

Happy Nowruz



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Saeed Jalali





Editorial

by *Shahri Estakhry*



Norouz/Norooz/Nowrouz/Nowruz/Novrouz and ...

If I didn't live in San Diego, all winter I would be yearning for spring. I no longer can tolerate the cold, snow or ice; those were for when the body was young! Since I do live in beautiful San Diego, just about now (early February) I begin to smile with the thought of spring being around the corner. I can smell the fresh flowers, see the young buds on the trees and I can almost hear the singing of the birds and gladly feel the gentle breeze of spring. Much more exciting is the thought of Norouz/Norooz/Nowruz and the annual preparation for welcoming a new year. No matter what our origins are, we all need to respect and revere each other's heritage. Norouz (new day) is that beautiful heritage for me with many fond memories that make me hold my head up and be proud.

Norouz is the oldest Iranian festival going back to mythological times. The origin of it has to do with calendar and the turning of the seasons. March 20 is the Vernal Equinox, the first day of spring, when the lengths of day and night are equal. It is the time when the dormancy of winter is over and earth begins to breathe a new life. A glorious and most appropriate time for the beginning of the New Year. Today, nearly 300 million people around the world celebrate this ancient tradition as the beginning of their New Year. Around the world the word is written according to each nation's pronunciation, Norouz/Norooz/Nowrouz/Nowruz/Novrouz and many more, all with the same meaning of "New Day."

The ceremony is old, so old that different localities of Iran have their own traditions, but there are certain customs which are observed all over. Norouz is a time of renewal, hope and joy. Houses are cleaned, new clothes are bought, gifts are exchanged and people visit each other spreading good wishes for the year ahead. On the Vernal Equinox, the sun changes from the constellation Pisces (fish) to Aries (ram), which is why most Iranians eat fish on the eve of Norouz.

A major part of the New Year's ritual is the setting of a special table with seven specific items known as the Haftseen (7 is haft and the name of each of these items begin with the letter S, or seen, in Persian). In ancient times each of the items corresponded to one of the seven creations. Today, these seven dishes and other items on the table are symbolic of the various attributes of life. These are Seeb (apple-beauty), Seer (garlic-health), Sabzeh (seed sprout-birth), Serkeh (vinegar-patience), Sumagh (sumac berries-joy), Senjed (fruit of service tree - happiness), and Samanoo (boiled malt with flour-prosperity). Some families add to these, colored eggs (equal to number of children in their family), a bowl with live gold fish, candles, a bowl of water with coins it (prosperity) and, if celebrants wish, their holy book. At the exact time to the minute and second when the season changes, all family members gather around the table to greet the New Year and the elderly give money or coins to the younger members of the family.

A few months ago we began a petition online to the Secretary General of the United Nations, requesting that this grand celebration with several millennia of history be recorded annually in the calendars of all organizations related to the UN. To review these signatures and support this special request please visit www.pccus.org. During the past several months since the petition went up, I have received many emails on a daily basis that have expressed their thanks and gratitude to us in taking this initiative. Some have most graciously corrected any mistakes that we had; others suggested some additions to the original letter. Several scholars have objected to the spelling of Norouz. Most importantly, we learned that among the nearly 300 million celebrants, there are close to 14-15 different ways the word is spelled. Iranians are less than 1/4 of the population celebrating Norouz as their New Year; therefore we simply cannot claim that our way is the right way of how the word should be spelled. It is impossible to please all, but with the help of a wonderful scholar who searched Google (yes the blessed Google) I have the three most often used versions of the word: Norooz/Norouz/Nowruz. Therefore, all of the three versions as seen here have been placed in the letter to Secretary General of the United Nations.

Starting this petition was not to expand on our differences, but to place a major emphasis on the importance of the occasion. Should the spelling divide us or let this glorious and very unique celebration unite us throughout the world? I choose unification and wish all a happy Norouz season of new beginnings.

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Persian Cultural Center

9265 Dowdy Dr. # 105- San Diego, CA 92126

Tel : (858) 653-0336

Fax & Message: (619) 374-7335

Email: pcc@pccsd.org

Web site: www.pccus.org

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Charitable Organization
Affiliate of Persian Cultural Center
Tel: (858) 653-0336
Fax & Message: (619) 374-7335

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Persian Cultural Center Report

The board of directors of PCC wishes everyone a happy Nowruz, and a new year filled with joy, prosperity and good health.

January and February 2009:

PCC's board of directors held two monthly meetings. At these meetings, various committees presented their respective reports as well as projections of their future activities.

PCC held four programs in January and February:

This year PCC once again participated in the Global Village Festival in San Diego on January 17th. Iran's booth, which had been decorated with Persian handicrafts, photos, books, and traditional costumes, was visited by numerous enthusiasts of world culture.

Niloufar Talebi, the editor and translator of *BELONGING*, spoke at the National University, on January 23rd.

The documentary film, *Arusi Persian Wedding*, a collaborative event with the San Diego Central Library, was successfully screened on February 18th. Dr. Cyrus Nakhshab, mediated a post-film discussion and Q & A session.

The screening of the film, *Tehran Has No More Pomegranates*, took place on February 18th and 19th, at La Jolla's Landmark theatre.

PCC's upcoming programs:

Kamkars in concert will be held at Sherwood Auditorium in La Jolla, on March 4th.

Pre-celebration of *Nowruz* at Mingei International Museum, a collaborative program with the House of Iran and the Dance Academy with traditional Persian music will be held on March 7th in Escondido.

The celebrations of *ChaharShanbe Soori* on March 17th and *SizdeBedar* on April 5th; co-sponsored by AIAP and the House of Iran, will take place at Mission Bay Park in San Diego.

Nowruz celebration, a collaborative even with AIAP, will take place at the Hilton hotel Torrey Pines, La Jolla, on March 21st.

Nowruz Committee:

PCC is proud to announce that this year, it will be again launch its *Nowruz* celebration with AIAP on March 21st at Hilton Hotel Torrey Pines, La Jolla. The details of the event were provided and submitted to the board by both PCC and AIAP's *Nowruz* committees during several meetings.

Grant Committee (Public grant):

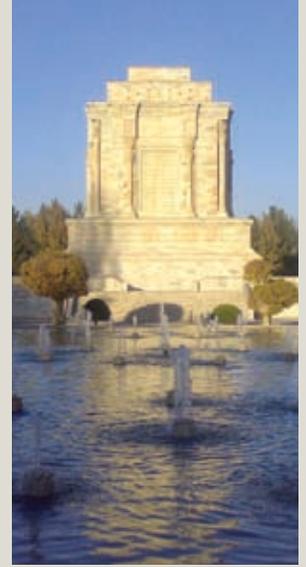
The committee put countless hours and effort to secure PCC's annual budget, through applying for two grants from City of San Diego and (ACTA). We are happy to announce that this year PCC is once again eligible to receive a City of San Diego Art and Culture grant with a high ranking of 3+. PCC cultural programs, outreach, and the publication of *Peyk* to promote the culture of Iran have received positive recognition from the Advisory board of the City grant committee.

Solicitation of Material

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

*Peyk reserves the right to edit all materials at its sole discretion. Materials submitted will not be returned to sender, even if not used, and the contributor will be deemed to have given consent and license for the reproduction and publication of such submission in *Peyk* magazine and/or the *Peyk* website.*

2009 Has been designated as the year of Ferdowsi. In Honor of His Memory and Work



Ferdowsi is considered to be one of the greatest Persian poets. The Shahnameh is considered to be the Persian national epic, to which he gave its final and enduring form, although he based his poem mainly on an earlier prose version. For nearly a thousand years Persians have continued to read and listen to recitations from this masterwork.

Ferdowsi was born in Iran in the province of Khorasan in a village near Toos, in 935 CE. He devoted most of his adult life to writing The Shahnameh. It was originally composed for the Samanid princes of Khorasan, who were the chief instigators of the revival of Persian cultural traditions after the Arab conquest of the seventh century.

During Ferdowsi's lifetime this dynasty was conquered by the Ghaznavid Turks, and there are various stories in medieval texts describing the lack of interest shown by the new ruler of Khorasan, Mahmud of Ghaznavi, towards Ferdowsi and his lifework. Ferdowsi is said to have died around 1020 CE in poverty and embittered by royal neglect, though confident of his and his poetry's ultimate fame.

The Shahnameh or The Epic of Kings is one of the definitive classics of the world. It tells heroic tales of ancient Persia. The contents and the poet's style in describing the events takes readers back to ancient times and makes them sense and feel the events. Ferdowsi worked for thirty years to finish this masterpiece.

