 mcg).

Sources of Vitamin D;

- Sunlight is the most common and efficient source of vitamin D.
- The recommended intake of vitamin D depends on the amount of sun exposure
- A sunscreen with sun protection factor (SPF) 30 can reduce the body's ability to synthesize vitamin D by 95%. People who live in northern latitudes or areas of high pollution, those who work at night and stay home during the day require more vitamin D from food sources.
- Infants who are exclusively breastfed are also at high risk of vitamin D deficiency, especially if they are dark-skinned or have minimal sun exposure. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all breastfed infants receive 400 IU/day of an oral vitamin D supplement.
- It is best to obtain any vitamin or mineral through natural sources first. It is not the individual vitamin or mineral alone that make certain foods an important part of our diet, but the synergy of that foods nutrients working together and allowing for greater absorption. For example, vitamin D is fat soluble, meaning that its absorption requires dietary fat. In addition, magnesium is needed to convert vitamin D into its active form.
- The recommended dosage of vitamin D for prevention of diseases such as osteomalacia, atopic eczema (skin sensitivity), autoimmune diseases, cancer, heart disease, cognition, inflammation, and more, can be found in a report by the Mayo Clinic (6)

Vitamin D content in some selected foods

- Cod liver oil, 1 tablespoon .....1,360 IU
- Herring, fresh, raw, 4 ounces .....1,056 IU
- Salmon, sockeye, cooked, 4 ounces... ... 596 IU
- Sardines, canned, 4 ounces ..... 336 IU
- Lean Beef Roast, 3 oz (85g) .....14 IU
- Fortified Milk, 1 cup (244g) .....127 IU
- Tuna, canned in water, 3 ounces ..... 68 IU
- Egg, one large ..... 44 IU
- Turkey, 3 oz (85g) .... 10 IU
- Cheddar Cheese, 1 slice (1 oz, 28g) ..... . 11 IU
- Chicken 1 thigh with skin (129g)..... ... 15 IU
- Shiitake Mushrooms, 1 cup (145g) ..... 41 IU

.....

IU = International Unit.
1 microgram (mcg) vitamin D = 40 IU vitamin D

Vitamin D intoxication

The Upper Level limit recommended for vitamin D is 4000 IU per day. However, the National Institutes of Health has suggested that vitamin D toxicity is unlikely at daily intakes below 10,000 IU/day. Although hypervitaminosis D is rare among people, mounting evidence indicates that levels greater than 10,000 IU/day of vitamin D in the long term are more likely to cause vitamin D intoxication. Vitamin D intoxication is in conjunction with hypercalcemia (too much calcium in the blood), and consequences are similar to that of hypercalcemia.

Patients with hypercalcemia often experience constipation, confusion, diarrhea, headache, loss of appetite, dry mouth, metallic taste, and frequent urination. Some patients may also experience fatigue, nausea, vomiting, and weakness associated with hypercalcemia (6). Clinical studies show that vitamin D intoxication and hypercalcemia are associated with increased risk of kidney stones, over calcification of bone, and hardening of blood vessels.

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3- http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/161618.php
4- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vitamin
5- https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2726624/
6- http://www.mayoclinic.org/drugs-supplements/vitamin-d/dosing/hrb-20060400

Questions Posed by Strangers

By Marriam Zarabi

My parents do not shy away from sharing their Iranian ethnicity with strangers, or responding to *where are you from* with UNESCO-style facts about Iran. While at times questions from strangers are answered with reservation, they always remain grounded in their Iranian heritage, especially by my mother. My developing cultural identity and my political identity have been sparked by questions from strangers throughout my childhood and into my adult life. I continue sharing questions posed by strangers about Iranian ethnicity and culture, Iranian history, and Iranian politics with my parents, and we make an effort to unpack the complexity of each question. Questions from strangers helped me understand the parallels of self-identification, my cultural identity, and my political identity.

