

Peyk



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Shahri Estakhry



Climate Ignorance and Climate Reality

If you did not see CBS's *60 Minutes* on October 4, 2020, I encourage you to take the time to find it and watch the first segment on the raging wildfires in California. Thousands of firefighters have been battling dozens of blazes, which have taken the lives of more than 30 people and destroyed thousands of structures. Over 4 million acres (and counting) have been destroyed down to ashes, creating ghost towns and portending of global disaster.

It doesn't and didn't have to be like this.

In the summer of 1983, I moved from North Carolina to California. Driving down from Los Angeles to San Diego, as I passed through Orange County, I was bewildered at the beauty of the mountains on one side and the magnificent Pacific Ocean on the other. The blue sky and the radiant sunshine reflecting on the ocean were breathtaking. I was so overcome by a transcendent feeling of peace and balance in nature.



Now, thirty-some years later, I am witnessing the destruction of beautiful California. My heart breaks at our collective neglect of the environment. After ignoring the warnings raised by scientists for decades that we will reach a point of no return for the environment, we have finally arrived at the threshold of it becoming too late to be able to do much.

In 1988, NASA climate scientist James Hansen sounded the alarm about climate change in an address to the U.S. Senate. Although then-presidential candidate George H.W. Bush vowed to use the "White House effect" to battle the "greenhouse effect" and later, during his presidency, allowed the United States to be a founding member of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, his actions and those of subsequent administrations have not been enough. Since Hansen's speech, global carbon dioxide emissions have risen 68 percent and use of toxic fossil fuels has actually risen over time, despite increased use of "clean" solar and wind energy. In 2018, environmental magazine *Grist* noted that "[t]hirty years after Hansen testified, the world still isn't even close to solving the problem. In fact, for every year we wait, we are making the problem much, much harder. On our current path, emissions will still be rising 30 years from now, and the world will have long ago left behind all reasonable chances of preventing the irreversible tipping points in the climate system that Hansen predicted. **If climate change was an urgent problem in 1988, it's now an emergency.**" (*Grist*, June 22, 2018, bolded for emphasis.)

By not trusting science and those knowledgeable in the field—and instead by listening to nonsensical obfuscation and magical thinking from those who benefit financially from the destruction of our environment—we have arrived at the disaster zone earlier than expected. Not long ago, California was in the top five economies of the world and the state provided many of the vegetable and fruit crops for the entire nation. Just this year, however, it broke yet more heat records, including the third hottest day ever recorded... a lethal 130 degrees Fahrenheit in Death Valley. Farmlands are drying up and turning to ashes, millions of trees are dying, and the oceans are warming. The question now is: how long are we going to continue to deny reality and, thereby, actually help destroy ourselves and whatever remains? There has to be a limit to stupidity.

Perhaps during this unprecedented time—when we are mostly homebound due to the COVID-19 pandemic—it would be a good time to seriously research the climate and how it will impact not just our future, but that of our children and grandchildren.

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Persian Cultural Center

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PCC (Persian Cultural Center):

Annual Meeting and Election Persian Cultural Center of San Diego September 20, 2020 32 Years of Service

PCC's Annual General Assembly took place on Sunday, September 20, 2020, at 2 p.m. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual meeting was postponed from mid-May to September and was conducted online via Zoom. At the assembly, the annual report was presented, followed by the election of the new board members.

PCC's 2019-2020 president, Fariba Babakhani-Ghazi, reported last year's activities. Shahla Salah presented the financial report and Ali Sadr presented the reports for the Iranian School of San Diego (ISSD) and *Peyk* magazine. A summary of last year's activities is listed further below.

PCC's 2019-2020 Board of Directors and Committee Members

PCC's board of directors and committee members for the past year were Fariba Babakhani-Ghazi (President), Nikoo Atefi (Vice-President), Shahla Salah (Treasurer), Farideh Fazel (Secretary), Amir Farshad Babakhani, Parnian Badii, Hamid Beikzadeh, Hossain Hajimowlana, Ali Sadr (ISSD Principal), Venus Safaei, and Golsa Soraya. The advisory board consisted of Shahri Estakhry, Saeed Jalali, Rosita Bagheri, Shaghayegh Hanson, and Hamid Rafizadeh.

The PCC board of directors held monthly meetings over the past year, while committees held meetings as needed. At its first meeting, the board of directors elected its executive committee members and established the following committees:

Art and Culture: Hossain Hajimowlana (Head), Ali Sadr,

Fariba Babakhani-Ghazi, Amir Farshad Babakhani, Parnian Badii, Anahita Babaei, Abdy Salimi, Mahmoud Reza Pirouzian

Membership: Parnian Badii (Head), Fariba Babakhani-Ghazi, Golsa Soraya, Venus Safaei

PR: Farideh Rasouli Fazel (Head), Golsa Soraya, Fariba Babakhani-Ghazi, Amir Farshad Babakhani, Nikoo Atefi, Mahmoud Reza Pirouzian

Grant and Finance: Fariba Babakhani-Ghazi (Head), Rosita Bagheri, Amir Farshad Babakhani, Hamid Rafizadeh, Hossain Hajimowlana, Shahla Salah

Fundraising and Nowruz: Nikoo Atefi (Head), Fariba Babakhani-Ghazi, Farideh Rasouli Fazel, Shahla Salah, Venus Safaei, Amir Farshad Babakhani, Parnian Badii, Hamid Beikzadeh, Bahar Bagherpour, Mohammad Ayari

PCC Charity: Shala Salah (Head), Fariba Babakhani-Ghazi, Venus Safaei, Parnian Badii

Education: Ali Sadr (Head), Fariba Babakhani-Ghazi, Parisa Amini, Shahnaz Ahmadian

Charshanbehsoori & SizdeBedar: Hamid Beikzadeh (Head), Hamid Rafizadeh, Amir Farshad Babakhani

Building: Hamid Beikzadeh (Head), Ali Sadr, Fariba Babakhani-Ghazi, Hamid Rafizadeh

PCC Youth: Fariba Babakhani-Ghazi (Head), Farideh Rasouli Fazel, Venus Safaei

Peyk: Ali Sadr (Head), Saeed Jalali, Shahri Estakhry, Anahita Babaei, Aria Fani, Saeid Noori Bushehri, Shahrzad Julazadeh, Shaghayegh Hanson, Reza Khabazian, Ali Sahebalzamani, Rachel Tait

Governance: Ali Sadr (Head), Shaghayegh Hanson, Nikoo Atefi, Shahla Salah

PCC's 2019-2020 Cultural Activities

Over the past year, 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 continued promoting cross cultural activities, and sponsored or co-sponsored the following programs:

- 1- Book fair in collaboration with *Naakojja* publication at IAC
- 2- Setar workshop with Kourosh Taghavi at IAC
- 3- Art show by Ali Sadr
- 4- Comedy show and book signing with comedian K-von at IAC
- 5- Two play readings of *Morghe Sahar*, directed by Mahmoud Behrouzian at IAC
- 6- Fourth writing workshop with Hossein Mortezaeian Abkenar at IAC
- 7- Screening *Rahman 1400* (2019) at Reading Cinemas Town Square in collaboration with the Sheed Persian Film Festival
- 8- Author talk with Abdi Nazemian in collaboration with the Mission Hills/Hillcrest public library
- 9- Book drive collaboration with Mobile Library to send books to refugee camps in Greece
- 10- Mehregan celebration in collaboration with the San Diego Museum of Art (SDMA), Reza Rohani, and Sara Naeini concert
- 11- Screening *Nabat* and Q&A with Iranian director and actor Shahab Hosseini at IAC
- 12- Collaboration with San Diego's Asian Film Festival and the Pacific Arts Movement (Pac Arts)
- 13- Yalda celebration at Sufi Restaurant with singer Armin Vigen
- 14- Universal Children's Day in collaboration with Child Foundation and Dollar a Month at ISSD
- 15- Annual charity bazaar in December
- 16- Special documentary night at IAC
- 17- Art gallery "A Dream of Humanity" by Reza Deghati at IAC in collaboration with UCSD
- 18- Screening *Texas 2* (2019) at Reading Cinemas in collaboration with the Sheed Persian Film Festival
- 19- Mohsen Namjoo concert at Qualcomm
- 20- Setar solo concert "The Subline Sound of the Setar" with Kourosh Taghavi at IAC
- 21- Screening *Castle of Dreams* in collaboration with CinemaNex
- 22- Lecture and book signing by Professor Yann Richard at IAC
- 23- Electric Oud Trio concert at IAC
- 24- Nima Janmohammadi solo concert at IAC
- 25- Art show with Parvin Heydarinasab and Majid Fadaeian at IAC
- 26- Play reading of *Orange Garden* with Mahmoud Behrozian at IAC
- 27- Candlelight vigil for the victims of the downing of the Ukrainian Airliner, in collaboration with House of Iran and AIAP
- 28- Nowruz preparation at ISSD
- 29- Presentation of the haft-seen along with literary, cultural, and historical exhibits in seven public libraries throughout San Diego
- 30- Persian Night "On the Steps" at the SDMA
- 31- A Night of Poetry and Literature at IAC on the third Wednesday of the month (5 events)
- 32- Family Game Night at IAC (4 times a year)
- 33- Film and Discussion Series on every third Friday of the month at IAC (8 Events) (online during COVID-19 pandemic)
- 34- Jonge Farhanghi on every second Friday of the month at IAC (10 Events)
- 35- Art exhibition at IAC
- 36- Collaboration with Docunight to show a documentary movie on the first Wednesday of the month (online during COVID-19 pandemic)
- 37- Multicultural festival in Linda Vista
- 38- Multicultural festival in Balboa Park
- 39- Free remote tutoring

ISSD: Academic year 2019-2020 was ISSD's 32nd year of operation, with 281 students attending both branches of the school at Mt. Carmel High School. ISSD's Persian language program is accredited by all local school districts as well as the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), which means that high school students can fulfill their second language requirements by taking Persian language courses at ISSD. The first branch of ISSD offers 21 classes on Sunday mornings, which are separated into six levels. ISSD also offers two Persian classes for adults, three classes for kindergarten, and three classes for pre-kindergarten. Extracurricular

classes such as Dance, Theatre, and Setar have been offered as well. The second branch is held on Thursday evenings and has a total of 5 classes.