Ferdowsi was a landowner, deriving a comfortable income from his estates. He had one child, a daughter, and it was to provide her with a dowry that he set his hand to the task that was to occupy him for more than 30 years.

The Shahnameh of Ferdowsi, a poem of nearly 60,000 couplets, is based mainly on a prose work of the same name compiled in the poet's early manhood in his native Toos. This prose of the Shahnameh was for the most part the translation of a Pahlavi (Middle Persian) work, the Khvatay-namak, a history of the kings of Persia from mythical times down to the reign of Khosrow II (590-628 CE), but it also contained additional material continuing the story to the overthrow of the Sassanians by the Arabs in the middle 7th century A.D.

The first to undertake the versification of this chronicle of pre-Islamic and legendary Persia was Daqiqi, a poet at the court of the Samanids, who came to a violent end after

completing only 1,000 verses. These verses, which deal with the rise of the prophet Zoroaster, were afterward incorporated by Ferdowsi, with acknowledgement.

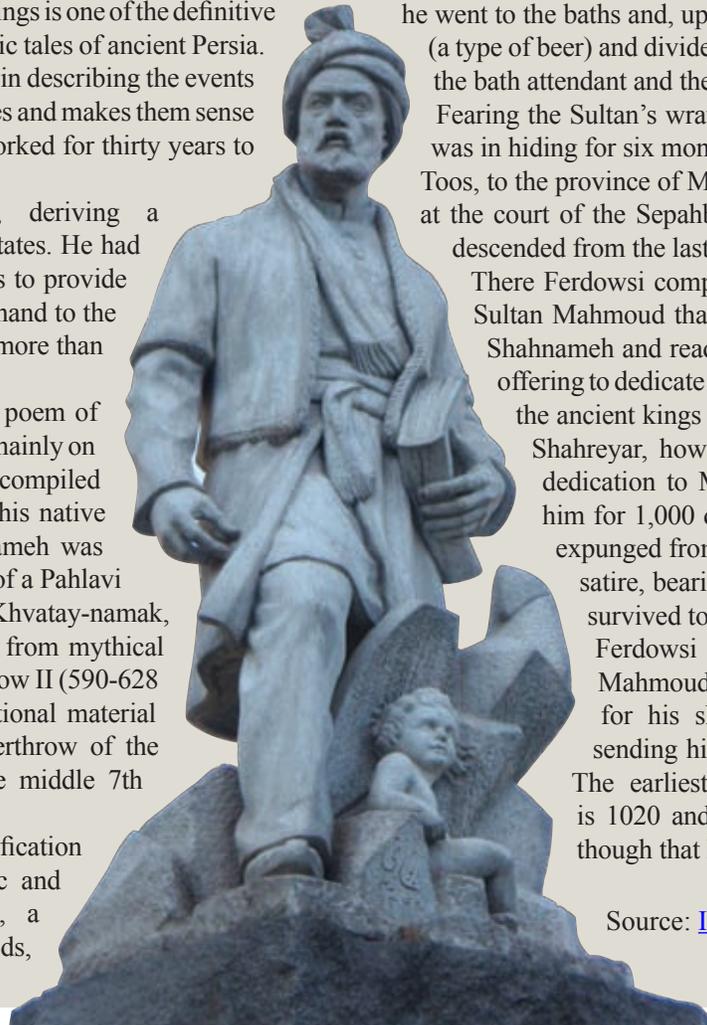
Ferdowsi's Tomb is in Toos near modern day Mashhad. The Shahnameh, finally completed in 1010 CE, was presented to the celebrated sultan Mahmud of Ghaznavid, who by that time had made himself master of Ferdowsi's home in the province of Khorasan. Information on the relations between poet and patron are legendary. According to the tale, Ferdowsi came to Ghaznavid in person and through the good offices of the minister Ahmad-ebn-Hasan Meymandi was able to secure the Sultan's acceptance of the poem. Unfortunately, Mahmud then consulted enemies of the minister as to the poet's reward. They suggested that Ferdowsi should be given 50,000 dirhams, and even this, they said, was too much. Mahmud was influenced by their words, and in the end Ferdowsi received only 20,000 dirhams. Bitterly disappointed, he went to the baths and, upon leaving, bought a draft of foqa' (a type of beer) and divided the whole of the money between the bath attendant and the seller of foqa'.

Fearing the Sultan's wrath, he fled first to Herat, where he was in hiding for six months, and then, by way of his native Toos, to the province of Mazanderan, where he found refuge at the court of the Sepahbad Shahreyar, whose family was descended from the last of the Sassanians.

There Ferdowsi composed a satire of 100 verses about Sultan Mahmud that he inserted in the preface of the Shahnameh and read it to Shahreyar, at the same time offering to dedicate the poem to him, as a descendant of the ancient kings of Persia, instead of to Mahmud. Shahreyar, however, persuaded him to leave the dedication to Mahmud, bought the satire from him for 1,000 dirhams for each verse, and had it expunged from the poem. The whole text of this satire, bearing every mark of authenticity, has survived to the present.

Ferdowsi however, died just as Sultan Mahmud had determined to make amends for his shabby treatment of the poet by sending him 60,000 dinars' worth of indigo. The earliest date given by later authorities is 1020 and the latest 1026 CE; it is certain though that he lived to be more than 80.

Source: [Iran Chamber Society](#), [Wikipedia](#)





Noush-e-Jan

At Nowruz time a special menu is prepared for the first meal after the arrival of the New Year. Sabzee Polow and Mahi (herb rice with white fish); Kookoo Sabzee (fresh herb Quiche) Peyk 114; Ash Reshteh (noodle and herb ash) Peyk 106. These recipes can be accessed at www.pccus.org. All represent Mother Nature & the arrival of spring. For your enjoyment and addition to your Nowruz table here is a recipe for Baghlava – Iranian style. Wishing you a very happy Nowruz season and a healthy and prosperous new year. Noush-e-Jan Editor

BAGHLAVA:

From: The Joy of Persian Cooking

By: Pari Ardalan Malek

Preparation time 2 hrs; makes 260 pieces

1 box frozen Filo pastry; 5 cups ground almonds or unsalted raw pistachios; 2 ½ cups powdered sugar; ¼ cup sweet butter (do not substitute); 1 ½ cups Mazola corn oil or any other liquid oil; 1 cup rose water; 1 teaspoon cardamom powder; ½ cup ground raw pistachios for garnish.

Syrup: 3 cups sugar; 1 ½ cups water; ½ cup rose water

1. Thaw pastry in refrigerator for at least 10 hours or at room temperature for 30 minutes. Do not leave pastry exposed to air once box is opened; cover with a damp dish cloth at all times.

2. Melt butter, add oil and set aside.



3. Mix 5 cups of almonds or pistachios with powdered sugar and cardamom. Add rose water and stir so mixture forms a paste.
4. Brush a double layer of pastry (handle pastry very gently) with butter mixture. Fold pastry over ½ inch, the widest edge of pastry close to you, to make rolling easier.
5. Place 4 tablespoons of nut paste along the folded edge. Roll pastry tightly, starting at the folded edge. Roll should be ½ inch to ¾ inch in diameter.
6. Place on greased cookie sheet and cover with a clean dish cloth.
7. Continue with remaining pastry and nut paste.
8. With a sharp knife, cut each roll crosswise into ½ inch slices. Cut at an angle and leave the cut pieces in place. Brush with butter mixture.
9. Bake at 325 for 25-30 minutes.
10. Fill a basting tube with sugar syrup, and 5 minutes after removing baghlava from the oven, baste with syrup.
11. Cover lightly with aluminum foil. Set baghlava aside for at least 5-6 hours, then use a sharp knife to separate slices. Baste with syrup and sprinkle with remaining ground pistachios. Baghlava should be moist & juicy.
12. Prepare enough additional syrup to baste baghlava several times.

Noush-e-Jan

Noush e Jan (enjoy in good health)



The cutting edge of 3D street art by Edgar Müller

PLASTIC IS RIGHTLY PASSÉ

AT HOME:

Basic—If you microwave your food in plastic containers, there is a chance that chemicals from the plastic will work their way into the food, even if the plastic itself does not appear to melt as such. Glass is a much better choice.

Intermediate—Avoid plastics that have become cloudy over time; this indicates deterioration which leads to leaching of chemicals into your food. Also avoid re-using butter, margarine, yoghurt, take-out containers or such store/restaurant plastic containers for hot food to avoid release of chemicals or carcinogenic styrene into food.