In Kansas City, where I live, Iranians are a minority within other minorities. Growing up with experiences of being different and having experiences of "other" is a shared experience for many identifying members of a minority. As many people experience, being different is closely linked to stereotype, prejudice, racial and ethnic discrimination, political tension, and at the root, respectively, misunderstanding. I have felt recently, as I have in ebbs and flows throughout my childhood, that *being Iranian* is associated with *being something political*. The identity of my parents is political. My identity is political. Talking about our identities has once again, become something political. *Being something political,* unfortunately, can also mean *being controversial* or *threatening.* Although I grew up with a politically-conscious and activist-minded family, I never self-identified as a person that practiced a strong activist voice. This was especially apparent in my approach toward Iranian politics; I was well-read and somewhat versed on Iranian politics of the past and the present, but my lack of emotional and physical connection to Iran distanced me from the feelings of national pride or homesickness my mother felt for her Iran. My first visit to Iran, at age eleven, was difficult. Wearing a hijab was strange to me, the traffic and crowds of people in the streets were overwhelming, and the local people were vocal about their disagreements with the government and their unhappiness with lack of appropriate representation. Everyone seemed very angry and unhappy. Questions from strangers about my first visit to Iran are still hard to answer because I saw so much for the first time. Today, I acknowledge these questions from strangers as an important piece of my developing political identity.

During the 2009 Iranian post-election, I was on my summer break from my junior year of college. My idea and interpretation of the Iranian Green Movement from beginning to end was greatly influenced by my mother, a strong advocate for freedom of expression, for actively and peacefully pursuing justice. She wore green regularly and did not stop watching CNN, BBC, or the Iranian-state television news channels in the warmth of our kitchen, while the latter were still available. This movement caused me to re-question my identity as an Iranian-American woman while trying to find meaning in the chaos of what I saw on TV, in my interactions with Iranians and non-Iranians, and in what I read in newspapers and magazines. I navigated my questions about the movement through an analytical and academic lens, by way of my honors thesis. My aim was to examine five instances of women actively participating in the movement: a citizen journalist in her Facebook campaign, Zahra Rahnavard, a public political figure campaigning alongside her husband, Mir-Houssein Mousavi; three photographs of women in spontaneous acts of protest; and Neda Agha-Soltan, who found herself fallen and after her death remained an important icon for the movement. These five instances of women's participation in the Green Movement provided working definitions of women's citizenship and activism in Iran.

Studying the Green Movement revealed ways in which women's political identity and citizenship was a cause for activism. This academic and analytical perspective helped me understand the commonalities I share between my mother, her Iranian pride, and the women activists of the Green Movement. The discovered commonalities were disperse in similarities and differences; once I understood the relationship between activism and cultural identity, I realized the political identity that developed from my cultural identity. I had a new framework with which to participate in the Women's March on Washington. I had a new reason to continue studying political and social movements.

My political identity helps me understand my mother's experience and identity as an immigrant woman, and as a mother. My political identity helps me understand my cultural identity as an Iranian-American woman. My political identity helps me navigate the complexity of community building within Iranian diaspora communities. My political identity is part of who I am as an Iranian-American, and in many ways, is the unintended fruition of many questions posed by strangers.

As we stayed abreast of the most recent presidential election in Iran this April and May, I was reminded of my mother's participation in the Green Movement and of my academic efforts to understand the movement. Similar to the Green Movement, most of our information was garnered from TV and social media. Watching the large crowds during the debates and hearing various chants reminded me of the effort of the many protestors from the Green Movement. Instead of seeing strangers, however, I saw hints of my mother's face; I saw hints of my aunt, my grandmother, and my sisters. These faces are no longer the faces of strangers.
I silently give thanks for the questions posed by strangers.

Marriam is a young professional exploring her dual identity through narrative and written prose, often writing about her personal experiences as a second-generation Iranian growing up in Kansas City.