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) of each branch of ISSD was instrumental in preparation of the Mehregan and Yalda celebrations. The PTA also helped a great deal to raise funds for the school. In addition, students at ISSD raised approximately \$2,200 for the Dollar a Month Foundation's "Project 200," aimed in helping the street children of Iran.

The school's Nowruz preparation program was held on March 8, 2020, but the Nowruz celebration was canceled due to COVID-19 as was ISSD's end of year event. Due to the pandemic, the last two months of the academic year for all classes, including the extracurricular ones, were conducted online. The cooperation of parents and students in coping with the sudden change was exemplary. The virtual graduation for the Class of 2020 took place on July 12, 2020.

PCC's Education Committee has completed six textbooks for teaching Persian as a heritage language. Many active Persian schools around the country use our textbooks and our curriculum. ISSD has a website (issd.pccsd.org) and is also active on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

Persian Cultural Dance Academy: With 55 students, the Academy met on Sundays at ISSD Branch I. The dance students performed "On the Steps" at the SDMA. Dance classes for adults were also offered this year.

The IAC: IAC has hosted a variety of cultural activities for the Iranian community (such as the Iranian American Scholarship Fund [IASF] and Dollar a Month Fund [DMF], San Diego State University, and UCSD) and has a library with more than four thousand books.

Peyk Magazine: *Peyk*, PCC's bimonthly and bilingual cultural publication, is one of our most successful outreach instruments. Every two months, *Peyk* is mailed to approximately one thousand subscribers in San Diego County and other parts of the country, with several thousand more issues distributed through business and cultural centers in San Diego, Orange, and Los Angeles Counties, the Bay Area, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Maryland, Dallas, Atlanta, and many other cities.

This year we were finally able to develop and present *Peyk* online. Our web address is peykmagazine.com. This site is interactive, and you can directly communicate and send your comments to us. Past issues of *Peyk* are still available at our archive at pccsd.org/peyk.

Outreach Programs: PCC enjoys continued joint programs with local organizations such as the Association of Iranian American Professionals (AIAP), House of Iran, San Diego Public Library, San Diego Museum of Art (SDMA), UCSD, Dollar a Month Fund (DMF), Iranian-American Scholarship Fund (IASF), and Iranian American Bar Association (IABA).

PCC has 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: PCC continued advertising and inviting members of the community to join PCC. After PCC provided new online membership software by (Join-it), membership increased by 10%. PCC also issued membership cards to its members, who receive a special discount to PCC events and from various Iranian businesses.

Public Relations: Thousands of people all over the world view PCC's Website, www.pccsd.org, and its Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, and Twitter accounts. PCC issues a weekly electronic newsletter that reaches thousands of community members, and its website provides quick access to *Peyk*, PCC's ongoing programs and activities, as well as other cultural information and events, membership information, and tax-deductible contribution information. In the past year, several 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 out to the Iranian American community, but also other communities who attended our featured programs.

The PCC Foundation: This charitable organization continues to raise funds for the following projects:

Helped an Iranian woman and her teenage daughter with food and housing (Project MM)

Raised money to help members of our community who are facing many challenges with layoffs and furloughs due to COVID-19

Helped a young lady and paid for one month of food and rent

Helped others with food

Continued to support two young students who lost their parents and need help (long-term project)

Youth Committee: This committee has been behind the planning of many PCC events, both for members of the center and for charity. They are responsible for organizing Family Fun Night every other month and work on the logistics and promotion every month. The committee helped plan for PCC's Nowruz celebration and worked behind the scenes to put together the gifts and display tables. Committee members helped organize PCC's office and spent hours working together to clean out the library and organize the files. The student board organized fundraisers for Dollar a Month Fund and within PCC, collecting 41 pounds of food for the San Diego Food Bank. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, committee members also offered free remote tutoring to any students who need help while attending classes from home.

Outgoing Board Members: We would like to take this opportunity to thank the following board members who have served their terms and are leaving the PCC board. We are grateful for the time, energy, and talents they generously gave to PCC and our community. We look forward to having them back on the PCC Board again: Fariba Babakhani-Ghazi, Farshad Babakhani, Hamid Bekzadeh, Farideh Fazel, Shahla Salah, and Golsa Soraya. With the exception of Fariba Babakhani-Ghazi and Golsa Soraya, who have served their two consecutive terms and are subject to "term limits," the others can run for re-election.

We are continually looking for volunteers to join our committees and sub-committees. Please step forward and GET INVOLVED with various groups to HELP US better serve the community.

2020 PCC Board of Directors Election: After the Board of Directors' report, candidates to fill the vacancies in the Board introduced themselves and presented their plans for joining the Board. Mr. Kohbodi, Ms. Alagheband, and Mr. Shoushtari observed the election, which was done by secret ballot. After counting the ballots, including the absentees and electronic votes, the results were announced.

The following were elected as voting members of the Board of Directors: Shahla Salah

Farideh Fazel

Amir Farshad Babakhani

Hamid Beikzadeh

Mahmoud Reza Pirouzian

Hamid Rafizadeh

These new members will serve along with the current board members:

Nikoo Atefi, Parnian Badii, Hossain Hajimowlana, Ali Sadr, and Venus Safaei. The general assembly was adjourned at 4 p.m.

The first meeting of the Board of Directors was held on October 14, 2020. Subsequently, the Board elected members of the Executive Committee, who will serve PCC for one year:

President: Shahla Salah

Vice President: Amir Farshad Babakhani

Treasurer: Hamid Refizadeh

Secretary: Nikoo Atefi

Advisory Board: Shahri Estakhri, Shaghayegh Hanson, Saeed Jalali, Fariba Babakhani-Ghazi

Other members of the Board of Directors will be leading various committees such as Art and Culture, Education, Charity, Building, Grant & Finance, Fundraising and Nowruz, PR, PCC Youth Group, Charshanbehsoori, and Membership.

Please join us. If you are interested in joining any of the committees, please contact PCC by phone at (858) 552-9355 or email at pcc@pccsd.org.



PCC NEWS

Annual Meeting and Election – September 20, 2020

The annual meeting and election of new members to PCC's board of directors was held virtually via Zoom on September 20, 2020. Ms. Fariba Babakhani, the president of the board, presented the report of PCC's annual activities. Then Mr. Ali Sadr gave reports on the Iranian School of San Diego activities and *Peyk* magazine. Ms. Shahla Salah then presented the annual financial report. The new board candidates gave a summary of their proposed plans and an election for the new board members was held virtually. Amir Farshad Babakhani, Hamid Beikzadeh, Farideh Fazel, Mahmoud Reza Pirouzian, Hamid Rafizadeh, and Shahla Salah were elected as the new members of the board.

PCC's Board Meetings

PCC's board of directors holds its meetings every second Wednesday of the month. Since last March these meetings have been conducted online. The last two meetings took place on September 9 and October 14, 2020.

Docunight – September 6, 2020

The documentary *Abbas by Abbas*, directed by Kamy Pakdel, is about the life and works of Abbas Attar, a renowned photographer living in France. This documentary was completed in the last days of Attar's life. Ahmad Kiarostami hosted a virtual Q&A with director Pakdel and special guest Atiq Rahimi, a French-Afghan writer and filmmaker.

Docunight – October 4, 2020

All That's Missing (2018), directed by Zeinab Tabrizy, narrates the lives of two women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer. Docunight hosted a virtual Q&A with director Tabrizy, Azadeh Afifi, and Ahmad Kiarostami.

Virtual Movie Discussion Series – September 24, 2020

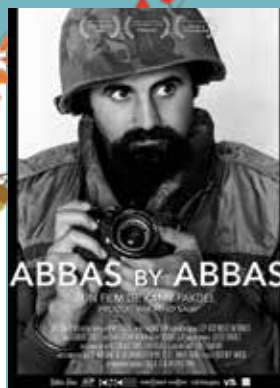
September's virtual movie discussion centered on *Get Out*, the 2017 horror film about America's systemic and casual racism. The movie was written and directed by Jordan Peele, starring Daniel Kaluuya, Allison Williams, Bradley Whitford, Catherine Keener, and Lakeith Stanfield. Host Mahmoud Pirouzian led the discussion of *Get Out* with the event's guest, Sheldon Deckelbaum, who reviewed the movie.

Virtual Movie Discussion Series – October 19, 2020

Malcolm X (1992) was the movie selected for the October virtual movie discussion. The American epic biographical drama about African-American activist Malcolm X was directed and co-written by Spike Lee, starring Denzel Washington in the title role. Mahmoud Pirouzian hosted the discussion with guest Bahar Davari, who reviewed the movie.

A Night of Poetry and Literature – September 16, 2020

In this virtual event moderated by Farshad Babakhani and the Poetry & Literature group, poetry was read by the attendees.



Virtual Concert – Dornab Ensemble -- September 25, 2020

Dornab Ensembles performed a virtual concert in September 2020, dedicated to the memory of "Earthman" Manooch Vahdat. Performers included Fernando Gomez (drums), Omar Lopez (bass, guembri), Louis Valenzuela (guitar, oud), and Farhad Bahrami (electric oud).

Persian Fall Festival "Mehregan" with the Damsaz Ensemble - October 11, 2020

The fourth joint PCC and San Diego Museum of Art Mehregan celebration took place on the evening of Sunday, October 11, 2020. The program consisted of a virtual concert by the Damsaz Ensemble with performers Jessica Kenney (vocal), Niloufar Shirini (kamancheh), Shahab Azinmehr (tar), and Milad Jahadi (percussion). As in previous years, all proceeds were allocated to the preservation and expansion of the Persian Art gallery at the museum. A special thanks to Ms. Anahita Babaei for managing the event.



By Ali Sahebalzamani

FOR THE KNOTS IN OUR THROATS

There is a knot in our throats; all our throats, whether in Iran or in exile, our throats are closed completely shut by this knot. Can you imagine it? All these swarthy people, all over the world, walking around with their throats all closed off by the same knot. Last week I tried to explain it to a coworker who noticed my sorrow. I tried to convey the depth of our sorrow at losing maestro Mohammad Reza Shajarian by elaborating on the fact that he had stood shoulder to shoulder with the people of Iran through all the chaos and fire of the past half-century; that when he sang, it wasn't just his own pristine voice that came out of his throat, but all our voices. It had stopped being *his* throat many years ago. That throat was *our* throat, now closed shut by this bitter knot.