Advanced—Know your numbers and letters. These are the safe plastics: #s 1 PETE, 2 HDPE, 4 LDPE, and 5 PP. Avoid #s 3 V, 6 PS, and 7 PC. To find the number and its letter(s), turn the container upside down and look at the bottom; the number will be in the middle of a triangle of arrows (used for recycling purposes) and the letters will be underneath the triangle.

THE BIGGER PICTURE:

If you look around your home or workplace you'll see objects made of petrochemicals like polyethylene, polystyrene, nylon and acrylic. Although convenient and durable, these types of plastic are resistant to degradation. Plastic production, use, and recycling causes huge carbon emissions, difficulties in recycling the things we use, plastic bags threaten wildlife, and plastic products can be bad for our health.

FRIDGE FACTS



AT HOME:

Want to know if your fridge is working efficiently? Try the following:

1. Shut the door onto a dollar bill at various parts of the door to check the seal. If it pulls out easily warm air is leaking through and you probably need a new seal. If the door keeps the bill firmly in place your seal is good.
2. Keep the internal temperature of your fridge to between 38 and 40 degrees F. Put a thermometer in a glass of water in the fridge to check how much of an adjustment, if any, you need to make.
3. Every three months, clean the dust off your fridge's condenser coils (usually in the back) to keep them working efficiently.

THE BIGGER PICTURE:

The more energy we use in our homes the bigger our carbon footprints will be. Our increased demand for electricity, result in increase carbon emissions from the power plants providing us with it.

AND JUST IN CASE WE NEED REMINDING:

Last month Dr. James Hansen, a NASA scientist and climate expert warned President Obama he has only 4 years to save the world. As the world's greatest carbon emitter and the planet's largest economy, "America must take the lead," Dr. Hansen said. We should all be willing to help.

See www.guardian.co.uk

Sources: *True Green*, Kim McKay and Jenny Bonnin (National Geographic, 2006); National Geographic's *Green Guide*, Fall 2008; *Your Carbon Footprint*, The Pocket Idiot's Guide, Nancy s. Grant, 2008.



House of Iran

It is with great pleasure and honor that the Board of Directors from House of Iran, San Diego, wish you all a happy and prosperous Nowruz. As the vernal equinox takes place, millions of Persian descend all over the world gather around the Haft Seen table and celebrate Nowruz. This tradition was passed down to us throughout thousands of years, and as Iranian-Americans living in the United States, it is our mission to celebrate Nowruz and it is our desire to share this beautiful tradition with our fellow citizens.

On March 22, 2009, not only we celebrate Nowruz, but it is also the four years anniversary of the unveiling of the Cyrus the Great Declaration of the Human Rights Monument in Balboa Park; first of its kind. During the last four years, thousands of visitors in Balboa Park have visited our beautiful cottage and have taken pictures of the monument and have learned that we are the proud descendents of Cyrus the Great.

Come enjoy this joyful occasion, which is free to all who attend. This is House of Iran's 17th Annual Ruz-e-Iran Festival, and each year, at least 3000 people come to the Park and celebrate with us. The cottage will be open, with a beautiful Haft Seen table spread from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM. You will also be able to purchase delicious Persian cuisine to satisfy your taste buds. The stage program starts at 2:00 PM sharp which includes a performance by the Janbazian Dance Academy of Los Angeles. This will then be followed by music of Mohsen DJ from 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM. Bring your folding chairs, dress up in your traditional Persian costumes and come visit us with a big smile. Let's dance to the music and celebrate Nowruz.

I am excited to announce that the House of Iran has a new Board of Directors effective January 1, 2009. The following are the names of the 2009 Board members: Habib Hariri, Dr. Reza Fadaei, Dr. Fayeze Zomorodi, Maryam Noor, Abbas Abbasov, Max Zaker and Shahram Salehi. Also countless thanks go to outgoing Board members Bahar Bahgerpour and Arya Zeghamina.

House of Iran is open to the public every Sunday, from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m. Hundreds of visitors visit our cottage every Sunday. We welcome our visitors with a hot cup of chai, Persian cookies and a big smile. Our cottage is known as one of the best in Balboa Park. The cottage is run through the labor of love and hundreds of hours of volunteer work from the people who love Persian culture and traditions. We need your suggestions, ideas, volunteer work, support and your membership to keep the cottage open. Your help could include paying your membership dues, making tax deductible donations or by participation in our activities and functions. If not on Sundays, you can also contact us by visiting the House of Iran Web Site: HouseofIranSanDiego.org

Happy Nowruz!

Board of Directors
House of Iran

PAAIA Releases Survey of American Perceptions of Iranian-Americans

Executive Summary

In August of 2008, the Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans (PAAIA) commissioned Zogby International to conduct a national public opinion survey of American perceptions of Iranian Americans, Iranians, and Iran. The purpose of this unprecedented survey is to gather accurate and timely information about how the American public at large perceives Iranian Americans, facilitating a better understanding of the Iranian American community's standing in American society. The margin of error for the results of this survey is +/- 3.2 percentage points.

The results of this PAAIA/Zogby survey indicate that about half of all Americans have a favorable impression of Iranian Americans, as well as the Iranian people. On the other hand, about one-eighth of all Americans have an unfavorable impression of Iranian Americans and the Iranian people. Significantly, however, about one-third of Americans are not familiar with either Iranian Americans or the Iranian people. The similarity of the American public's overall impressions of Iranian Americans and the Iranian people perhaps indicates that such impressions are in large part formed by media reports on Iran.

In contrast to generally favorable impressions of Iranian Americans and the Iranian people, two-thirds of Americans have an unfavorable impression of the Iranian Government. Interestingly, fewer Americans indicate that they are unfamiliar with the Iranian government than they are with the Iranian people or Iranian Americans, perhaps underscoring the point made earlier that American perceptions of Iran, Iranians and Iranian Americans are mostly formed by media reports on Iran that are for the most part focused on the political situation there and the state of relations between the two countries.

Four of every ten Americans indicate that their opinion of Iran has gotten worse in the past five years. In contrast, only one-tenth of Americans have a worse impression of Iranian Americans than they did five years ago. On the other hand, the opinion of only one-in-ten Americans towards Iranians and Iranian Americans has improved during this time period.



Two-thirds of Americans do not personally know any Iranian Americans, and one-in-three have never had contact with an Iranian American. However, of those Americans who have had a business, professional or social relationship with an Iranian American, about nine out of ten surveyed had a generally favorable impression of that experience.

Six of every ten Americans believe Iranian Americans generally share the same values as most Americans, while a near equal number also believe the current government of Iran does not represent the values and views of a majority of Iranian Americans. Furthermore, four of five Americans say they are not suspicious of Iranian Americans because of their national origin, with two-thirds considering them to be Americans as opposed to Iranians. If, however, there were a military confrontation between the United States and Iran, that number would drop considerably to fifty-eight percent.

Even though half of all Americans view Iran as a threat, a significant majority of more than sixty percent (60%) oppose military options in dealing with Iran. Moreover, nearly half of all Americans believe diplomatic negotiations would be the foreign policy approach towards Iran that would be in the best interests of the United States.

More than half of all Americans believe Iran has a right to peaceful nuclear technology. Moreover, two-thirds of those surveyed believe diplomacy can dissuade Iran from developing nuclear weapons, whereas slightly more than one-third believe economic sanctions could achieve the same objective.

For more information see;
http://paaia.org/cs/news_events/paaia_feature_articles/newest_articles/paaia_releases_survey_of_american_perceptions_of_iranian_americans



By Shaghayegh Hanson

GOT ORGANIZATION?



I have piles. Not the kind requiring medication, although I wish there was some ready cure for my condition. My piles are the usual: papers, clothes, shoes, books, magazines, letters, bills, etc. My mother once confiscated the chair behind my desk at home because I would only use it for piling up my clothes. She then removed my desk because the clothes pile worked its way onto that surface area, which was already occupied by book and magazine piles. She finally had to resort to threats of confiscating my John Travolta poster (from Grease...the first one) if I didn't live a pile-free life. That's when I began to develop the skill of being a secret pile-keeper. I realized that if my piles were out of sight I could continue being as slovenly as I chose while maintaining a tidy and organized exterior. My clothes piles moved to the interior of my wardrobe and my book piles gathered dust under my bed.

30 years after my cowardly refusal to organize my belongings and systematize my life, I am still a perpetrator of this haphazard method of "keeping stuff." However, the problem has multiplied and become exacerbated over the years with the addition of a husband and two children. Let me tell you from experience; there is no such thing as "organized chaos." I can't shop early for Christmas presents, say in October or November, because the "December piles" obstruct the piles from previous months and I completely forget about my well intended early start. I regularly confuse dirty laundry piles with clean laundry piles which can cause unpleasant results. Sometimes my bill and paper piles collapse into each other such that I can no longer tell where my "pay now," "pay soon," "do now," and "do later," piles begin and end. And if I need to find one particular thing, well, I could be raking through piles for hours.