Persian Cuisine

Nush-e Jan

In our last issue, we began a series on the variety of kabab recipes. In *Peyk* #169, you will find recipes for Ground Meat or Ground Chicken Kabab (Kabab-e-kubideh).

From: New Food of Life
Najmieh Batmanglij

Fillet Kabab (Kabab-e-Barg):

Makes 4 servings; preparation time is 20 minutes, plus 4 hours for marination; cooking time is 10 minutes

2 loins of lamb, beef or veal
3 large onions, peeled and grated
1 cup fresh lime juice
1 cup yogurt (optional)
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. freshly ground pepper
8 cherry tomatoes or 4 large tomatoes, cut in half
One 12 ounce package of lavash bread
6 flat, 1/8 inch-wide swordlike skewers

Baste:
¼ cup butter melted
¼ tsp. ground saffron dissolved in 2 Tbsp. hot water
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
2 Tbsp. sumac powder (optional)
1 lime, cut in half

1. Have your butcher remove back bones from the loins, then the fillets from the loins, and then trim all fat and gristle from the main muscles.

2. On a wet board, cut main muscles (the eyes) lengthwise with the grain into strips 3 inches wide, 8 inches long, and ½ inch thick. Split each fillet without cutting entirely through the meat, and open out. Pound each piece lightly with a heavy-blacked knife to make shallow incisions along the meat. Place meat in a large bowl.

3. Start charcoal 30 minutes before you want to cook and let it burn until the coals are glowing evenly.

4. Peel and grate the onions, then take the onion and press the bits against a sieve being held over the large bowl with the meat. This will allow the onions' juices to be released into the mixing bowl. Add lime juice, salt, pepper, and the yogurt. Mix well. Cover the meat and marinate for 4-24 hours in the refrigerator.

5. Thread the strips of meat onto each skewer, leaving a few inches free on both ends. Spear tomatoes onto separate skewers.

6. In a small saucepan, melt butter. Add the saffron water, salt, and pepper. Keep warm. Baste the meat and tomatoes with this mixture.

7. When the coals are glowing, first place tomatoes on grill; after 1 minute, place the skewered meat on the grill. Cook for 4-5 minutes on each side, turning frequently and basting occasionally. The meat should be seared on the outside, pink and juicy on the inside.

8. Spread *lavash* bread on a serving platter. When the meat is cooked, place the skewers of meat on the bread and brush them with the baste. Slide the meat off the skewer with another piece of bread. Arrange the meat on the bread and garnish with the grilled tomatoes. Sprinkle with sumac to taste and squeeze half of a fresh lime over the kababs, and cover the meat with more lavash bread to keep it warm. Serve immediately with chelow (white rice) or bread, fresh herbs, scallions, salad, yogurt and cucumbers (mast-o-khiar), and Persian pickles (torshi).

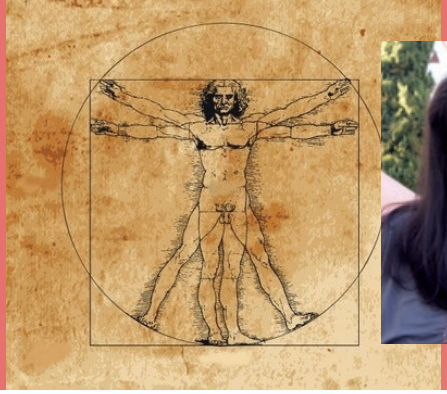
Salad Shirazi:

Home recipe and not from Food for Life

This salad is often served with kababs. Makes 4 servings; preparation time is 10 minutes.

5 long seedless Persian cucumbers, peeled and diced
2 large tomatoes peeled and diced
1 medium size onion, peeled and diced
1 tsp. salt
¼ tsp. ground pepper
1/2 fresh lemons
2 Tbsp. virgin olive oil

Mix cucumber, tomatoes, and onion. Add salt and pepper. Squeeze the juice of one or two lemons (individual preference for sour taste), and add olive oil. Mix well and serve.