I told him about our late maestro's early days on the radio where, for fear of his father's disapproval, he had performed under the pseudonym Siavosh Bidagani. That at the time it was a matter of course for singers who became famous by performing classical music on the radio to be hired in the cafés and cabarets of *Laleh Zar*, there to perform a far lower standard of music. But this practice became common, I explained, because they were paid a much greater sum of cash than they could ever earn as employees of the National Radio and the ministry of arts and culture. Yet our late maestro refused this offer and, in doing so, established himself as a singer of a much higher caliber and as an artist of integrity and principle.

At the time, his talent was recognized by one of the last great masters of the old method of singing, Nour-Ali Boroumand, to whose classes he eagerly rushed, along with many of his contemporaries—men such as Parviz Meshkatian, Mohammad-Reza Lotfi, and Hossein Alizadeh—who would go on to compose the most famous and memorable, not to mention musically ingenious, works which Shajarian would sing.

Later on, when the royal regime's brutal tactics against dissidents rose to a fever pitch in the last days preceding the revolution of 1979, our late maestro, along with the entirety of the younger generation of the radio's best and brightest, tendered his resignation in protest. From the ranks of those angry young men and women, who surely had knots in their throats back then as we do now, would be forged the *Chavoosh* center for music. The fruits of their labors would be the ten cassette tapes that today any true listener of Iranian music knows by heart—those melodies, familiar like the contours of the knots in our throats, and those poems like the drops of blood that drip from our heart. They stood shoulder to shoulder with the people and Shajarian, as the main singer throughout those albums, became a sort of figurehead to their audience. To quote Bijan Kamkar, "When the regime shot people on the street, Shajarian sang 'my brother's crown is a blossom in bloom.'"

The day was eventually carried by the revolutionaries and the new regime was established through the labors of young



activists, and the knots in our throats were beginning to loosen with hope; so Shajarian sang:

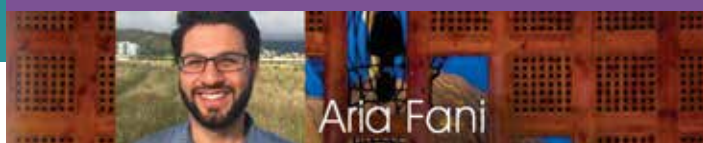
"Iran, O home of hope,
O'er thy roof the dawn has finally broke"

And the people sang along with him, little knowing that even as that song was being broadcast from the radio, now under the control of the revolutionaries, the very poet who wrote the lyric to it was already imprisoned. Slowly, as the dream of hope was turning into a nightmare of despair, music—classical music, to be precise—was cast aside by zealots who believed it to be indulgent and sinful. So the knots in our throats tightened once again. A year into the war with Iraq, the musical geni who had resigned from the shah's radio were rarely allowed to perform for the people with whom they had stood, so one by one they went into self-imposed exile; some physically left Iran whereas others stayed and taught their arts to students and performed in small private concerts, a shadow of the massive sold-out performances they gave during the first months after the revolution. However, our late maestro had a habit of recording all his performances, no matter how small the audience or how meager the sales, and from among these tapes were forged his next few albums. He started his own record label, Del Avaz records, and distributed the masterpieces he created with Parveez Meshkatian. These albums, such as *Astaan-e Jaanaan*, *Bidaad*, and *Dastaan*, would be the soundtrack of those horrid years. In *Bidaad*—which, roughly, translates into 'injustice'—he chose a poem by Hafez, which goes:

"The city of beloved friends and the soil of grace was this,
O sovereigns! What has become of you?"

This poem specifically resulted in much controversy and a lot of effort went into the attempt to censor this album; efforts that would eventually remain unsuccessful. Through the creation of these albums, our late maestro let us know that he still stood with us and that it was still our voice that came out of his throat, no matter how many bitter knots we had in there.

At this point in the conversation, my coworker pointed out that I had not been present for most of the years I referenced. "That is true," I said, "but, in the years that I did occupy the same planet as Mohammad Reza Shajarian, his song was my song. When the people of Iran rose once more in protest in 2009, it was again his songs that shook the air above the streets and the first time I had my heart broken it was the poetry of Sa'di coming out from between his lips that consoled me; and today, as I am struggling to come to terms with the uncomfortable truths of my life and the world, it is still his song that can loosen the bitter knots in my throat."



Aria Recommends ...

I started writing for *Peyk* in 2005, when I was eighteen years old. The idea of my name appearing in print was just exhilarating! My first task was to summarize a Persian-language series on the provinces of Iran edited by Hasan Zende Del, et al., designed to promote tourism within Iran. Gradually, I earned more trust from the editorial board and contributed a couple of essays of my own. In 2008, just as I declared English literature as my major at San Diego State University, I started a two-page column called *Persian Poetry Today* in which I introduced the work of around fifty modern and contemporary Persian-language poets to English-language readers over the course of ten years. When I look back at my literary writings in *Peyk*, I see a writer who was, at every stage, in need of reading more (as he still does!), but I also see a young mind gradually learning how to look at forms of cultural production—particularly poetry—historically and methodically.

My articles on Persian poetry reflect my honest failures at thinking critically but also my personal maturation as a student of literature. As a new administration came into office in 2017, I turned my public attention to a more urgent matter: the predicament of asylum seekers in a world that had taken a sharp turn toward right-wing nationalism and xenophobia. As I began my social advocacy in Berkeley on behalf of Central American refugees and asylum seekers, a new set of questions preoccupied me: how to educate the public on a humanitarian crisis in a non-partisan, honest, and nuanced manner during a time of extreme polarization. I also needed to locate and mute any “white savior” impulse there might have been in my voice. My social advocacy on behalf of Central American asylum seekers has empowered and educated me far more than the other way around. One day when I have gained more critical distance from these writings, I will look back in order to learn how to better lend my voice to marginalized communities.

Since I earned my Ph.D. in 2019, the completion of my elementary education in literary studies, I have struggled to find the time to contribute argumentative and thematically coherent essays. But I am not yet ready to stop writing for this precious community magazine. I owe a world of gratitude to its editorial board and you, the readers, for all of these years of support and encouragement. More importantly, I still have something to say to you and this platform gives me the privilege of speaking to a non-academic readership without at least some of the jargon that marks my scholarly writings (because I can’t help it!). Starting this column is an effort to continue contributing to *Peyk* without the pretense of framing my disparate thoughts under a single theme. In “Aria Recommends...,” you will mostly come across book recommendations, placed in the context of social issues and current affairs. You may jump from one theme to another depending on your interests; there is no clear order to follow.

As I am recommending two books this month, it’s worth repeating my past spiel about not ordering these books on Amazon. COVID-19 has had a catastrophic economic impact on the world, but sadly corporations like Amazon have emerged as clear winners of this tragic pandemic. The corporate wealth accumulated during

this pandemic alone makes a mockery of the idea of a free market system, which is anything but “free,” absurdly rigged in favor of transnational oligarchs. Boycotting a mega-corporation because it has benefited from a deadly pandemic is not a long-term strategy. But in the absence of a democratic Congress that refuses to address our broken democracy and actively facilitates such unethical and self-defeating accumulation of wealth (there is your real looting!), then boycotting will sadly have to remain in our strategic arsenal as progressive-minded consumers. Please consider supporting bookshop.org or your local bookstore by purchasing the books on this reading list.

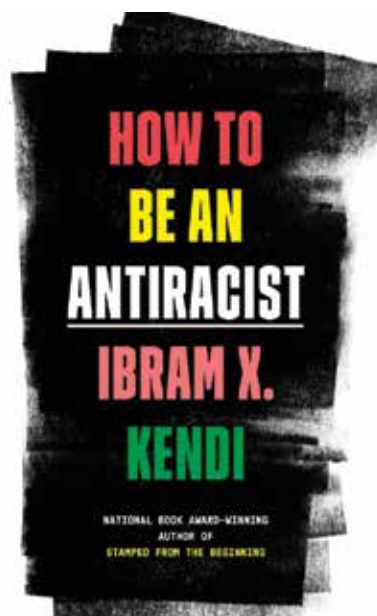
On Racism

In the wake of George Floyd’s murder, Ben Shapiro, conservative commentator and the editor of *The Daily Wire*, told his millions of viewers that institutional racism doesn’t exist. Liberals want us to believe that there are people in our system who are actively trying to keep Black people down, Shapiro said, displaying his inability to differentiate between individuals and institutions. In a gesture of faux sincerity, Shapiro then said if liberals could show him instances of institutional racism, he’d fight it shoulder to shoulder with them. Shapiro here teaches us two things: firstly, his operative assumption is that racism doesn’t exist until proven otherwise and, secondly, it is upon people of color, those who experience racism, to show and convince him that it exists. Shapiro’s unique quality is that he exudes so much confidence even as he spews such demonstrably facile and racist ideas.

During the Republican National Convention, the former governor of South Carolina, Nikki Haley, spoke of the hardship her Sikh parents faced upon immigrating to the U.S. But my parents didn’t give in to hate, she proclaimed, they overcame it and achieved their American Dream. Haley invoked racism as if it were an invisible particle in the air, attached to no agency, disconnected from domains of laws and policy making. It’s a self-contained problem. Many people catch it, but somehow our systems are immune to it. Haley’s dishonest message is clear: when faced with

racism, just close your eyes and wish it away. It works like a charm, especially for someone like Haley who frames her political story as “I am the rule, and not the exception,” when in reality, Haley has been the exception in many ways—the first female governor of South Carolina and only the second person of Indian descent to become a governor in the U.S.

The entire Republican party has adopted and amplified this denial. Attorney General



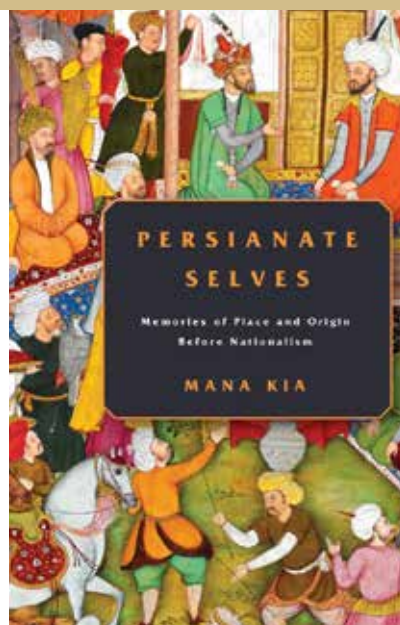
William Barr, Vice President Mike Pence, and President Donald Trump have all denied, when asked point blank, that there is such a thing as institutional racism. If that is the case, then why bother asking Black Lives Matter protesters to express their opposition to racism in a different manner? Because the main problem is not their form of protest, when one major political party believes and acts on the idea that there is simply nothing to protest about. That is the part they can't say out loud, that is why they spend all their time painting overwhelmingly peaceful protesters as thugs and looters. On the other hand, the Democratic party tends to only pay lip service to the cause of racial justice. When it comes to fighting police unions and rethinking budgetary priorities, progressive voters have come to expect more of the same from Democratic public officials.