I used to have a whole stack (even a pile) of self-help books about how to organize. They met their fate with "garage storage," along with several other types of self-help books, after my husband declared that our book collection was beginning to favor the incompetent neurotic rather than the cultivated reader. I wish I could say I learned something from those books; instead I learned something from their absence...external stimuli and instruction did not help.

So what does it take to become even moderately more organized? The answer lies in my "new" New Year's resolutions. I had actually sworn off New Year's resolutions as pointless; I mean after a decade or so of resolving to "lose weight" and

"exercise more" these things have become more of a running joke than a resolution. Then a very wise friend urged me to think really hard about something that I have always wanted to accomplish on a deeper level than the aesthetics of my anatomy. Hmmmn, that was tough, but after a night of soul searching, I realized that my piles were weighing me down, cluttering my mind, and unnecessarily complicating my life. I needed to become organized once and for all. My friend is going to hold me accountable in a year's time to make sure I follow through.

These are my resolutions so far:

1. Minimize "the stuff" that needs to be organized. I know in my heart that I will never again fit into that slinky, black, skintight dress I wore when I was 21 years old so why is it still sitting in a "maybe will wear again" pile in my closet? And what exactly will I need with a box of checks issued to me in my maiden name in 1991? Do I really need to keep all those plastic drink cups from the zoo and Sea-World? Will my daughter miss having two different styles of Princess Jasmine costume? Is my son even going to notice that his dinosaur collection is short a few T-Rex's and Stegosauruses? I am in possession of numerous things that don't even qualify for organization. These things will be thrown out, given away, or recycled.
2. Chores can be done a little at a time. Growing up I used to hate Sundays because it was Jaaroo day for me. The entire family would be on janitorial mode for most of the day; dusting, laundry, scrubbing, polishing, folding, etc.



Everyone had a job and mine was to sweep...with a dustpan and brush because it was the most thorough method (according to Mother). It made me long to be Christian so that I could spend at least the morning in church. I have come to the realization that this type of prolonged domestic torture is completely unnecessary. Who says you have to clean/tidy the whole house or a whole area in one fell swoop? I have been allotting 10-15 minutes a day to things like putting some clothes away in drawers, papers away in my desk, a little dusting, a quick vacuum, picking up the kids' toys and books. Actually, I bought myself a timer which I set for the amount of time that I can spare or can tolerate sparing for a particular task, e.g. folding laundry, and when that buzzer goes off I simply stop folding and step away from the laundry basket. Folding some clothes is better than none and it's way less painful than having to fold everything and put it all away at one time...remember I have a family of four and a daughter who feels the need to change outfits multiple times a day. Sometimes I'm so impressed with what I can accomplish in 15 minutes that I'm motivated to set the timer for another 15 minutes.

3. The infrastructure of the home is the key to a peaceful mind. You know that saying, "A place for everything and everything in its place"? I have almost completed my mission of finding a home for everything that exists in the house. For example, I've made labeled files for every possible category of paper that comes into the house for all of the members of the family. I've allotted shoe, jacket/coat, backpack, and hat/cap spaces to everyone by the back door or in the hallway closet. My children each have dirty laundry hampers in their rooms and my daughter even has a "during the week" clothes basket into which she can throw clothes that will require sorting at the weekend but won't litter the floor of her room during the week. The hard part is making sure everyone actually puts everything away in the right place. That is a question of routine and discipline...or incessant nagging on my part according to the rest of my family. But thus far, my kids have been very diligent about what they need to do (in part thanks to my new "points and rewards system" which I talk about last in 4.) For example, when they come home from school they know they won't get a snack until they have emptied their backpacks, placed their lunch bags on the kitchen counter, papers I have to see on my desk, their homework at their work table, their shoes, jackets, and hats away in the correct places, and washed their

hands. Then I reward them with a tasty treat while they do homework and the parents make dinner.

4. Every family should know that rewards systems, done well, do work. OK, I'll admit to you that I actually bought the aforementioned timer for time-outs for my children. But you know what, since instituting my rewards system, I have not had to put them in a time-out. I have only to threaten taking away a crucial point that would disqualify them from a certain reward, and they do as they're told! In the past I have tried many different types of rewards-for-good-behavior tricks and they have not worked. This time I have involved the children more directly in the process thus getting them to invest in its success. We made a list together of all the things they considered to be treats or rewards, and then ranked them in importance, e.g. is having a play date with a friend more of a treat than having a one-on-one "date" with Mommy or Daddy? We learned a lot from our children in this way; I mean would you believe they valued quality time alone with either Mom or Dad over a play date? So in this way we assigned more or less points to any given reward e.g. 8 points for a date with Mom or Dad and 6 points for a play date. Then my husband and I wrote down a list of all the ways they could "earn" points e.g. completing homework, cleaning up their rooms, trying new foods, doing well at school, getting ready in a timely fashion in the mornings, and...they can double or even triple their points if they do Persian homework and willingly go to Persian school on Sundays without fuss. And, of course, they lose points for opposite behaviors. So far this is working like a dream.

I believe I have made a pretty good start to the year with the above actions. I'm sure I'll learn more methods of organizing my life or fine tune the ones I have instituted as the year goes on but I already notice less piles and more order. Along with that comes a sense of peace and control. Some people are not bothered by piles and chaos; each to his/her own. But to my friends out there who are as perturbed and distracted by them as I am, I wish you all a very prosperous and organized New Year!

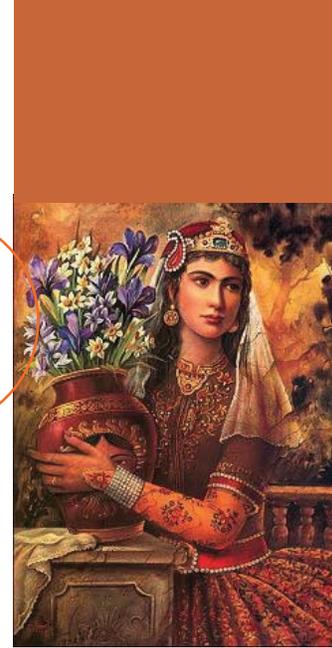
Want to share your new year's resolutions or organization tips? Write to us at Peyk and we may print your letter! The most helpful tipster among you will receive a year's free subscription to Peyk for a friend or family member.

EDUCATION

by Sheiveh Jones



Sudanese Holidays



EDUCATION

I recently had a conversation with a colleague who created an organization for Sudanese immigrants living in Southern California. We talked about how the school calendar is generally set up to honor Christian holidays and how this affects people of other cultures and religions. My colleague went on to tell me about one of the young men in her organization whose family wanted him to take a day off of school in honor of a Sudanese holiday; the young man, who is in high school, had perfect attendance which is honored by an award at the end of the school year. The conflict was if he took the day off, he would not receive the perfect attendance award from his high school. My colleague asked me what I would do for the student if I were her, and so it made me think about *Nowruz* and the years it falls on a weekday. What would I do as a parent for my own child and what would I do as someone who understands a little bit about how the system works? And even more, I wondered how much of the Iranian culture I have compromised in wanting to blend in with the American culture. Those of you who remember the hostage crisis will understand this need. Let's face it; my children are most likely never going to see Iran first hand. Their father, my husband, is American and though he embraces the Persian culture, I am the one with the first hand experiences thus it is ultimately my responsibility to pass down such traditions as *Nowruz*.

After this conversation and self-reflection, I really began to consider the Sudanese boy's plight and the plight of all of us who do not want to pull our children out of school for *Nowruz* when it falls on a school day for fear of having an unexcused absence or missing out on a day's education. It made me realize I need to take action, because in the end, in twenty years when my boys are educated and have successful careers, whether they took a day off school here or there does not matter. What matters are the experiences that ensure they know where their family came from, that they are proud to be Iranian-American, and that they honor their roots. So how is this done?

This year I decided to educate my children about *Nowruz* by having them participate in the preparations and events as well as by having them educate others. I will speak with my son's third grade teacher about

allowing him to give a presentation to his class for *Nowruz*. His presentation will specifically be about the activities around *Nowruz* such as *Chahārshanbe Sūrī*, *Haft Sīn*, *Haji Firouz*, and *Sizdah Bedar*. By educating classmates and the teacher, the culture becomes more understandable and less threatening to those around him ultimately allowing him to be Iranian-American even in the public sphere. The next time *Nowruz* falls on a weekday, I decided my children will not go to school in observance of this very special day. I want them to be proud of their heritage, but how can they be if I do not teach them to be proud? At the same time, the issue of an absence for *Nowruz* must be addressed in the bigger system which means there are many people to write letters to including school board members and superintendents. There are also many people to speak with like fellow parents, neighbors, and community members who will offer support by also writing letters and raising the issue with people they know.

