

# Peyk

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سازمبک

*Happy Nowruz*

HAPPY PERSIAN NEW YEAR

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By: Shahri Estakhry



## A VALUABLE LESSON TO BE LEARNED

If we are lucky, there are individuals who appear in our lives and make such a positive difference that lasts us a lifetime. The important factor is to have the willingness to embrace the good fortune of learning from such individuals.

When I moved to San Diego and got involved with our community activities, I used to attend some of our local musical concerts. I wasn't used to the sound of setar and, at that time, it wasn't exactly a favorite of mine. By chance, some local musician friends encouraged me to attend a concert at Standley Middle School by an artist about whom I didn't know anything. His name was Hossein Alizadeh, and the only reason I went was because the flyer showed him with a tar—the sound being a perfect pitch to my ear. I know, many of you are saying, "What? How can you not know or have heard of Alizadeh? Not possible." Possible indeed - since most of my education was in the 1960s and in the Midwest, and at that time there was no Alizadeh or other concerts as we have today.

Brave ole me, I sat in the second front row, right in middle (something I never do) facing him. I was waiting for him to pick up his tar and suddenly I saw the setar and thought to myself "Why did I sit in front and facing him, there is no way to step out now." I sat quietly and prepared myself for what I thought was the inevitable. Trapped, I could do nothing but listen. To my own surprise, soon I felt tears rolling down my face. It was the most magnificent sound that I could have ever hoped to hear. My soul and my entire being came alive as I watched Alizadeh and listened to him. I was mesmerized with his music and the movement of his fingers along the instrument. His performance was masterful and he showed such respect for the instrument. I had the pleasure of meeting him and then I had a second surprise. Such a humble person, he took the time to talk with everyone, without arrogance or impatience, and truly enjoyed himself being among the people. That was probably more than 20 years ago.

Through the years, I made a point to learn more about Alizadeh and to follow his incredible success. His people and his nation, with a great deal of pride, call him Ostad (Master) Alizadeh. Without any doubt, the moniker fits him graciously because his success and title have made him neither an arrogant nor a self-centered person. His music and his personality separate him from many others.

Late last year Alizadeh was presented, and refused the acceptance of, the "Ordre des Arts et Lettres Chevalier" (Order of Arts and Letters), the highest decoration awarded by the French government. In an open letter, Alizadeh said that he does not need any decoration and added that he derives satisfaction from his good name.

Alizadeh described the time during which he wrote the letter as "the most difficult and beautiful moment" of his life. He spoke of the long, difficult path he took to acquire his knowledge of music and to achieve critical acclaim. He thanked the Iranian people and said, "The art-loving people and my dear compatriots have bestowed upon me the highest honor many times."

He went on to say, "If the political and cultural ambassador of France were to pin this gift given by the cultured people of France on the chests of all our great artists, we would certainly acknowledge the gift and would also praise the shining stars of our history.

"Perhaps, if our officials, who should be the guardians of the country's history, culture and art, had a proper appreciation of the art of music - as our people have - a gift and a decoration from outside our country would not require such reflection.

"Nevertheless, I thank the French officials and the ambassador, and in honor of the art-loving people of Iran, I derive satisfaction from the good name of Hossein Alizadeh, and I shall never add a suffix or prefix to it until the end of my life.

"Lastly, as I congratulate all the great Iranian and world luminaries who have received the Chevalier of the Legion of Honor, I deem myself free from the desire for any medal." (Payvand Iran News, www.payvand.com, November 30, 2014.)

After appears Master Alizadeh has a special place for our community in San Diego in his heart. He must know how much he and his amazing music and presentations are respected and appreciated here. His recent concert at IAC/PCC was sold out for a back to back two nights.

**At this time of Nowruz celebrations it is befitting to remind ourselves:**

**Good Words      Good Deeds      Good Thoughts**

*Wishing You a Healthy and a Prosperous New Year.*

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## Colors of Melodies Ostad Alizadeh's Concert

By: Kouros Taghavi

On a typical January night in San Diego, something quite extraordinary took place at the Iranian-American Center. In a rare appearance, Ostad Hossein Alizadeh dazzled and delighted his audience through a performance of Iranian music.