Finding meaningful legislative solutions to institutional racism at the national level appears elusive, though it is more realistic at the local level. There is emerging a cohesive anti-racist grassroots movement with clear ideas on how to bring about income equality, criminal justice reform, educational reform, and affordable housing—all of which have everything to do with racism. If each movement needs a book to offer a clear diagnosis of social ills and a compelling proclamation of ways to combat them, then Ibram X. Kendi's *How to Be an Antiracist* (Penguin Random House LLC., 2019) is precisely that book for the emerging anti-racist movement in the U.S. and beyond.

Kendi writes with astonishing clarity: his definitions are crisp, nuanced, and memorable, and the ways in which he frames and contextualizes instances and modes of racism are effective and useful. For instance, this is how Kendi differentiates between the work of a white savior and that of an anti-racist: a white savior aims to liberate marginalized communities from their own inferiority while an anti-racist strives to liberate people from oppressive systems. His definition of race is equally apt and compelling: *a power construct of collected or merged difference that lives socially* (p. 35). Kendi's impulse to locate and analyze the ways in which racism is tied to power and is baked into all other social constructs gives him the clarity to proclaim that no law or policy is racially neutral—there are only racist and anti-racist laws and policies, the former of which creates and sustains inequality based on race while the latter strives for equity and justice. In that vein, Kendi rightly finds the phrase “institutional racism” redundant for racism is a system of inequality instituted based on racially created difference. I highly recommend this gem of a book!

On Iranian Studies

In the past two decades, the field of Persian and Iranian Studies has increasingly grappled with the ways in which nationalism as a political discourse has restricted and transformed our understanding of Persian literary culture. The term “Persianate,” coined by the historian Marshall Hodgson, aims to restore to our imagination an era during which Persian acted as a transregional language of learning, not strictly associated with any single territory, religion, or ethnic group. You were not born into Persian, you learned it across its diverse cultural geography. From the eleventh to the twentieth centuries, Persian interacted with so many different languages, ranging from Bosnian to Bengali, and created a massive corpus of writings in different genres and literary modes.



Illuminating the different relations people who wrote in Persian developed toward the language is a task that no one scholar can be expected to undertake. Among the studies recently published on this topic, Mana Kia's *Persianate Selves: Memories of Place and Origin Before Nationalism* (Stanford University Press, 2020) is one of the most anticipated books.

Persianate Selves poses a simple question: what did it mean to be

Persian before nationalism? By Persian, Kia doesn't mean people who ethnically identify as such or even native speakers of this language. She is referring to people who came to Persian as a transregional language of learning. Kia creatively and carefully reads a variety of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Persian-language texts—histories, travelogues, biographical dictionaries—composed and circulated in a cultural geography that included and far surpassed modern-day Iran. She interrogates concepts that today we have learned to take for granted: lineage, place, homeland, and origin. Kia convincingly shows that these concepts before nationalism, or more specifically before the formation of Iran as a nation-state in the early twentieth century, did not have a singular or linear relationship with one another; instead, they accommodated a multitude of meanings. For instance, the concept of homeland referred to small places, towns, or cities. Political territory was distinct from the idea of home. The notion of ethnic commonality, Kia demonstrates, was not determined based on blood, but rather on other factors such as one's learning background.

Persianate Selves constructs a world in which knowledge production in Persian formed a transregional community. This doesn't mean that in this world there existed no conflict or no difference based on religion, gender, or lineage, or that everyone lived in perfect harmony. It means that difference was expressed and contested through a different cultural form, that of *adab*. Kia's insights on the idea of race is important and extremely relevant. She rejects the idea of a blood-based kinship among Persian men (and, in some cases, women) of learning. This point gains more importance when you consider that many colonial historians understood and framed lineage or *nasab* as purely blood-based and biological. If you enjoy reading academic studies and are not dissuaded by some theory, pick up a copy of *Persianate Selves*! It is a slow read, but that is only a reflection of the complexity of the topic it so patiently unpacks for us. Reading *Persianate Selves* will deepen your appreciation for what it takes to do a careful and critical revision of a history as multifaceted as Persian literature.



You may reach Aria to ask for the entire reading list: ariafani@uw.edu



by Hooshyar Afsar



Historical and Future Considerations Regarding the Supreme Court of the United States

In all likelihood, by the time you read this article, Judge Amy Coney Barrett will have become *Justice* Coney Barrett and the conservative wing of the Supreme Court will have gained a 6-3 majority that will be unprecedented going back many decades. The new conservative majority could have a massive impact not only on policy—for example, by overturning the Affordable Care Act (aka Obamacare) as early as November 2020 and later the historic *Roe v. Wade* decision that legalized abortion in 1973—but on the upcoming presidential election itself. By the time this article is published, we might be in the middle of a contested presidential election that many predict could make the 2000 *Bush v. Gore* case—in which the Supreme Court effectively gave the presidency to George W. Bush by halting a recount of votes in Florida, where, at the time of the ruling, Bush had a mere 537 vote advantage out of almost six million ballots cast in Florida—look like a cakewalk. In that election, Al Gore ultimately won the overall popular vote by over 440,000 votes.

In light of the pending Supreme Court nomination and November’s presidential election, I want to examine historical aspects of the Supreme Court and differentiate among the Constitution of the United States, legislation enacted by the U.S. Congress, and judicial precedence and tradition.

The U.S. Constitution’s Minimal Description of the Supreme Court

Let’s start by looking at the federal constitution, which was approved at the Constitutional Convention of 1787. The original constitution was ratified by all thirteen founding colonies and was comprised of seven articles; it has since been amended 27 times. The first three articles were dedicated to the three branches of the federal government—namely, legislative, executive, and judiciary, and in that exact order. Of those first three articles, Article III, pertaining to the judicial branch, is the shortest with only three sections.

Article III, Section 1 basically states that judicial power lies in one Supreme Court and in inferior (meaning lower federal) courts as determined by Congress. It then states that the judges (note that it doesn’t even use the term “justices”) of the Supreme Court and the lower courts shall hold their office during good behavior and their salary (compensation) should not be reduced during service. That’s it. Article III does not say anything about the number of justices

(or judges) that should comprise the Supreme Court, leaving that decision for Congress to decide.

Nor does Article III say anything about the process of appointing justices. That point is covered in the second clause (paragraph) of Article II, Section 2, which describes the powers of the President to “... nominate, and by and with Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, Judges of the supreme Court” So the appointment of “Judges of the supreme Court” are grouped together with “Ambassadors” and “other public Ministers” with the vague language of “Advice and Consent of the Senate.” That is it when it comes to justices of the Supreme Court as far as the U.S. Constitution is concerned.

Ad Hoc Development of the Process for Appointing Justices to the Supreme Court

So, where did all this process for appointing justices to the Supreme Court come from? The answer is that the process is based on traditions and “gentlemen’s” agreements. As shown above, the language of the Constitution’s Article III only states “Advice and Consent of the Senate.” So, there are no laws or even rules written in the Senate that say how the president chooses new justices and how the Senate confirms them. There are even arguments among constitutional scholars over what exactly “Advice and Consent of the Senate” means.

How Many Justices? That’s Political

As discussed earlier, neither Article III, Section 1, nor any other clause in the entire U.S. Constitution, including all 27 amendments, contains any mention of the number of Supreme Court justices. By omission, the issue was left to Congress to decide and that’s exactly what happened in the Judiciary Act of 1789, approved by the first Congress. Based on that Act, Congress set the number of justices to six, including one chief justice and five associate justices. Then the political dispute of Federalists versus Democratic Republicans caused the outgoing Adams administration and the Federalist majority of Congress to pass the Judiciary Act of 1801, thus decreasing the number of justices to five upon the first vacancy in the Supreme Court. Just to contextualize the politicization of the Supreme Court nominations, the 1801 Act passed 19 days before the second president of the United States, John Adams, left office. So, whoever says that there is a tradition of not politicizing the

Supreme Court is selling you snake oil. In fact, after Jefferson took office in 1801, the new Congress—with a Democratic-Republican majority (Jefferson's party)—repealed the 1801 Act and the 1802 Act provisioned that the number of Supreme Court justices be increased to 7 by 1807.

The roller coaster story of the Supreme Court justices doesn't end there. In fact, another Act in 1837 increased the number of justices to nine and then President Lincoln and the Republican-dominated Congress passed the Tenth Circuit Act of 1863 that increased the number of justices to ten in the midst of the Civil War just because the president wanted to curb the powers of openly pro-slavery Chief Justice Taney. Obviously, the saga was not over and the 1866 Act again set the number all the way back to seven via vacancies (death, retirement, or impeachment), but before the Supreme Court even got back to seven justices, the Judiciary Act of 1869 restored it back to nine. Even after 1869, there were attempts to change the make-up of the Court. In 1937, FDR had a proposed bill to increase the number of Supreme Court justices to 15 because the Court kept striking down his New Deal legislation. The proposed change was only averted because two of the justices switched to become pro-New Deal and that became known as "the switch in time that saved nine." So, let there be no mistake, the United States Congress has the constitutional power to change the number of Supreme Court justices and it has done so multiple times in the past. End of story.

Judicial Review—A Judicial Power Grab

Now let's talk about another very significant function of the Supreme Court and that is the notion of judicial review. This concept basically means that Supreme Court may rule on the constitutionality of a law passed by the United States Congress. Again, neither Article III of the Constitution (remember the shortest of the first three articles) nor any other articles or the 27 amendments provide that power to the Supreme Court. Also, no laws passed by Congress have made judicial review legal.