By Sanaz Majd, MD

Shingles

Have you ever had chicken pox, or "varicella"? If so, it can return with a vengeance in a different form that produces a rash years later. This is a potentially debilitating condition called shingles (or "varicella zoster") that affects nearly 1 million people in the U.S. every year.

The bad news is that it can produce severe, debilitating pain over the rash. But the good news is that there's a great way to prevent it.

What is Shingles?

After the chicken pox transmission, the virus actually never goes away. It hibernates within the cushy nerve roots inside your body, of all places. Then, years down the line, often decades, it just decides to take a breather and wreak havoc by slithering through your nerves and out through your skin. It reappears by causing a different type of rash, along with a potentially debilitating pain over that area.

The rash begins as a localized (meaning one area, not all over the body) redness on one side of the body. Within this redness, there are often vesicles filled with fluid, much like the chicken pox. These vesicles tend to cluster near each other, and eventually pop open and crust over within several days. The rash usually disappears within a month.

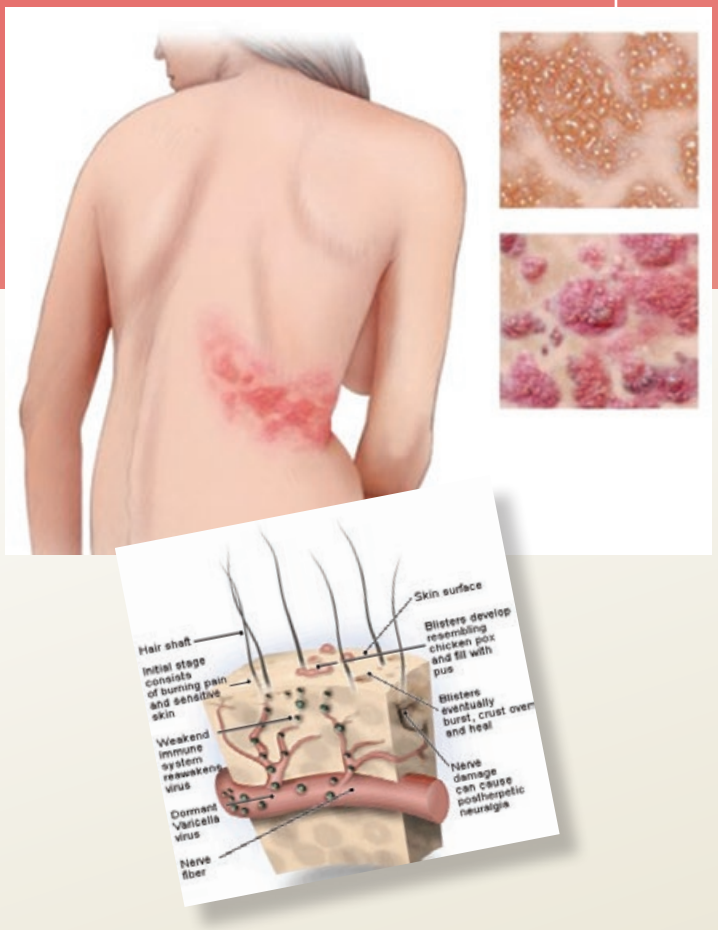
Who can get it?Anyone with a previous chicken pox infection. Up to a third of people with previous chicken pox develop shingles. But those whose immune systems are compromised are at a higher risk – for instance, people with diabetes, cancer, HIV, a history of an organ transplant, or on medications that suppress the immune system (such as those you take for rheumatoid arthritis). And an increase in age – the older we are, the more at risk.

Shingles Complications

The reason shingles is feared is because of the aftermath – the pain that potentially lingers for weeks or even months afterward is called "post-herpetic neuralgia." This pain is so bad that it is described as excruciating by some patients. For other lucky ducks, however, it may be mild and self-resolving.