Hossein Alizadeh belongs to a very elite group of musicians who came about in the seventies and eighties in Iran to preserve and revolutionize Persian Classical Music. His compositions and performances are some of the best examples of this approach. Alizadeh redefined the art of solo performance by introducing new techniques and dynamics on both the Setar and Tar (Persian string instruments). His compositions pushed and challenged the boundaries of Persian Classical Music while keeping the essential aesthetics of this art form.

The most important characteristic of Alizadeh's music is perhaps his passionate presence on stage. He is a sight to see as well as a masterful performer whose music is a phenomenon to hear. He truly lives his music as he improvises—he moves with every nuance of his melodies; tears come down from his eyes; smiles appear on his face as the notes are coaxied to life. Alizadeh himself says that before a melody comes to his mind, there is a rush of colors that overcomes him and pushes him towards a rhythm and a melody. Perhaps he is celebrating what is taking place in his soul!

So, on that otherwise ordinary night in San Diego, we witnessed all of Alizadeh's extraordinary presence and passion. First on the Setar, he started in Avaz Bayate Tork, leading us through a journey of colorful melodies and modulations. In an instant, we heard Reng-e Harbi from the Radif of Persian Classical Music before coming upon a rendition of an old song from the days of the rebellion! He then glided through a Chahar Mezrab—one of the rhythmic forms of Persian Classical Music which Alizadeh has had a big role in revolutionizing in recent years—before stepping through a freestyle musical verse full of passion and beauty.

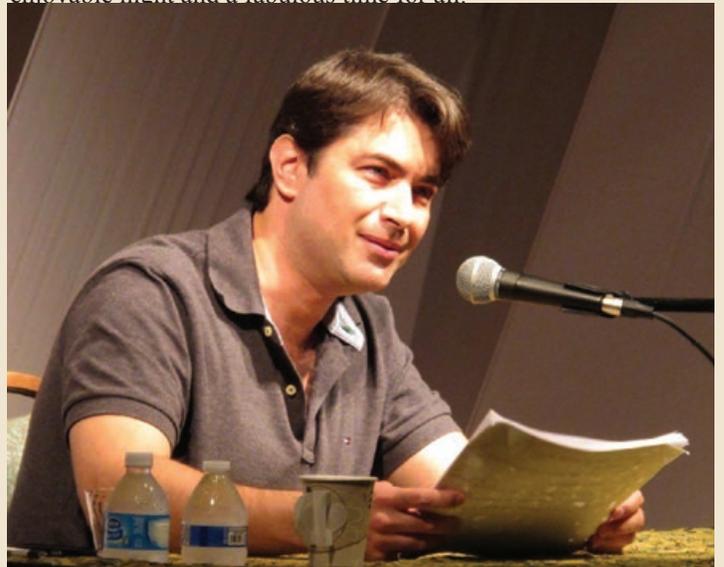
The second half of the concert, as Ostad explained, was a fantasy on the sound of chimes dancing in the wind. He started this journey of "wind through chimes" in Dastgahe Mahoor and took us all with him to Nava and Shur! As he fantasized in different modes and rhythms, one would go through a parallel journey by imagining colors and thoughts related to the deepest emotions of one's life. This is perhaps what makes Alizadeh's music so powerful. Different people relate to the same melodies and rhythms differently based on their own life experiences; in short, through this shared journey, they hear their own colors of music. That was a night to remember for all lovers of Persian Classical Music. Thanks to our community, this performance took place in our home, our new center which will undoubtedly bring us more of our vibrant culture for all to experience!

## Reading Chekhov at the Center

On Sunday February 7<sup>th</sup>, the renowned TV and movie artist, Mr. Parsa Pirouzfard, was present at the Iranian-American Center, hosted by PCC (Persian Cultural Center). He is a graduate of Tehran University with a degree in art/painting who later studied acting with Mahin Oskooei and Hamid Samandarian. His first movie was PARI directed by Dariush Mehrjooey. After numerous famous movies such as "Mother's Guest's," "Confession," and "Mercedes," he has moved on to directing plays, including "Glengarry Glen Ross," "Stones in His Pockets," and others. Take a look at "...etc."

The program was well attended, with standing room only available for some attendees. PCC host introduced Mr. Pirouzfard and he began by introducing CHEKOV as follows: ANTON Pavlovich CHEKHOV is a Russian author and playwright, born in January 1860. He was a medical doctor by training. He became one of the most prolific writers of his age, who alongside his medical career managed to write over 600 pieces of short and long stories and articles. Sadly he passed away at the young age of 44 in 1904. Chekhov is considered to be among the greatest writers of short stories in history!