Why is this important? Because as discussed earlier, by the time you are reading this article, the Supreme Court could be in the process of striking down the Affordable Care Act (aka Obamacare), depriving over twenty million Americans of health care and negatively impacting tens of millions by taking away the pre-existing medical conditions clause of the ACA. According to a September 22, 2020, *New York Times* article, as many as 133 million Americans have pre-existing medical conditions. COVID-19 has exacerbated this problem significantly since at least 8 million people have tested positive. Add to all this, all the young people under the age of 26 who are covered under their parents' health plan as provisioned by the ACA will lose their coverage. The number of people of color who will be impacted by probable repeal of the ACA will again be disproportionately high compared to their population size as hundreds of years of racial and economic injustice has put them

in the high risk categories including disproportionate numbers of COVID-19 infections. So, where did this beast called judicial review come from if it is not in the U.S. Constitution and it is not in any laws passed by Congress? The short answer: it is based on precedent, which is a fancy term for tradition.

The first three chief justices of the Supreme Court had very short terms until John Marshall was appointed by President John Adams in 1801. Marshall remained chief justice for 34 years until his death in 1835. One of the most significant rulings of the Marshall Court happened in 1803 in *Marbury v. Madison* that established the principle of judicial review. Yes, that's correct. Judicial review came into play by a ruling of the Supreme Court, not by any amendments to the U.S. Constitution or any laws passed by Congress. The Court pretty much increased its power by giving itself the authority to strike down one of the provisions of the 1789 Judiciary Act in *Marbury v. Madison*. Hence, we have a judicial review that allows the Supreme Court to rule on the constitutionality of laws. It is important to add that people who set this precedent were white men born in the eighteenth century. Chief Justice Marshall, who wrote the majority decision in *Marbury v. Madison*, was a slave owner from the state of Virginia. According to an article in the August 2020 issue of the *University of Chicago Law Review* by Paul Finkelman, and contrary to many biographies and articles written about the great Chief Justice Marshall, he not only owned hundreds of slaves during his lifetime, but his Court "heard fourteen cases involving black freedom. The Chief Justice wrote the majority opinion in seven, and in every case, the slaves lost." The article rightfully states that "Chief Justice Marshall never wrote an opinion supporting black freedom." Why is all this relevant? It is relevant because the precedent of judicial review was invented by a group of white supremacist male justices and a chief justice who was a slave owner—a precedent that is nowhere to be found in the Constitution of the United States and could impact the livelihood and health of tens of millions of Americans in the near future!

Hopefully, by the time this article is published, American democracy will have passed a vital test with a landslide defeat of Donald Trump in the November presidential election and the flipping of the majority in the Senate so that the long-overdue increase in the justices of the Supreme Court can become a reality through an act of Congress. This is a necessity for the expansion of American democracy so that many of the anti-democratic rulings of the Roberts Court can be overturned. Perhaps future generations will write and pass constitutional amendments to make judicial review unconstitutional, change presidential elections to be effectively based on the popular vote, safeguard equal rights for women, and, last but not least, judge discrimination based on race and gender by outcome rather than by intent. That's an America worth striving for!



POLITICS AND THE SUPREME COURT

THE DELIBERATE EROSION OF IMPARTIAL JUSTICE

By Shaghayegh Hanson



The year I came to the U.S. from England happened to be the year when Clarence Thomas' confirmation hearings were unfolding on television day after day. I had recently obtained my British law degree and was attending law school here in the U.S. I had never seen such unbridled political interference in a judicial selection process; it shocked me. I took my questions and comments regarding the process into my constitutional law class where the subject ignited some heated debate among the students, much to the delight of our professor.

It surprised me to learn that Article II of the U.S. Constitution gives the president the power to nominate a Supreme Court justice and, also, appoint that person "by and with the advice and consent of the Senate." I just could not understand why the Founding Fathers thought this was a good idea. I mean, wasn't that guaranteeing that the selection and confirmation of a nominee would become mired in political manipulations and tawdry mudslinging? How was this type of system supportive of the separation of powers and an impartial judiciary?

In the British system, for example, judicial selections were made based only on merit with input from senior judges about a candidate's abilities.¹ Today, the British system has progressed even further; appointments are made by an independent commission after open competition.² The commission is chaired by a layperson and consists of judges, lawyers, and other lay members. A major goal of this system is to keep politics out of the selection process because, "In a country operating under the rule of law, judges need to be independent of the executive. It must not be possible for the executive to require or improperly influence judges to decide cases in a particular way. Otherwise, there is an inevitable danger that the law could be used (or would be perceived as being used) to service the interests of the executive."³

All these years later, and here I am again, finding the whole U.S. process even more noxious. At the time of this writing, the confirmation hearings for Amy Coney Barrett have wrapped up and there is little doubt that she will be confirmed in due course, along party lines. The last few years have been the most politically divisive I have experienced since moving to this country in 1991. Not surprisingly, tied as it is to the politics of its time, the usual controversies in appointing a justice to the U.S. Supreme Court has been proportionately affected. The nomination and appointment process has become so politically charged, with so much at stake for citizens (e.g., healthcare, pandemic response, right to abortion, same-sex marriage, criminal justice reform) that observers from other countries are shaking their heads in pity. Justice Jonathan Sumption of Britain's Supreme Court recently stated in *The Times*, "What works for them [U.S.] does not necessarily work for us. But it is not clear at the moment whether it even works for them."⁴

The influence of politics on the U.S. judicial branch is a complicated issue that is not easily resolved by adopting, say, the British process of selecting judges (described as "almost [] like an internal promotion system rather than a politicized process"⁵). Unlike the U.K. Supreme Court, the U.S. Supreme Court has the power to strike down legislation as unconstitutional. Thus, the argument in favor of the U.S. selection

process is that since the U.S. Supreme Court is tasked with reviewing political matters, the need for popular political legitimacy of a nominee is greater.⁶ However, if that is indeed the sustaining rationale, the system is failing, and the consequences are grave.

For example, sixty-six percent of Americans do not want to see *Roe v. Wade* (securing abortion rights) overturned,⁷ sixty-seven percent of Americans favor same-sex marriage,⁸ and over half of the population is against overturning the Affordable Care Act (known as the ACA, which enabled more than 20 million Americans to gain healthcare).⁹ And yet, the official 2016 and 2020 Republican agenda lists reversing *Roe v. Wade* so as to criminalize abortion, reversing *Obergefell v. Hodges* so as to eliminate gay marriage, and reversing the ACA as priorities. Donald Trump has made no secret of the fact that Barrett's selection was made to achieve these goals. Barrett's nomination in the first place, made within weeks of a presidential election, is unabashedly an act of political strategy to pre-empt the will of the people should they choose Biden over Trump.

The biggest and most troubling result of the role of politics in the selection of justices to the highest court of this country is the proven effect of "dark money" on who "qualifies" as a nominee—money designed "to cement pro-corporate and partisan donors' interests in law by controlling our courts."¹⁰ The U.K. has its fair share of scandals about politicians being "bought off" by special interest groups, but the nonpolitical selection system for the U.K. judiciary protects the judicial branch from the nefarious influence of private donors. Not so in the U.S.

Here, a small number of anonymous billionaire donors can influence politicians and affect the make-up of the court by pouring tens of millions of dollars into nonprofit organizations to fund judicial confirmation battles.¹¹ According to at least one expert, "Conservatives have mastered the dark-money game and left Democrats in the dust."¹⁰ For example, one of the biggest players, the Judicial Crisis Network, received a single anonymous donation of \$17 million to fight Merrick Garland and support Neil Gorsuch; this network has promised to spend \$2.2 million on Barrett.¹⁰ The description and machinations of these groups are beyond the scope of this article but the information is well-documented and readily available from a variety of reliable sources. Suffice it to say that "the Supreme Court under Chief Justice Roberts has become a delivery system for Republican interests."¹² One need only review the seventy-plus, 5-4 partisan decisions in favor of conservative causes, including the infamous *Citizens United* case, to reach this conclusion.¹³

I have nothing against Barrett personally, she is clearly a smart lawyer and appears to be a good person. But what she may not realize when she says she has no agenda, is that she IS the agenda; that she was picked because her entire legal philosophy will serve partisan politics whether she consciously intends to do so or not.

6 <https://www.lawscot.org.uk/members/journal/issues/vol-60-issue-02/supreme-courts-the-us-and-uk-compared/>
7 <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2020-election/poll-majority-adults-don-t-support-overturning-roe-v-wade-n1241269>

8 <https://news.gallup.com/poll/311672/support-sex-marriage-matches-record-high.aspx>

9 <https://www.cnn.com/2019/12/29/how-the-affordable-care-act-transformed-the-us-health-care-system.html>

10 <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/amy-coney-barrett-rose-corporations-crusade-power-over-supreme-court-ncna1243251>

11 <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2020/10/federalist-society-judicial-crisis-network-amy-coney-barrett.html>

12 https://www.acslaw.org/issue_brief/briefs-landing/a-right-wing-rout-what-the-roberts-five-decisions-tell-us-about-the-integrity-of-todays-supreme-court/

13 https://www.acslaw.org/issue_brief/briefs-landing/a-right-wing-rout-what-the-roberts-five-decisions-tell-us-about-the-integrity-of-todays-supreme-court/ --Appendix of cases.

1 <https://www.judiciary.uk/about-the-judiciary/the-judiciary-the-government-and-the-constitution/jud-acc-ind/jud-appts/>

2 <https://www.judicialappointments.gov.uk/commissioners>

3 <https://www.statelaw.org/media/documents/news/2007/oct/uk-consult-judicial-appts.pdf>

4 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2018/10/06/why-americas-supreme-court-drama-looks-so-strange-rest-world/>

5 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-45632035>

Nush-e Jan

Persian Cuisine

From *New Food For Life* by Najmieh Batmanglij

Soups and Ashes

“Soup plays a vital role in Iranian traditions. Many different kinds of soups are served to mark special occasions, and sharing a bowl of soup is believed to forge the bonds of friendship. Some soups are thin, but many are thick and substantial enough to serve as main course. An ash (rhymes with squash) is a wonderfully flavored thick soup. In Persian, the cook is called ash-paz, or the soup preparer, and the kitchen is ash-paz khaneh, the place where soup is prepared. For best results, make the ash a day in advance to give the flavors a chance to meld, and reheat it just before serving. Add the garnish at the last minute, after pouring the soup into the tureen. We Persians like to decorate our soups with various garnishes, creating patterns that are pleasing to the eye. Just before serving, stir in the garnish. Serve with warm crusty Persian bread-like sangak, lavash or pita.”