So back to the Sudanese boy. What would I do? The most powerful way to force change is to mobilize as a community and bring awareness to an organization. In the case of the Sudanese boy, his family and every Sudanese community member who has a child in the school need to come together to address this issue to the school board. Though issues like this are slow to catch on, it is up to every individual within the group to pave the way for future families who come to the United States.

Sheiveh Jones began teaching in 1996 and has since taught high school math, English, and AVID. During the last five years she coached new teachers in effective instructional practices to increase student learning. She is currently a program coordinator for the San Diego County Office of Education and continues her work with new teachers through training and mentoring. Additionally, she is completing her Doctorate of Education Organizational Leadership and navigating her way through the public education system as a parent of two boys.

Calendar of Events

Dar Shahr Cheh Khabar?

Visit Our web site at www.pccus.org

Persian Cultural Center

Tel: (858) 653-0336 - Fax & Voice Mail: (619) 374-7335
Website: www.pccus.org



Kamkars in Concert,

March 4, 2009 7:30 PM at the Sherwood Auditorium, LJ

Nowruz Family Festival with House of Iran and Mingei Museum

Saturday March 7, 2009 at Mingei International Museum, Escondido.

Charshanbeh soori, with HOI and AIAP,

Mission Bay, March 17, 2009 from 6PM

Nowruz Celebration, with AIAP

Saturday, March 21, 2009 at Hilton La Jolla, Torrey Pines

Sizdeh Bedar, with HOI and AIAP

Mission Bay, April 5, 2009 From 11 AM

Setar classes by Kourosh Taghavi (858)717-6389

Daf workshop with Ali Sadr, Tuesdays 6 to 7:30 PM at PCC office.

Iranian School of San Diego (858) 653-0336

Nowruz Preparation

Sunday March 8, 2009 at branch I form 2-4 PM.

Nowruz celebration

Sunday March 15, 2009 3:30 to 6:30

Branch I : 1:30 to 4:30pm Standley Middle School

Branch II: 6:00 to 8:00pm Mount Carmel High School



Persian Dance Academy of San Diego

Every Sundays at Iranian School of San Diego Branch I
From 1:30 to 5:30pm (858) 653-0336

Dollar a Month Fund

Nowruz Bazaar - Egg coloring, March 8, 2009
2 to 4 PM at Iranian School of San Diego Branch I.
Tel: (858) 653-0336
www.dmfund.org



Association of Iranian American Professionals (AIAP)

Tel:(619) 645-7273 www.aiap.org
Last Wednesday of each month at 6:30pm



Kamal Cultural Foundation

Tel: (858) 538-0829

House of Iran

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

Day of Iran, March 22, 2009 11am-5pm at Blaboa Park

Iranian-American Scholarship Fund

Tel: (858) 653-0336



Mehrgan Foundation

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

Iranian Women's Study Group of San Diego

Meets: First Sunday of the month • Contact: (858) 952-6713
Meeting location: The University of California, San Diego
The Women's Center • 9500 Gilman Drive, 0096
La Jolla, CA 92093-0096 • Meeting time: 3:30 to 6:30 PM

Association of Iranian American Network of Services

Thu Oct 9 2008, 12:30 PM
(760) 729-9979 www.niabo.org

Nomadic Legacy

at The Mingei International Museum
October 12, 2008 - March 22, 2009

Classics 4 Kids Family Concert

"Culture Crossroads"

Sunday, March 22, 2009 - 2:00pm
Balboa Theatre in downtown San Diego
868 4th Avenue, San Diego, CA 92101

Classics Philharmonic Orchestra

Dana Mambourg Zimbric, Conductor

Special Guests from The Persian Cultural Dance Academy and Malashock Dance

www.classics4kids.com or 619-291-3111

Tickets also available through Ticketmaster outlets

Charshanbeh soori

PCC, AIAP and HOI

March 17, 2009 from 6pm
Mission Bay

Day of Iran

House of Iran

March 22, 2009
from 11am- 5pm at Balboa park

Sizdeh Bedar

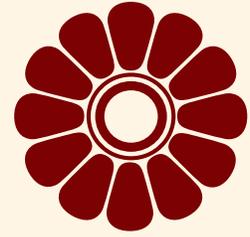
PCC, AIAP and HOI

April 5, 2009 from 11 am
Mission Bay



بنیاد بورس تحصیلی دانشجویان ایرانی - آمریکایی

Iranian-American Scholarship Fund



Supporting Excellence

The Board of Directors of the Iranian-American Scholarship Fund would like to take this opportunity to express best wishes for the New Year and sincerely thank everyone who has supported this Fund in past years.

Thank you: Drs. Hossain Ronaghy and Javid Najafi for your service on the Board of Directors.

Welcome: Mr. Majid Zarrinkelk, CPA as our new member of the Board of Directors.

Welcome: Dr. Mahmood Mahdavi, Dr. Hossain Ronaghy and Dr. Massih Tayebi to the Advisory Board.

A Special Scholarship:

Let us tell you of a heart-warming story about a young man named Omid Yousefi who graduated from USC (University of Southern California), finishing his undergraduate studies in 2004. Part of his graduation gift from family and friends was cash, which he placed in trust with the Iranian-American Scholarship Fund. He stipulated that the recipient of his scholarship be a graduate level Iranian-American student researching aspects of Iranian culture, and that a summary of this research be published in *Peyk*.

For the academic year 2008-09, IASF received a request from a Ph.D. candidate, Ranin Kazemi, who was attending Yale University. Just as many students throughout the nation have faced economic hardship due to budget cuts, Ranin too was facing the loss of much of his grant support for continued research in his field of study. He applied for the Omid Yousefi Scholarship, with a strong recommendation from his academic instructors, and the Board of Directors of IASF awarded him the scholarship. We are pleased to congratulate both Omid and Ranin, and as a community, we can be very proud of both for their accomplishments.

A summary of Ranin Kazemi's research in his field of Iranian studies will be published shortly in a future issue of *Peyk*.

The 2009-10 application and necessary requirements are now available at www.iasfund.org

By visiting our web site www.iasfund.org you can support the 2009-2010 scholarships with your online payment or mailing the following with your contribution to IAScholarship Fund, P.O. Box 500835, San Diego, CA 92150.

IASF is non-profit 501(c)3, your gift donation is tax-deductible in accordance with law.

Phone: (858)653.0336 Fax: (619) 374.7335

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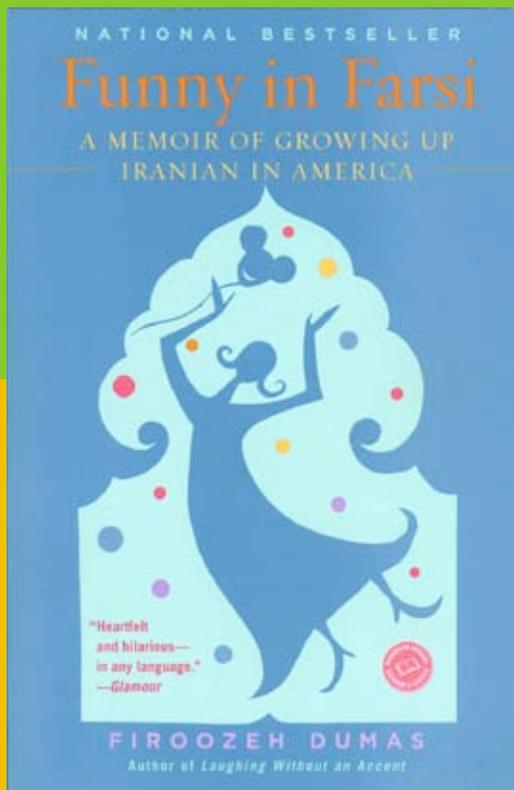


**Iranian-American
Scholarship Fund**
Supporting Excellence

Firoozeh Dumas

Carlsbad Library hosts author of the

bestseller
"Funny in Farsi"



**Carlsbad Public Library
Collaborates with the
Persian Cultural Center
for the first time ever
In April 2009**

EVENT DATES:

"White Baloon" Film Screening **April 8**

Music & Dance performance **April 18**

Firoozeh Dumas Reading **April 23**

**PERSIAN CULTURAL CENTER MUSICAL AND DANCE GROUPS CELEBRATE THE NEW YEAR WITH
MUSICAL AND DANCE PERFORMANCES AT CARLSBAD LIBRARY ON APRIL 18, 2009**

Carlsbad City Library's fifth "Carlsbad Reads Together," a community-wide reading program, will feature Firoozeh Dumas' bestseller *Funny in Farsi*. Free events will take place throughout the month of April 2009 to coincide with National Library Week (April 12-18). For more information, call (760) 602-2012 or visit www.carlsbadlibrary.org.