The program continued with readings of several stories. Mr. Pirouzfard masterfully, as a one man show, portrayed each different character in the stories with voices and expressions. It was a most enjoyable night and a fabulous time for all.



## Cultural Program -JONG

Arts and culture lovers in our community have been enjoying the program JONG e Farhangi (Cultural Variety) for several months now. This started as a pilot program and has turned into a monthly gem. Jong takes place on the second Friday night of the month at the Iranian-American Center and is being organized by the members of the Peyk editorial board (Persian Section). Topics are diverse ranging from visual arts to poetry to film and cultural discussions, as well as interviews with distinguished artists, and members of the community.

The latest of such nights was on February 13th, which was warmly supported by a full house of attendees. The MC for the night was Mr. Ali Sadr and the guest was a renowned film director and film critic Mr. Esmail Mihandoost, who has recently published his book: "Face to face with Asghar Farhadi." Mr Farhadi won the Oscar for his movie "Separation."

The program started with showing Mr. Mihandoost's latest film called "Stopover in Las Vegas." He then introduced his book that he has just published in Iran. He said that after seeing Farhadi's first two movies over ten years ago, he realized that a star is being born. He contacted Mr. Farhadi and started a series of interviews, which took place after the release of each of his movies.

In part two of the program, the conversation about the book and specific elements of Farhadi's movies were discussed. The program continued by question and answer. At the end of the second part, the audience watched another short movie by Mr. Mihandoost called "Jaayezeh" or prize. The night ended with many getting autographed copies of Mr. Mihandoost's book.



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**Nowruz (New Day) - Arrival of Spring Equinox**  
**The First Day of Spring is a Non-Religious Celebration of New Year for More Than 300 Million Celebrants Around the World**

## HAFTSEEN

A major part of the Nowruz- New Year's ritual is the setting of a special table with seven specific items known as the **Haftseen** ("haft" means 7 and the name of each of these items begin with the letter S, or "seen," in Persian). **The components of the Haftseen should be edible and grown with roots in the ground.** 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-rebirth), **Serkeh** (vinegar-patience), **Sumagh** (sumac berries-joy), **Senjed** (fruit of jujube tree- happiness), and **Samanoo** (boiled malt with flour-prosperity). In looking at twenty million Parsi words, we cannot find another item that could fit the requirements for the actual Haftseen but the above mentioned seven. Today, some families add to these traditional components, including **Sekeh** (coins-prosperity), colored eggs (fertility equal to number of family members), a bowl with live gold fish (life and the sign change of Pisces), candles (enlightenment and happiness), 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. This year, Nowruz begins on Friday, March 20th at 3:45 p.m., which is the exact time when winter turns into Spring or Spring Equinox.

In wishing everyone a joyous Nowruz Season, the Persian Cultural Center will be sharing Haftseen displays at the following public libraries throughout the city:

- Carmel Valley Branch Library: 3919 Townsgate Dr. San Diego, CA 92130
- Linda Vista Branch Library: 2160 Ulric Street, San Diego, CA 92111
- Rancho Peñasquitos Branch Library: 13330 Salmon River Rd, San Diego, CA 92129
- Pacific Beach Branch Library: 4275 Cass Street, San Diego, CA 92109
- North University Community Branch Library: 8820 Judicial Dr. San Diego, CA 92122
- College-Rolando Branch Library: 6600 Montezuma Rd, San Diego, CA 92115
- La Jolla/Riford Branch Library: 7555 Draper Ave, La Jolla, CA 92037-4802

# Facebook: a superficial look into human complexity

By: Shaghayegh Hanson

It took some urging from family and friends, especially those who live afar, to get me to sign up for Facebook in the first place. I was concerned, and still am, that communication through technology has a pernicious side to it; in the absence of face-to-face interaction, text messages and emails can be read with the wrong tone or taken in the wrong way, issues that deserve in-depth back and forth discussion are reduced to the road block of a couple of sentences sent in reactionary haste, and the benefits of intellectual debate and real human contact can be lost. I worried that cyberspace was turning us into caricatures of ourselves, open to erroneous, exaggerated and one dimensional perceptions of who we are.