Sweet & Sour Soup (Ash-e-miveh):

Serves 6, preparation time 30 minutes, cooking time 3 hours

Ash Ingredients:

3 onions, 2 peeled and thinly sliced, 1 peeled and grated; 1 pound ground meat or chicken; 2 ½ tsp. salt; ½ tsp. freshly ground pepper; ½ tsp. ground cinnamon; 1 cup chopped fresh parsley; ½ cup oil; ½ tsp turmeric; ½ cup yellow split peas or dried chickpeas; 8-10 cups water; ½ cup chopped fresh chives or scallions; ½ cup fresh beet leaves; ½ fresh chopped mint; 1 cup chopped fresh coriander leaves; 1 cup dried pitted prunes; 1 cup dried apricots; ½ cup rice; ¼ cup walnuts; ¼ cup sugar; ¼ cup red wine vinegar

Garnish Ingredients: 1 large onion, peeled and finely sliced; 5 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed; 2 Tbsp. oil; 1 tsp. dried mint flakes, crushed; ¼ tsp. turmeric



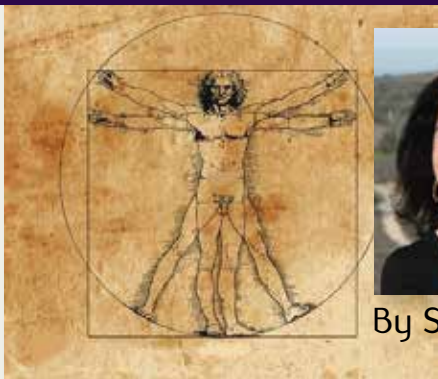
Preparations:

1. In a bowl, combine grated onion with ground meat. Add ½ tsp. salt, ¼ tsp. pepper, ¼ tsp. cinnamon, and 2 Tbsp. parsley. Mix well and shape into meatballs the size of walnuts.
2. Brown the two sliced onions in ¼ cup of oil in a large pot. Sprinkle with 2 tsp. salt, ¼ tsp. pepper, and turmeric. Add the split peas or chickpeas and sauté for a few minutes. Pour in 8 cups of water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 25 minutes over medium heat, stirring occasionally.
3. Add the remaining parsley, chives or scallions, beet leaves, fresh mint, and coriander. Simmer while covered for 25 additional minutes.
4. Add prunes, apricots, and meatballs and cook, covered, for 25 more minutes.
5. Add rice and walnuts. Cover and cook for 45 additional minutes.
6. Mix the sugar and vinegar together in a separate dish, then stir into the soup. Cook for about 25 minutes longer. Add more warm water if the ash is too thick. Taste for seasoning and add more sugar or vinegar if needed to balance the sweet and sour.
7. Shortly before serving, prepare the garnish by browning the onion and garlic in 2 Tbsp. oil in a non-stick frying pan. Remove from heat, add crushed mint flakes and turmeric to the pan, and mix well.
8. Pour warmed soup into a tureen. Pour the garlic and mint garnish on top and serve with Persian flatbread such as sangak or lavash.

Note: For richer, more developed flavors, make your soup the night before. Just before serving, warm up the soup and add the garnish mixture of browned onions, garlic, and mint.

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By Sanaz Majd, MD



Coronasomnia

I have seen a surge of insomnia reported by patients in the clinic since the COVID-19 pandemic began. According to a recent article by *The Washington Post*, prescription sleep aid usage has increased by 15% during this time. The UCLA Sleep Disorders Center reports an increase of 20-30% in the number of insomnia patients. Some experts have even termed this new insomnia epidemic as “coronasomnia.”

This epidemic within a pandemic is not unexpected. Our daily routines have been disrupted. Our work and home environments have been altered as many people are working from home, while others are having to juggle work along with homeschooling of children. There has been an increase in financial burden as people have lost their jobs. Mental health disorders have been on the rise. All of this can affect our sleep and circadian rhythms and, eventually, our health.

But before you dash for the doctor's office in pursuit of a pill to cure your coronasomnia, note that sometimes it only takes a few simple sleep hygiene changes to retrieve our beauty sleep. Medication, while an option, should only be considered as a last resort.

So, let's review three steps to help reclaim your ZZZs:

Step 1 - Assess Your Sleeping Environment:

One of the top environmental factors that interfere with sleep is screen usage. Try to avoid using your smartphone within an hour of bedtime and during sleep hours. If you have been using it as a clock on your nightstand, consider purchasing a separate alarm clock for this purpose. One flash of that blue light in the middle of the night is activating the brain.

Read a book at bedtime instead of watching TV or playing on your tablet. Just make sure the book is not overly exciting—no action or highly stimulating reads. For those of you who are students, you know how effective this tip is—just bust out that organic chemistry textbook and you will be out like a light!

For those of you who say you simply cannot fall asleep without the TV on, note that the TV screen is also stimulating to the brain. In addition, the brain continues to process noise during sleep and certain sounds can disrupt it, such as the sounds of conversation on TV. So, if you need background noise to fall asleep, consider implementing “white noise” instead. White noise—which is a backdrop of steady, ambient sound that contains all frequencies at equal intensity—can actually help block sounds that stimulate

the brain and will help you sleep more *soundly* (no pun intended). Consider using a white noise app, but set it to turn off at a certain time so that you do not have to view your smartphone in order to turn it off. A fan left on throughout the night is another white noise option that also provides good airflow.

Do you have light sensitivity? Light is a stimulating signal to the brain that it is time to awaken. Consider installing blackout curtains or wearing an eye mask to bed to lessen this possible sleep disruption.

Do you have sound sensitivity? Perhaps your spouse snores? This is a rather common frustration reported by spouses and can interfere with obtaining quality sleep. Consider wearing earplugs, as long as it is safe for you to do so, that is if you do not have an infant, small child, or vulnerable adult you need to tend to in the middle of the night and/or you have another adult who can respond to situations if need be.

How is the room temperature? Is it too hot or too cold? Too many blankets or not enough? Most people seem to sleep best when the temperature is kept slightly cool.

Step 2 - Assess Your Sleep Behavior:

First of all, are you getting enough sleep? Now, not everyone needs eight hours of sleep each night—this is a myth. Some people do just fine with 5 or 6, while others may need 9. Instead, ask yourself if you feel refreshed when you wake up in the mornings. Find out how many hours it will take for you to feel refreshed.

Maintain a routine bedtime schedule by setting consistent sleep and wake times. Varying your routine may confuse the brain as to when it is time to sleep and awaken. You may have some difficulty adjusting to your new routine during the first week or so, but your body will get used to the new circadian rhythm.

Avoid daytime napping, especially for longer than 15-20 minutes. If you nap during the day, it may be more challenging to fall asleep at night.

Do not do anything else in bed except sleep; train your mind to recognize the bedroom as only for sleep. So do not watch television, play on your laptop or tablet, or complete your work or assignments in bed—find a different space for these activities.

Avoid caffeine after lunch time. Besides the obvious coffee, do not forget about other sources of caffeine such as tea (even some



green teas), soda, and chocolate. Caffeine is a stimulant, in addition to also acting as a diuretic that will increase urination. So as a double whammy, it not only activates the brain, but it will increase urination.

Stop alcohol, as it is also a diuretic that will increase urination.

In addition, although it may help you fall asleep initially, alcohol inherently causes early morning awakenings.

Avoid cigarettes at night. Nicotine is a stimulant that will also keep you awake.

Avoid large, heavy, or high-carb meals at night, and do not go to bed within two hours of consuming a large meal.

Exercise earlier in the day so that you are more tired by nighttime. Avoid exercise within 4-5 hours of bedtime because exercise releases activating endorphins that will interfere with sleep.

If watching the news is stressful, limit how much you watch. Perhaps start *reading* about the news instead of watching the more graphic, stimulating images on a TV screen.

Drink a cup of warm milk or have a warm bath an hour before bedtime. Warmth is soothing.

Practice meditation and/or relaxation techniques. Yes, there is an app for that! (See references below.)

Step 3 - Rule Out Underlying Medical Conditions:

If the above steps are not sufficient, seek help from your doctor to make sure that there are no underlying medical conditions that can interfere with sleep. Poor sleep may not improve until the underlying cause is addressed. Here are some common underlying medical conditions that can interfere with sleep:

Sleep apnea: Do you snore in the middle of the night? Does your spouse report that you momentarily stop breathing during sleep? Sleep apnea causes moments of diminished oxygen to the brain and, hence, people do not obtain quality sleep and are fatigued during the daytime. Sleep apnea is under-diagnosed, and can also contribute to hypertension, heart disease, and heart failure if left untreated.

Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS): Do you have an unexplainable urge to move your legs at nights? RLS is a hereditary neurologic condition that can prevent people from obtaining quality sleep.

Urinary frequency: Are you awakening to urinate in the middle of the night? If so, avoid consuming any fluids within two hours of bedtime, void right before bedtime, avoid diuretics like alcohol and caffeine, and make certain that there are no medical conditions causing the increased urination, such as diabetes, prostate issues, or a urinary tract infection. Note that some medications may also

increase urination, such as diuretics used to treat hypertension and heart failure.

Acid reflux: When lying flat, the stomach's acidic contents are more likely to travel upward into the esophagus. This reflux can cause an acidic taste in the mouth, chest pain, or a persistent sore throat or cough. Certain foods, alcohol, nicotine, and medications can predispose to acid reflux.

Pain: Are low back pain and/or headaches keeping you up at night? You will need to address the pain if it is causing you to awaken in the middle of the night.

Medication side effects: Some antidepressants, stimulants (such as ADHD treatment), corticosteroids, or chronic opioids can interfere with sleep.

Anxiety/Depression: These conditions are more common during the pandemic. If you lie awake at night thinking about all the things you need to do the next day, just get up and make a list. Get it out of the way and then go back to bed. Depression and anxiety can also cause early morning awakenings. If either of these conditions is enough to impair your sleep or quality of life, you may benefit from some form of treatment.

Note on medical treatment of insomnia:

Over-the-counter (OTC) options often include melatonin, which I have reviewed in greater detail in a prior article and antihistamines. Note that most OTC sleep aids are actually sedating antihistamines in disguise and are not recommended for most people over the age of 65. You can discuss with your doctor to determine if either one is a good option for you before you consider prescription alternatives. But if neither is effective and you are considering prescription alternatives, opt for non-habit-forming options first. There are a number of them available.