A highlight of the program will be a visit from Firoozeh Dumas, as she gives her first talk in the San Diego area. There will be two events, a 3 p.m. talk at Carlsbad's Georgina Cole Library (1250 Carlsbad Village Drive) and an 8 p.m. talk at Carlsbad City Library's Schulman Auditorium (1775 Dove Lane). Seating is limited and tickets will be required. Free tickets, limit two per person, will be given out at each location beginning an hour before each talk. Each talk will be followed by a signing and books will be available for purchase.

On April 18th, the library will celebrate an evening of Persian dance and music in collaboration with the Persian Cultural Center of San Diego and the Persian Dance Academy of SD. The event will begin at 7pm at the Carlsbad City Library's Schulman Auditorium (1775 Dove Lane). Entrance is free but limited, so please arrive early.

**Learn more by visiting the Carlsbad Library website: www.carlsbadlibrary.org
or contact PCC for more info.**

ART EXHIBITIONS AND ECONOMY

My regular weekly museum visits have been reduced to once every month. Not only that, I don't go to cinema theaters to watch movies that often these days. The change in my habitual art life is both related and unrelated to the current economic situation in the United States and the world.

It is unrelated because my family income is the same and the activities I mentioned still cost the same (the same as before the recession). That being said, every day we hear factories, companies and businesses in the art world and beyond are cutting out more and more jobs and reducing their production. However, if the current disaster in the economy has affected the art world it has not yet influenced the price of its products. I pay the same amount to go to the Cinema Theater as I paid two years ago.

The Economic meltdown has left its immediate mark on the art world, not yet on its price but on its production. An art museum is a business like any other; its permanent collection can be seen as a reflection of its capital. The temporary art exhibition can be seen as its product; the museums borrow and sometimes buy art pieces for artists or collectors and put together an art exhibition. Putting an exhibition on view is an expensive venture. The most expensive part of it is perhaps the insurance cost for the art pieces.

What has happened in the past couple of months is that art museums have reduced both the number of their new exhibitions and the quality of them. Perhaps it is still early for an assessment of the quality of art exhibitions (we have to wait a couple of years for a thorough review of the situation) but there have been simply no noticeably good art exhibitions since September. Since Fall only two art exhibitions caught my eye. Strangely, only one of them was in New York City, the so called art center of the world after WWII. The other exhibition was in Austin, Texas, in the Blanton Museum of Art, which is a university museum and a much smaller museum compared to the museums in New York City.

The negative effect of the economy on small art museums is more visible. From 2002 to 2008 Blanton Museum of Art exhibited 8 to 16 art exhibitions a year despite undergoing construction between 2002-03. For 2009-10 only 7 exhibitions are promised on Blanton's website. Another example of the impact of the recession on smaller art museums is Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University, which sold off a 6,000-object collection. Brandeis University President, Jehuda Reinharz has stated that due to the few visitors to the museum "We felt that, at this point given the recession and the financial crisis, we had no choice." Rose will be closed this summer.

So what should we do to continue nurturing Art? Should we keep going to museums when their temporary exhibitions are not appealing enough?

Yes! We should keep our eyes and minds busy by looking at art and art exhibitions even when there is not much going on. What the bad economy has not changed yet in the museums (small or big) is their permanent collection that earlier in this article we considered as the museums' capital. It is useful to know most museums only exhibit a very small percentage of their permanent collection. Something close to 3 percent of what they really own is exhibited at each



Princesse de Broglie, 1851-53, Ingres, Oil on canvas; Robert Lehman Collection, MET

pieces or what we tend to call masterpieces belong to a museum's permanent collection.

The only thing we need to do is a little bit of research before heading out to museums. Check the information for the museum you like online. Check the hours and the days that the museum is open. Also check the entrance fee; for such a luxurious intellectual adventure, visiting a museum is not that expensive. Some museums are free or have a pay-as-you-wish policy like the Metropolitan Museum of Art. With this policy the visitor can pay as little as 1 cent, but there is also a recommended admission fee for those who wish to pay. Most other museums have a discount for seniors, students and children under a certain age. You can gain all this information by visiting the museum's website. Also, if available, watch an online survey of the museum's art collection. Knowing the highlights of a museum's collection ahead of time will help you organize your time inside a museum and help you to find the art style you are already interested in or would like to be more familiar with. But never rely on the online images: seeing a piece of art up close is something else.

I usually recommend keeping the duration of your visit short, between 1 to 2 hours. It is almost impossible to see all the galleries of a big museum; and what's the rush, you can always go back and see what you haven't seen yet.

You don't need to go that far to find art you will enjoy. Check the art museums and galleries around you. It is in a museum's permanent collections that you can find such pieces as the beautifully executed portrait of *Princesse de Broglie*, (1851–53) by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (at Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY) and Willem de Kooning's *Woman* (1950) (in San Francisco Museum of Modern Art). Some works of art appear in many museums around the world either because they are on tour or like many of August Rodin's bronze sculptures (which have over 20 original copies each) there is more than one original. For example, 15 copies of Rodin's *The Thinker* (1902) can be found in museums across the United States.

Happy Nowrooz; Happy Persian New Year!



Woman 1950, Willem de Kooning, oil on paper mounted on Masonite



The Thinker (1902), Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri



The Thinker, Auguste Rodin, Paris, Musée Rodin

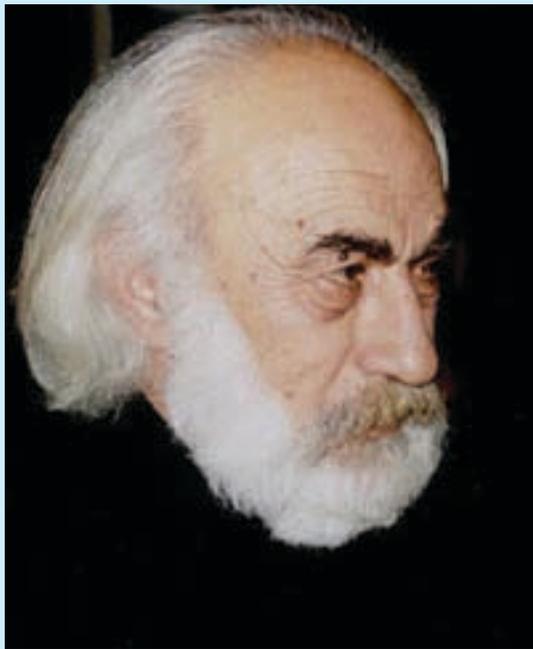
given time and they rotate the works on view. It has been like this for a long time and this has nothing to do with the economy; it is mostly due to the space limitation and other practical and preservation reasons.

But still, that small percentage of a museum's collection is worth our time. Most famous art

Iranian Poetry Today

“Our literature is in need of change, in all respects. New subjects would not suffice, neither would it suffice to elaborate on an old concept and express it in a new way.” Several decades have already passed since Nima Yushij modernized Persian Poetry in the 1920s by breaking the rhyme and meter scheme of the Classical Poetry (known as *Sher’r-e No’ or She’r-e Nimaee*). Nima did not entirely break free from rhyme and meter and ultimately it was Ahmad Shamloo, who established *She’r-e Sepid* (Free Verse), removing all limitation from Persian Poetry. Shamloo was one of many voices who emerged after Nima; Forough Farrokhzad, Sohrab Seperhi and Mehdi Akhavan Sales are all poets who shaped Modern Persian Poetry. Many generations have come and gone since Iran’s historic modernity movement.

Where does Iranian Poetry stand today? Has it traversed all that is modern? Who does the future of Persian poetry belong to? *Iranian Poetry Today* offers a snapshot of Iranian poetry produced in the “post-modern” age. Everything else will be left to the imagination of readers to guess how post-modern Iranian poetry reflects the multi-layered and complex nation Iran is today.



Amir Hossein Afrasiabi was born in 1934 in Esfahan, Iran. Poet, short-story writer, and critic, he has been living in the Netherlands since 1986. He started writing poetry as a child and is the author of six books of poetry in Persian as well as poems in Dutch. His Persian books are *Autumn Words*, *With the Seagulls*, *Station*, *On the Way*, *More Words*, and *Until the Next Station*. In language unusually fresh for his generation, Afrasiabi’s poetry meditates on aging and memory.