Rarely, it can spread through the bloodstream and cause other threatening conditions, such as hepatitis, meningitis, and pneumonia. If the rash involves the eye, it can cause serious problems with the vision or even blindness.

Pregnant women should never come into contact with someone with active shingles (or chicken pox, for that matter), as it can spread to the vulnerable fetus and wreak havoc there.



How to Prevent Shingles?

It's vital that the shingles rash is covered up, in order to prevent the direct contact of others with it.

The good news is that there is a vaccine to prevent shingles. Although the vaccine is FDA approved for people aged 50 or more, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends it for those ages 60 and up (the age range that shingles seems to affect the most), whether or not they remember having chicken pox in the past and whether or not you may have had shingles before. Most insurance plans will only cover the cost for people aged 60 or higher.

Treatment of Shingles

Shingles is battled with an antiviral drug, often *acyclovir* or *valcyclovir*. However, they are most effective when taken within 48 to 72 hours of onset of symptoms. Therefore, sooner is better. So if you have a localized red rash that spans only throughout one half of the body, and appears like chicken pox with red, itchy vesicles with fluid in clusters, please see your doctor right away.

The best way to treat is always to prevent it in the first place. If you are 60 years or older, please ask your doctor about the shingles vaccine. Patients with Medicare can obtain the vaccine at the local pharmacy.

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

This article was first published in 2016. Some of the information might be outdated, considering the new geopolitical environment, however, we thought the information presented here might still be of interest to our readers.

Peyk

Painting a Silicon Iran

By Christina Ashtary

Diaspora Homeland Recollections Come Face-to-Face with Tehran's Thriving Tech Frontier

"I bought my iPhone in Iran, and it was probably cheaper than what any of you have paid in the U.S." Nasser Ghanemzadeh said, leaving a packed room of 50+ Iranian-American tech executives in Silicon Valley with jaw-dropping stares.

"Not only do we have access to leading technology, but in Iran, we also have all of the same services you have here in the U.S.: Uber, PayPal, Spotify, and more."

Iran Startups Founder Nasser Ghanemzadeh addresses Iranian American entrepreneurs in Sunnyvale, CA.

Founder of Iran Startups, Ghanemzadeh spoke to a generation of Iranians gathered through the Yaran Network, a community organization for Iranian-American technology, business and professional executives in Silicon Valley.

The truth is, the majority of Iranian diaspora have no idea just how developed the Iran startup ecosystem is. Since 2012, Iran's startup scene has rapidly expanded, and since 2013, has hosted more than 80 Startup Weekend events, with regular meet-ups and technology events targeting entrepreneurs on a weekly basis. Startups mimicking global competitors, as Ghanemzadeh referenced, have popped up to fill the gap in an economy closed to many global technology services. From Uber clone and Rocket Internet-backed Snapp, to PayPal twin, ZarinPal, Iran's entrepreneurs have made it possible for its 30+ million smartphone users to build a consumer-driven economy of their own.

"Startup is the sexiest word in Tehran these days, and everyone wants to be a part of this movement," Ghanemzadeh said while highlighting some of Iran's biggest technology players.

But it's more than just the culture that's catching on: so is the technology. Currently in Iran, 50% of the population has internet

Iran's leading startups (taken from Ghanemzadeh's presentation)

connection, with the speed increasing nearly four times over the past three years. Mobile providers have started to offer a 4G network. The government has also helped foster this wave of entrepreneurship: startups that receive proper certification are entitled to 15 years of tax-free business. And these conditions have given way to a rising ecosystem of tech stars like Digikala, an Iranian online e-commerce platform recently valued at US$400 million.

Bridging Silicon Valley and Iran

While many attending the event were beyond surprised to learn about Iran's robust startup scene, a smaller group of attendees have been supporting this dialogue and connection for the past two years: Kamran Elahian (Global Catalyst Partners), Amir Zarkesh (Bluechip Systems), and Yahya Tabesh (Sharif University) are all leaders of the groundbreaking initiative iBridges, aiming to bridge Silicon Valley to Iran.