As last resort, a referral to a sleep specialist is an option if insomnia becomes persistent.

For a video version of this article, check out www.youtube.com/MajdMD.

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American College of Physician Insomnia Guidelines: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27136449/>

Sanaz Majd, MD is a board-certified Family Medicine physician and host of the Majd MD YouTube channel, reviewing the latest medical topics and headlines: www.youtube.com/MajdMD. You can also follow her on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram: @SMajdMD.



Collagen supplement pros and cons

By Mohammad Ahrar, PhD

Introduction

Like many Iranian families who discuss the nutritional value of foods at the dinner table, a few days ago, one of our family members raised the question of the benefits of collagen protein supplements, which are heavily marketed as solutions for nice skin and joint problem prevention. I gave it a thought for a moment and decided to write this article to reveal some facts about collagen and its role in our health—and whether the use of it as a food supplement has any benefit, as some people may think.

Before we get into the food value of collagen as a protein supplement, I will give some basic scientific information about collagen and what makes it different from other protein sources.

What is collagen?

There are thousands of different proteins in the body that vary in size, shape, and function. Collagen is a fibrous protein and is made up of twisted polypeptide chains—which are chains of amino acids—making it the strongest fibrous protein in the body. It is the most abundant protein in the body, and almost all organs of the body contain different forms of collagen. It is found in bones, skin, blood vessels, muscles, tendons, ligaments, cartilage, and many other tissues and organs. You can think of collagen as the “glue” that holds different structures together. In fact, the word comes from the Greek word “kólla,” which means glue (2). Most people eat collagen in their diets. As an example, when you cook a whole chicken or any meat with bone, after the product is cooled, the jelly-like material includes different forms of collagen.

Why is collagen different from other proteins?

Like other types of proteins, collagen is also made up of amino acid subunits. However, during the process of collagen synthesis, other molecules, including sugars, interact with amino acids to produce glycoprotein, which gives collagen a glue-like property. Additionally, collagen contains specific amino acids—glycine, proline, hydroxyproline, and arginine—in high ratios. None of them is an essential amino acid. Hydroxyproline is unique to collagen and forms specifically stable bonds with other amino acids in the complex collagenous fibers, which are typically arranged in branching bundles of indefinite length. This form of collagen is very tough and insoluble in water. Some other protein sources, such as egg, meat, fish, and the proteins in dairy products, provide all essential amino acids and have a proper ratio of amino acids. Moreover, the protein molecules in these foods, and plant proteins are less complex than the type 1 collagen.

Types of collagen

There are at least 16 types of collagen, but 80 to 90 percent of the proteins belong to types 1, 2, and 3. Type 1 is referred to as native collagen, found in connective tissues under the skin and in tendons, ligaments, vertebral discs, joints, and other tissues of the body. This type of collagen is composed of large triple helix polypeptide chains, which makes it a very strong fibrous protein, insoluble in water. It is used in collagen casings, medical materials, sponges, and many other commercial products.

Types 2 and 3 are extracted from raw materials, such as bone scraps, by using heat and applying enzymes to break the triple helix of polypeptides into smaller peptides to make gelatin and similar products. Gelatin dissolves in warm water, and has many household and culinary applications, such as gummies, candies, jellies, sauce thickeners, etc. (4).

Sources of collagen

Collagen is found only in animals and is naturally made in the body. Most organs of the body, including bones, cartilage, skin, hide, and the hooves of animals, contain collagen. The industry defines “hides” as the skins of large animals such as cows and buffalo and the term “skins” refers to smaller animals such as goat, sheep, deer, pig, fish, etc. Commercial collagens can be produced from any of the mentioned animal sources. Collagen fiber supplements advertised by commercial companies are mostly type 3 collagen, which is a hydrolyzed form of fibrous collagen containing simpler polypeptides. This form of collagen is usually used as food supplement in the market.

Role of collagen in the body

Collagen is the most abundant protein in the human body, making up around 30% of the total protein content. Collagen is an important fibrous protein in connective tissues found in all organs of the body and is an integral part of bones and cartilage. About two-thirds of the skin, mainly in the dermis, is made of fibrous collagen. The skin's top layer, called the epidermis, is comprised of several layers of keratinous cells (keratin itself is a tough protein, also found in the hair, nails, and hooves of animals). The second layer of the skin, called the dermis, is much thicker than the epidermis and is comprised of several layers of collagenous fibers which gives rigidity and strength to the skin. The fat layer under the dermis, called the hypodermis, plays a major role in the softness of the skin, which gives it a younger look. The picture below is a sketch of the skin, showing the epidermis, dermis, and hypodermis (6).

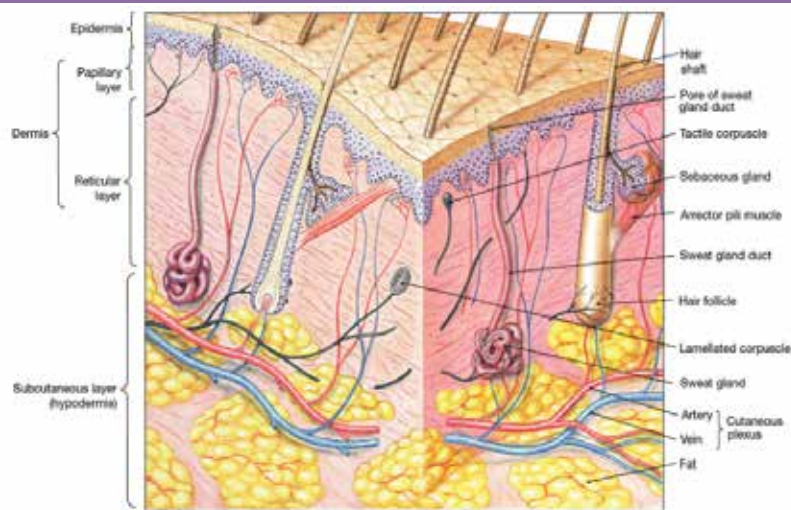
How do wrinkles appear in the skin?

As we age, formation of collagen gradually diminishes and, in a person's later years, the destruction of collagen outpaces its production, which results in wrinkles and looseness of the skin. Studies indicate that people begin to lose about 1% of their collagen per year during their mid-20s and as much as 30% during the first 5 years of menopause (5). Sun exposure enhances this process.

Is collagen a good-quality protein?

Factors that distinguish good-quality from poor-quality proteins include an abundance of essential amino acids, ratio of essential amino acids to non-essential amino acids, digestibility of the protein when eaten, and presence of toxic materials or allergenic compounds. There are 20 amino acids that make proteins—nine of them are known as essential amino acids because the human body cannot synthesize them, so they must be supplied through the diet.

Good quality proteins (known as complete proteins) provide all es-



sential amino acids in adequate amounts and proportions needed by the body to produce its own proteins and maintain tissue repair and growth. Low-quality proteins (also known as incomplete proteins) are low in one or more of the essential amino acids, and/or do not have the proper ratio of them (*Peyk* #162).

Collagen consists of high levels of non-essential amino acids (mentioned before), low in essential amino acids, and does not have the proper ratio of amino acids that the body requires. For these reasons, collagen is not considered a high-quality protein for human consumption.

Is collagen digestible?

When food is consumed, the ingested proteins—including collagen—are partially broken down into smaller molecules (polypeptides) by the stomach enzyme (pepsin). The partially digested proteins enter the small intestine and are further broken down into smaller peptides and finally into amino acids by pancreatic and intestinal enzymes. Amino acids will be absorbed into circulating blood and transported to different tissues and organs for synthesis of new proteins. However, digestion of collagen may not be as easy as digestion of poultry or plant sources.

Does the collagen that we eat replace the collagen in our body?

In short, different protein sources contain different proportions of amino acids. All ingested proteins can be broken into amino acids and absorbed into the blood. At the tissue level, different cells use all 20 amino acids for the synthesis of specific proteins controlled by each individual DNA regardless of the source of the amino acids. Studies show that the body makes procollagen by combining two amino acids—glycine and proline. These amino acids are present in collagen as well as in most other protein sources, even from plant proteins. Therefore, collagen is synthesized from existing amino acid pools available to the cells regardless of the source of proteins.

Are collagen supplements beneficial?

Commercial advertising espouses the beneficial effect of collagen supplementation for healthy skin and joints. For centuries, Chinese women have viewed collagen as a fountain of youth, routinely consuming foods like pigs' feet, shark fins, and donkey hide in hopes of smoothing withered skin and preserving aging joints (1). Studies indicate that a group of elderly people who took 2.5 or 5 grams of collagen daily for 8 weeks showed improvement in skin elasticity, compared with those who did not take it. In another study, the group of women who took 1 gram per day of a chicken-derived collagen supplement for 12 weeks showed 76% less dryness and fewer visible wrinkles. Other reports indicate that collagen supplements can

heal wounds faster, reduce wrinkles, and make skin look younger.

The science behind most of the findings is still controversial. Some health professionals also remain skeptical about the effect of collagen supplement for skin repair. Dermatologist Lauren Eckert Ploch, based in Augusta, Georgia, says “stomach acids break down collagen proteins you eat before they reach the skin intact,” and she does not believe that collagen supplements per se have much effect on skin repair.

Does collagen cream repair wrinkles?

Studies have shown that collagen creams work only on the skin surface and, like other moisturizers, mainly slow the rate of water loss from the skin and help to keep the skin supple, but they can't get under your skin. Even collagen type 3, which contains simpler peptides, is comprised of molecules that are too large to be absorbed through the skin.

Possible side effects of commercial collagen powder

Most commercial collagens are made from ground-up fish, chicken, pig, and cow parts, and these parts can be contaminated by heavy metals, such as cadmium. Dermatologists and consumer groups have also expressed concern that ground-up hooves, hides, bones, and nerve tissues—particularly if they come from cows—could carry diseases like bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) or mad cow disease. Human consumption of BSE-infected meat has been linked to neurological disorders. In 2016, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) prohibited the use of some cow parts in dietary supplements to “address the potential risk” of the presence of BSE. However, the FDA exempted gelatin—a key collagen source—from the ban “as long as it is manufactured using specified industry practices.” Companies are required to comply with federal “good manufacturing practices,” which prohibit unsafe levels of contaminants like heavy metals.