Red Rose 1

I’m talking about the same red rose
In that little backyard,
whose perfume
wafted in the afternoon shadows of summer’s end
through the veranda and yard
(when you watered the footpath
And brewed tea)...

Afternoons of summer’s end

when I sat on that veranda
and spotted it
over your shoulders,
red and fragrant.
I used to think, It’s there,
It’s still there...

I’m talking about the same red rose
In the little backyard of that house...

Red Rose 2

You’re talking about the same
red rose in that little backyard,
I know.

Sometimes, when I watered the footpath
and brewed tea
and you sat on the veranda,
you spotted it being there;

from over my shoulders,
you spotted it there.

You always spot roses,
red and fragrant
over my shoulders,
but you never
see
me.

Translated by *Niloufar Talebi*, retrieved from
BELONGING: New Poetry by Iranians Around the World.

Share with us your views on *Peyk*’s poetry page
fani@rohan.sdsu.edu

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Mingei International Museum,
the Persian Cultural Center
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Family Nowruz Festival



MINGEI INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM

(www.mingei.org)

155 West Grand Avenue in

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Telephone: 760-735-3355

CELEBRATE NOWRUZ PERSIAN NEW YEAR!

Saturday, March 7, 09 1-4 pm

Location: Escondido

Join Mingei International Museum, the House of Iran and the Persian Cultural Center for Nowruz, the vernal Equinox celebration observed for thousands of years in Persianate cultures. Enjoy musical recitations of poetry, learn about the seven elements that comprise the Haft Seen table (symbolizing the triumph of good over evil) and engage in crafts associated with the Persian New Year.



Iran's Sexual Revolution Passionate Uprisings

By: Pardis Mahdavi

Reviewed by Shaghayegh Hanson

protection, and health advice to young people.

Shockingly, the estimated average age of a young Tehrani's first sexual experience is 14. This being the case, many young women are engaging in pre-marital sex, and having hymen reconstruction surgery prior to marriage or multiple abortions. A prominent gynecologist, known as the "abortion doctor" tells Mahdavi: "Our kids are in trouble. Sex is happening behind closed doors, fourteen-year-olds are coming in here asking for abortions, third-year medical students are coming back for multiple abortions because they can't stop sleeping with their married professors, and AIDS and infections are on the rise. I don't think there is any place in the world—well, at least any place in the Muslim world—where the abortion rate is so high." This particular doctor reported that he performed at least 8 hymen reconstructions a week, and advised brides-to-be to use a capsule of goat's blood or a razor squeezed between the thighs to shed blood on the wedding night sheets to fake virginity.

Another doctor running an HIV center told Mahdavi, "Young people in Iran are up against a lot. They are tired and don't have an outlet to express their frustration with the bad economic situation, which has left many of them educated but unemployed. And they certainly have no venue to express their frustration at having to grow up with so many social restrictions. So what are they doing? They are turning to extreme social behaviors."

So what has this sexual and social revolution achieved? For now, Mahdavi notes that long gone are the days of public lashings for "bad Islamic dress" and placing women's feet in buckets of cockroaches for showing their ankles. More parents are accepting their children will be sexually active and some parents encourage their children to party and enjoy themselves because they feel sorry that they have to spend their youth under the government's strict laws. There are officials attempting to introduce better sex education in schools and the government has set up needle exchange programs and clinics where people can get HIV/AIDS testing, treatment, counseling and housing; STI testing, and harm reduction information. Mahdavi was impressed that the staff at these centers were very open to discussing premarital sex, sexual behaviors, homosexuality, and harm reduction. She believes the behavior of youth has widened not just the government's but also society's acceptance of certain freedoms and behaviors.

However, one cannot help but ask, at what cost?

"Ladies, I have heard they are selling vibrators in *Bazar-e-Tajrish*; let's go and buy some!" So says Laleh, the flamboyant and outspoken instructor of Pardis Mahdavi's dance classes in Tehran. Laleh is one of Mahdavi's several "informants" whom she tracked over the 7 years of research she undertook for her book, *Passionate Uprisings, Iran's Sexual Revolution*. Although her study focused on 105 young people in Tehran, mostly from the lower-middle to upper-middle class, she believes their behavior and experiences are trendsetting, and a bellwether for the rest of the country. Mahdavi, an Iranian-American, and an alumna of the Iranian School of San Diego, traveled to Iran every year between 2000 and 2007, to observe the life of these youth in the Islamic Republic. And you wouldn't believe the half of it!

Cyber sex, sex in the back of taxis or cars; drugs and alcohol; multiple-partner sex or orgies; hours and hours spent on make-up, clothes, and picking up partners. What is going on exactly? Well, the bigger picture, according to Mahdavi, is that there is a sexual and social revolution taking place in Iran; or as the youth call it, an *enghelab-e-farhangi*. The children of the revolution are all grown up and are carving their own way to sociopolitical change. Mahdavi says her informants repeatedly reminded her that their emphasis on style and outward appearances was more than a fashion statement but a way of "speaking to a regime that would hear only these signals." She argues the regime has defined the battleground for this revolution by trying to regulate morality, social behaviors, and sexuality in extreme ways.

However, there are serious repercussions for the youth's hedonistic behavior. Besides lashings or more severe punishment for being caught by the morality police, there is very little sex education or awareness of safe sex in Iran. The youth harbor many misconceptions about sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV and AIDS, and the ways in which pregnancy may be avoided. Mahdavi was constantly put in positions where she was giving basic prevention,

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Irvine, CA 92612
Tel: 949-551-4111

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Tel: 858-535-9700

La Jolla Library

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La Jolla, CA 92037

Sahel Bazaar

7467 Cuvier Street # A
La Jolla, CA 92037
Tel: 858-456-9959

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1419 Westwood Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90024
Tel: 310-477-7477

Crown Valley Market Place

27771 Center Drive
Mission Viejo, CA 92691
Tel: 949-340-1010

Swedish Royal Bakery

12222 Poway Rd
Poway, CA 92064
Tel: 858-486-1114

Saffron Market

4444 Auburn Blvd.
Sacramento, CA 95841
Tel: 916-978-7978

Shahrazad Restaurant

2931 Sunrise Blvd. Suite 125
Sacramento, CA 95742
Tel: 916-852-8899

Balboa International Market

5907 Balboa Ave
San Diego, CA 92111
Tel: 858-277-3600

Carmel Valley Library

3919 Townsgate Dr
San Diego, CA 92130
Tel: 858-552-1668

Darband Restaurant

Authentic Persian Restaurant
1556 Fifth Ave
San Diego, CA 92101
Tel: 619-230-1001

Kabob House (Star of Persia)

16761 Bernardo Center Drive
San Diego, CA 92128
Tel: 858-485-5883

Parsian Market

4020 Convoy St
San Diego, CA 92111
Tel: 858-277-7277

Saffron Persian Cuisine

15817 Bernardo Center Drive #109
San Diego, CA 92127
Tel: 858-673-2223

Soltan Banoo

Eclectic Persian Cuisine
4645 Park Boulevard
San Diego, CA 92116
Tel: 619-298-2801

Persepolis Market

327 S. Rancho Santa Fe Rd
San Marcos, CA 92078
Tel: 760-761-0555

Rose Market (Bay Area)

14445 Big Basin Way
Saratoga, CA 95070

Maryland

Ms. Firoozeh Naeemi

Las Vegas

Zaytoon Inc.

Mediterranean Market & Kabob
3655 S. Durango Dr. 314
Las Vegas, NV 89147
702-685-685-1875

Palm Mediterranean Market & Deli

8866 S. Eastern Ave #104
Las Vegas, NV 89123
702-932-5133

North Carolina

Ms. Nazi A Kite

Virginia

Saffron Grill

1025-A Seneca Rd
Great Falls, VA 22066
Tel: 703-421-0082

By: Sareh Bahreinifar



Alcohol: Potion or Poison?

Is alcohol a type of medicine, a delightful potion, or simply a poison? It may be all three depending on how it is consumed, and is a vital example of how consumers should always consider a risk versus benefit ratio when making any health related decisions. This can include taking any prescription medications, over the counter drugs, choosing dietary supplements, and of course, consuming alcohol. Most people tend to weigh the negative consequences of alcohol against its pleasurable, positive results, and continue seeking this drug as a source of excitement. Although alcohol might appear less dangerous than most other street drugs, its relatively innocent profile can make it the most dangerous in other ways. A recent statistic that underscores this irony is that alcohol-related deaths are on the rise in the United States alone with approximately 200,000 deaths each year (Griffith, 2002). Although heavy alcohol consumption is associated with harmful effects, moderate drinking may have beneficial effects on the heart only in specific populations.