Debuting in 2014 with its U.C. Berkeley-hosted conference, the formal mission of iBridges is to contribute to developing and growing the high-tech entrepreneurial ecosystem in Iran, wherever it legally can. Under current U.S. law, financial transactions and direct business relations—including formal business mentorship—are prohibited. iBridges, operating through its university partner, the U.C. Berkeley Center for Entrepreneurship and Development in the Middle East, is able to bypass this embargo through a primarily educational mission.

Despite challenges, the iBridges team has been pivotal in making positive strides: last Spring, they convened a technology summit in Berlin, showcasing 350 entrepreneurs from Iran, and drawing in 1100 attendees from across the globe—making it the largest gathering of Iranians outside the country in more than three decades. The group is now planning its Fall 2016 conference in Barcelona, which is slated to be the biggest one yet.

"A majority of the diaspora community have not been back to Iran in past 30–40 years, and have little knowledge of the talent, technology, and know-how that is currently flourishing in Iran,"

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Painting a Silicon Iran

said Elahian, a serial entrepreneur, investor, and co-Founder of iBridges. "When we started this initiative, we thought we'd be in a position to solely educate Iran's entrepreneurs. But what we've found is that it's a really beautiful exchange—we learn as much from them as they do from us."

Bridge or Bust…

While the relationship between U.S. and Iran has been on a positive trajectory with the recent lifting of multilateral sanctions, the future of a reciprocal business relationship is widely dependent on the removal of bilateral trade and economic embargos with Iran, some of which have been in effect since 1979.

But this hasn't stopped big tech conglomerates like Google, Amazon and Microsoft, through their European arms, from reaching the Tehran capital. While still lacking a physical presence in Iran, resources from these companies like Amazon Web Services (AWS) are available to hungry Iranian entrepreneurs who are able to pay in foreign currency. Local Iranian companies are also doing what they can to bring more awareness to the largest modern economy awaiting to re-enter the global market; technology news outlets like Techly and TechRasa publish entirely in English, promoting Iran's technology developments and helping to break the image of the nation being an economic black box.

"We all dream about Iran gaining international recognition as a great country with a thriving economy once again, and I'm absolutely convinced that this is the best way," commented one of the Yaran event attendees. And it's looking more likely that technology will be the way forward—to unite a distant diaspora with today's promising startups and entrepreneurs, and to bring Iran's economy—one of the largest remaining—back into the global fold.

This article was first published in "Iratel Ventures" website. Christina Ashtary, Community builder extraordinaire, aspiring glomad, passionate about techonomic development, gig economy and scaling startup ecosystems.

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Public Announcement

Money-saving energy tips for the summer

- If you live in a climate where it cools off at night, turn off your cooling system and open your windows while sleeping. When you wake in the morning, shut the windows and blinds to capture the cool air. Learn more about natural ventilation.
- Set your thermostat as high as comfortably possible in the summer. The smaller the difference between the indoor and outdoor temperatures, the lower your overall cooling bill will be.
- Cool off in the pool. An energy-efficient pool pump can use up to 70% less energy than a standard pool pump. SDG&E is offering a $200 pool pump rebate.
- Avoid placing lamps or TV sets near your room air-conditioning thermostat. The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause the air conditioner to run longer than necessary.
- Add caulk or weather-stripping to seal air leaks around leaky doors and windows to prevent hot air from coming in. Find how to select and apply the appropriate caulk and also weather-stripping.
- Monitor your energy use. Go to My Account to check out the Energy Management Tool and sign up for energy alerts to receive email or text alerts when your energy use or spending goal reaches a certain limit.
- Shop for energy-saving products. Visit SDG&E Marketplace for your one-stop-shop for energy efficiency products from a variety of retailers.

For more energy-saving tips,
watch SDG&E's video or visit the website.

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