Summary

Collagen is a complex protein and is the most abundant protein in the body. It is found in bones, skin, muscles, tendons, and many other tissues and organs of animals. About two-thirds of the skin is made of fibrous collagen. Collagen consists of high levels of non-essential amino acids, but low in essential amino acids, and has not a proper ratio of amino acids that the body requires, which renders it as a poor-quality protein. It is advertised as a protein supplement to alleviate skin wrinkles and promote joint health. Commercial collagens are made from ground-up fish, chicken, pig, and cow parts, which can be contaminated by heavy metals or other unhealthy materials.

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NATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY OF IRANIAN AMERICANS REVEALS CONTINUED CONCERNS ABOUT DISCRIMINATION

The economy and foreign policy also top issues among survey respondents

Washington, DC – The Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans (PAAIA), a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization serving the interests of the Iranian American community, today released the findings of its 2020 National Public Opinion Survey of Iranian Americans conducted from September 8th to September 20th of this year, which revealed that more than three-quarters (78%) of respondents expressed concerns about discrimination, citing national rhetoric and policies towards immigrants and Muslims and increased tension between the U.S. and Iran as sources for discrimination. In fact, sixty percent (60%) of respondents reported that they or Iranian Americans they know have faced discrimination because of their ethnicity or country of origin.

“As Election Day nears, these are the issues on the minds of Iranian Americans as they cast their ballots for the future of our country,” said PAAIA Executive Director Leila Austin. “While fears of discrimination loom large among respondents, Iranian Americans of all political affiliations are also worried about the economy, jobs, foreign policy, health care, education, and national security. When voting for the president and members of Congress this election, these are the issues our community will be prioritizing.”

PAAIA has commissioned nationally-recognized pollsters to conduct its annual survey of Iranian Americans since 2008. The poll is the only one within the community that has an ongoing collection of accurate scientific data. If the election were held today, the majority of Iranian Americans said they would vote for former Vice President Joe Biden over President Donald Trump by a margin of 56% to 31%, with independent Iranian Americans saying they prefer Biden, 57% to 17%.

The results of the survey also reflect a strong, bipartisan desire among Iranian Americans (58%) to advance democracy and human rights in Iran and a plurality of respondents (44%) believe a grassroots democratic movement is the best way for Iran to move to a more democratic society. Beyond that, Democrats and independents favor lifting the trade embargo (D: 36% I: 29%) and negotiating a new nuclear agreement (D: 32% I: 28%) while Republicans favor a regime change (37%) and limiting Iran’s role in the region (26%).

“Iranian Americans remain deeply connected to family back in Iran,” explained Austin. “While domestic policies to restart the U.S. economy and get Americans back to work are a priority, so too are strategies that encourage diplomacy between the U.S. and Iran and foster democracy and human rights in the country.”

Regardless of party affiliation, one half of respondents (47%) want a more comprehensive deal with Iran that addresses both the nuclear issue as well as Iran’s engagement in regional conflicts. Roughly 3 in 10 respondents would prefer returning to the JCPOA while a quarter of those surveyed say they want no deal with Iran. Again, partisan divides highlight the second and third choices of respondents, with 40% of Democrats preferring to return to the JCPOA while 38% of Republicans favor not to return to negotiations with Iran.

If the 2020 presidential election were to be held today, which of the following best describes how you would vote?		
	2020	2019
Definitely President Donald Trump	21	10
Probably President Donald Trump	10	11
Probably former Vice President Joe Biden*	14	19
Definitely former Vice President Joe Biden*	42	50
Other**	4	-
Not sure	5	8
I would not vote	4	2
* In 2019, we asked about the Democratic Party candidate. ** In 2020, an option for “other” was added.		
What would you expect to be the two main goals of an Iranian American civic or advocacy organization? (Choose two.)		
	2020	2019
Enhance Iranian American participation in the U.S. political process and increase the influence of Iranian Americans	42	50
Improve the image of Iranian Americans	36	39
Protect the civil rights of Iranian Americans*	35	-
Advocate for issues of importance for Iranian Americans in the United States	30	31
Preserve and promote Iranian culture and heritage	27	28
Influence U.S.-Iran policy	24	36
Other*	2	-
Not sure	2	8
*In 2020, an option for “protect the civil rights of Iranian Americans” and “other” were added.		

Read the Complete Report:
<https://paaia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/PAAIA-2020-survey.pdf>

ABOUT PAAIA: The Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans, PAAIA, Inc., is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonreligious 501(c)(4) organization that serves the interests of Iranian Americans and represents the community before U.S. policymakers and the American public at large



Delshad Coenen, 10 - Iranian School of San Diego (ISSD) Student
Subject: Sad Planet



Public Announcement

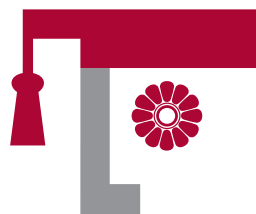
Article 2: AVOID BEING A VICTIM OF ULITLITY SCAMS

A new wave of scammers is targeting SDG&E customers, threatening to turn off electric service unless they pay their bill immediately with a prepaid card. A common scam tactic is pretending to be SDG&E and asking to be paid with Green Dot MoneyPak. This is a way to send cash with prepaid or bank debit cards. Then, the customer is asked to use these prepaid debit cards or a wire transfer to pay their utility bill right away. The customer is asked to call a different phone number to provide the card information which allows the thieves to steal your money. Scammers may also play a recorded message and menu options that are like SDG&E's to confuse victims. SDG&E's official Customer Care Center phone number is 1-800-411-7343.

SDG&E will **never** call a customer to ask for payment information nor send an email with a QR code for payment. If a caller claims to work for SDG&E and asks for **payment over the phone**, it is a scam. Hang up immediately. Only provide financial information by telephone if **you** initiate the call. After you hang up, you can call SDG&E at 1-800-411-7343 to verify information about your account. You can also view your account details, bills and payments with SDG&E's mobile app or at sdge.com/myaccount.

There may be occasions when SDG&E will use automated messages to communicate changes to your account. But you'll always be directed to log in to My Account to make the changes on your own.

Unfortunately, scams rise during times of uncertainty like the COVID-19 pandemic. If you've been a victim of fraud, call SDG&E at 1-800-411-7343 to report it. Visit sdge.com/scams for more information on how to spot a scam.



Iranian-American Scholarship Fund

Supporting Excellence

The Board of Directors of the Iranian-American Scholarship Fund (IASF) would like to extend sincere thanks to all who have supported this Scholarship Fund for the past 21 years. Scholarships for the 2020-21 academic year will be awarded to 21 outstanding applicants. This brings our total to 354 scholarships awarded to date. Congratulations to this year's outstanding recipients.

2020 Graduate Recipients

Alaleh Azhir

Harvard U.– Medicine

The Etemad Family Annual Scholarship

Nader Mehregani

U. of Nevada –Kinestiology

The Feradoun Mehrayin Annual Memorial Scholarship (1)
The Mohammad Massoud Memorial Scholarship (2)

Ariana Nikmanesh

Georgetown U –Foreign Service

The M. Ali Aghassi Annual Memorial Scholarship (3)
The Susie and Kazem Niamir Memorial Scholarship (4)

Ali Reza Sasani

Tufts U. - Medicine

The Behrooz and Nasrin (Owsia) Akbarnia Annual Scholarship
The Mahmood and Fereshteh Mahdavi Annual Scholarship

Ladan Navari

Ohio State U. - Medicine

The Bahram and Manijeh Manoocheri Annual Scholarship (5)
The Rointun Bunshah Annual Memorial Scholarship (6)

Brandon Shayan Badamtchian

Lake Erie- Osteopathic Medicine

The Jafar Farnam Annual Scholarship
The IASF Community Scholarship

Yasmin Raaz Byott

Duke U. –Global Health

The Fred and Gita (Khadiri) Khoroushi Annual Scholarship
The Soheil Nasiri Annual Memorial Scholarship (7)

Soraya Fereydooni

Yale U. -Medicine

The Khosrow Nasr Memorial Scholarship (8)
The Farhang Mehr Memorial and Parichehr Mehr Honorary Annual Scholarship (9)
The SUSMA(Shiraz University School of Medical Sciences Alumni) Scholarship

Nina Mazarei Afshar

George Washington U.-Medicine

The Hossein Samadi Memorial Scholarship
The Mahin Hendi (Heravi) Annual Scholarship

Daniel Eliahu Mishail

UCLA – Dentistry

The Michael and Anita (Varzi) Akavan Annual Scholarship
The Iranian American Women Foundation (IAWF) Annual Scholarship

Bitia Fathipour

U. of Washington – Dentistry

The Belglys Tayebi Annual Memorial Scholarship (10)
The Habib Tayebi Annual Memorial Scholarship (11)

Nadia Shojaie

Baylor U.- Communication

The Payam Scholarship (12)
The Peyman and Maryam (Famourzadeh) Farhat Annual Scholarship

Sara Esmaili

John Hopkins U.-Biotechnology

The Shamsedeen Zayanderoudi Annual Memorial Scholarship (13)

2020 Undergraduate Recipients

Ariana Sarah Tagavi U. of Michigan –International Studies	The Massih and Haleh Tayebi Annual Scholarship
Amirardavan E. Shirazi UC Berkeley-Global Studies	The Habib and Sharareh Hariri Annual Scholarship The AIAP (Association of Iranian-American Professionals) Annual Scholarship
Madelyne Yasameen Etami George Washington U.-Public Health	The Hassan Julazadeh Memorial Scholarship (14) The IASF Community Fund
Milad Heydari Georgia Institute of Tech. Computer Science	The Etemadi Family Annual Scholarship The Jamshidi-Zadeh Annual Scholarship
Kylie Rae Martin Boise State U.- Nursing	The Homa Bahador Yaghmai Memorial Scholarship (15) The Jannat Bolandgray Memorial and Abbas Bolandgray Honorary Scholarship (16)
Sepanta Sarraf UC Berkeley – History	The Persian Cultural Center and ISSD Annual Scholarship The Golamreza & Mozzaian Bagherzadeh Memorial Scholarship (17)
Noah Rofagha UC Berkeley-Political Science	The Zarrinkelk Family Scholarship The IASF Community Scholarship
Parisa Sharif University of Texas –Biology	The Fatemeh Jabbari Memorial Scholarship (18) The IASF Community Fund

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