Despite its harmful effects, alcohol remains extremely popular among many around the globe. The majority of alcohol consumers may not be aware of its detrimental health effects. Alcohol is not digested like food and its effects on the body are different. For instance, what happens when alcohol is poured on an open wound? It burns! This burning can also occur when drinking alcohol on an empty stomach, which many do to achieve faster intoxication. The inner lining of the stomach, like the open wound, burns when consuming alcohol without any food. Alcohol is quickly absorbed into the bloodstream through the stomach and gastrointestinal tract when swallowed. Drinking on an empty stomach gives the impression to many that it is an effective way of getting alcohol to the brain quickly, without realizing the damage to the liver and the inner lining of the stomach. Heavy alcohol consumption can have destructive effects on many of the body's organs, such as the liver and the pancreas (Landau, 2003). The liver is where alcohol gets metabolized. Due to excessive alcohol intake, the liver can become inflamed and hepatitis can be the end result. This is when the importance of moderation becomes a key factor. Despite evidence of the harmful effects of alcohol, many associate its consumption with the freedom to relax, socialize and have fun.

Alcohol is known to be the world's favorite drug, but few consumers are aware of how its risks could outweigh its benefits. Alcohol is a depressant which slows down the central nervous system when taken in excessive amounts and works as a stimulant when taken moderately. It works as a mind-acting drug which impacts the brain cells and brain system and in



turn, this facilitates a pleasurable experience. Many have the misconception that alcohol creates a "high" whereas the opposite is true by slowing down the individual's breathing and heart rate. Though euphoria is the end result of alcohol consumption, physiological changes such as a rise in blood pressure, and an increased secretion of urine are also two of the many consequences. This euphoric effect of alcohol may reinforce the individual to keep drinking, not realizing that an overdose of this potentially poisonous drug can lead to death. Death by alcohol overdose can easily be facilitated when this drug is mixed with sedatives, tranquilizers, or opioids (chemical substances that act as morphine in the body). Alcohol interacts negatively with more than 150 different medications (Landue, 2003).

Many risks are associated with excessive alcohol consumption which can be mental, behavioral, or disease-specific. One of the many clinical results of excessive alcohol consumption is respiratory depression. Others include complications by inhaled vomits or the capacity of alcohol to lower the blood sugar level. Alcohol may also lead to malnutrition as well as damaging and impairing the body system. Specifically, the brain, nerves, muscles, liver, pancreas, and heart are all vulnerable to excessive drinking. For example, the continual use of alcohol places the drinker at a higher risk of developing chronic diseases such as liver cancer, hepatitis, cirrhosis, pancreatitis and upper digestive cancers. Excessive alcohol consumption can cause the pancreas to become inflamed; a condition known as pancreatitis. The detrimental effects of alcohol on the pancreas and liver should be emphasized since these are two of the most important and vulnerable organs in body. Pancreatitis can be fatal, and symptoms include severe abdominal pain and weight loss (Griffith, 2002 & Landue, 2003).

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), excessive alcohol consumption is the third leading preventable cause of death in the United States, and is associated with multiple adverse health consequences, including liver cirrhosis, various cancers, unintentional injuries, and violence (CDC, 2004). Despite these findings, many believe that these chronic diseases would not apply to them since they don't consume alcohol on a regular basis. However, these health issues may definitely apply to drinkers

that are more likely to consume a large amount of alcohol at one time, a pattern referred to as binge drinking. Binge drinking is a huge public health concern, especially among the younger population when drinking becomes a pattern and intoxication the main goal. Internationally, the main goal of young people's drinking habits is the importance of the "buzz." A buzz is another term used for intoxication defined as changes in thought process and loss of control over normal functions (Hyde & Setaro, 1999). The buzz as a result of binge drinking puts these young kids at high risk for alcohol related problems mentioned earlier. As a result, many drinkers develop an addiction, which becomes a problem when the drinking starts to control the individual, rather than the individual controlling the amount of alcohol consumed.

One of the many results of alcohol addiction is that it interferes with brain functioning. It releases a chemical called GABA into the brain, where one of the effects is inhibiting external threat. It also releases another brain chemical called dopamine which increases brain arousal. The combination of the two chemicals in the brain can be good or bad, depending on the situation. Additionally, alcohol and some other drugs have a depressive effect on the brain. The reason alcohol is widely accepted as a recreational drug is because it temporarily induces mental disorder. This causes the intoxicated individual to be out of touch with reality like other drugs, but can still respond to what cultures accept as "normal" behavior. In other words, alcohol is socially tolerable. Not surprisingly, in European nations that have a more permissive attitude toward alcohol, the rate of cirrhosis of the liver is higher compared to other cultures that have a less tolerable attitude towards alcohol consumption.

In light of these differences among nations, what is considered moderate or safe amounts of alcohol consumption? According to some literature, women should not take more than 2 drinks per sitting; and men should not take more than 3 drinks in one sitting (Landau, 2003). Amounts in excess of this are associated with an increased risk of mortality and morbidity as well as a higher risk of future alcohol related consequences. In other words, having 2 or more drinks at one sitting is not considered beneficial to one's health. However, there is no universally accepted definition of moderate consumption. This can vary by different authors, country, gender, and age and of course beverage type. A number of authors have defined moderate drinking as an average consumption of about 1 to 2 drinks per day. An important point is that when considering moderate alcohol consumption, the pattern of consumption is also critical. The greatest benefits of moderate alcohol consumption occur when there is regular moderate consumption rather than sporadic episodes of heavy drinking. Research has also suggested that drinking alcohol with a meal rather than on an empty stomach is beneficial.

Despite the preceding discussion of alcohol as a poison, alcohol, if taken properly, can also be viewed as a medicine, albeit to a lesser extent. Alcohol may have health benefits, but they are far less than the risks. One of the few benefits of alcohol lies in its blood-clotting mechanisms. It may reduce the mortality risk from certain types of stroke that are caused

by blood clotting. These benefits, however, are restricted to groups of men aged over forty and women of post-menopausal age who are at high risk of heart disease, over 50 (Griffith, 2002 & Landau, 2003).

In addition to its blood clotting mechanisms, alcohol has also been found to be good for the heart. Studies have shown alcohol protects the heart against coronary heart disease. According to the American Heart Association, light to moderate alcohol consumption can increase HDL cholesterol levels (the "good" cholesterol) by approximately 12%. It can also reduce the risk of myocardial infarction (commonly known as heart attack). These benefits, however, are primarily restricted to high risk individuals who have diabetes, hypertension, or previous myocardial infarction. Every individual is different, thus it is essential to consult with a doctor before consuming any alcohol especially if taken with any medications (Griffith, 2002).

It should again be emphasized that alcohol affects people differently. Thus, the cardio protective effects of moderate alcohol consumption vary with different people. The relationship between moderate alcohol consumption and reduced risk of Cardiovascular Heart Disease (CHD) was first documented in 1970. In Europe, red wine was consumed in high levels which led to low CHD among Europeans. Thus, a foundation was laid for the popular belief that moderate alcohol consumption equals reduction of risk of heart disease. However, the health benefits of alcohol are not linked to all types of alcohol but rather a selective few. The alcohol in wine and beer, made from grapes and barley, do not intoxicate to the same degree as an equal amount taken in brandy and whisky. Wine seems to excite the social traits of character. Though wine intoxicates, it seldom leads to irritability and aggressive behavior.

Brandy and whisky on the other hand, have a more immediate and direct effect on the nerves and the brain. While hard liquor can have negative social and health effects, specific alcoholic beverages such as red and white wine contain numerous substances other than ethanol that may have cardio protective effects. They contain many bioactive polyphenolic compounds, including flavonoids and antioxidants. Beer contains amino acids, peptides, vitamin B, as well as phenolic compounds derived from hops and malts. There is a high vitamin B content found in beer. Beer also has an antioxidant ferulic acid not easily found in red wine. These benefits are subject only to certain populations and do not apply to everyone (Griffith, 2002).

Through the analysis of the risks versus benefits related to alcohol consumption, moderation comes to be an important key factor in living a healthy lifestyle.

Sareh Bahreinifar is currently obtaining her Masters of Public Health (MPH) with a concentration in Health Promotion at San Diego State University. Feel free to email her at: sareh.bahreinifar@gmail.com with any questions you may have.