Of course, I eventually signed up because of the benefits. Finding long lost friends and hearing from family abroad has been a particular joy. However, at some point, I realized that my misgivings were justified. Now, I have a love-hate relationship with Facebook. It draws me in but leaves me unsatisfied and frustrated. A couple of encounters I had recently prompted me to reevaluate my relationship with Facebook.

There's this thing called the "Five Labs" Facebook analyzer that supposedly measures your agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness, extraversion, and openness. The tool is free and will spit out your personality profile at the click of a button. It will even tell you which of your "friends" are most like you. I tried it just because I thought it would be "fun." I winced at my score of 54% in the neuroticism category (how easily I experience unpleasant emotions) and was slightly relieved at the 84% I received in the openness category (how intellectually curious I am). Perhaps this explains all those self-help books littering my bookshelves next to such offerings as, "A Short History of Nearly Everything" by Bill Bryson.

I was definitely upset to see that I am more neurotic than dependable, which is apparently what my 53% score under conscientiousness means (I guess the self-help books haven't worked). But I was most wounded by my abysmal failure to be "agreeable," scoring only 19% in this category! That would explain why the tool could not locate even one friend who was most like me; perhaps I don't deserve to have any friends. I know it sounds paranoid but I immediately thought about what some of my "mom" friends have been saying to me over the last year or so; that my posts on Facebook are too political.

When I first heard this, I was taken aback. At dinner one night I said, "What, you want me to post funny videos of cats and dogs and babies doing cute things, and those sickly Hallmark-style statements that urge you to re-post if you also have a mother/father/brother/sister/best friend that you love? There are people dying, starving, and being persecuted out there in the world!" They hesitated and then one of them was forthright enough to say, "Well



something more personal from time to time would make you seem less opinionated or preachy." Oh no! Not opinionated and preachy! I hate those types of people! So I said that I would turn it down a notch or two.

After that, I started to post more pictures of my kids doing interesting things (since my life is so uneventful) and I even wrote up a pretty emotional tribute for my *mamanbosorg* in Iran when she died. I also started to post some cat, dog, and baby videos. But the things that inspired me to initiate posts or comment on other posts were the events of the day, you know, the kind of things that matter outside of our individual spheres and connect us to the larger picture of who we are and what our role is in making our world a better place. I was acting under the assumption that Facebook was actually a great tool for constructive debate. I welcomed comments that challenged me or put forth the opposite viewpoint because I thought it showed that people were *thinking* about important issues and not just wandering the earth in a self-absorbed stupor.

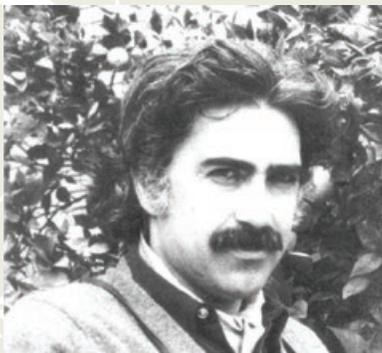
Now I see that people are thinking that political dogma is all I care about or fill my mind with whereas, in reality, it's merely what I would like to discuss on Facebook. And the FiveLabs test, which was based on the words and language I used in my posts, sort of confirmed this. Lest I get too indignant about such a perception of me, I fear that I too have fallen victim to superficial judgment. I neglected to see that just because others did not engage in the debates I wanted to have or enter discussions on world events, this did not mean they were obsessively self-absorbed or that they had no opinion on topical issues of the day. Others simply did not want to express their thoughts in such a public arena.

I can't help but wonder what Freud would say about all this. I mean the man spent a genius life proving that people's personalities lay in probing the *unconscious* mind, so many layers removed from the snapshots of themselves that people choose to display on Facebook and other cyber-world communication. Maybe he would say, step back, get perspective, make space in your world for all types of communication but make sure you give each only the weight it deserves.



## Routes of Persian Literary Modernism

The last time I saw Karim was in Tehran. It was March 2004. A few days later, my family immigrated to the United States. I was eighteen, and passionate about adabiyat. At the dinner table, Rahim, Karim's brother, asked what field I wished to pursue. It was an intimidating question. Karim and Goli were my mom's ideal couple; they were an intellectual powerhouse. I'd hear about their literary translations and interviews. I'd hear about Zamineh, their bookstore and publication house, which remarkably became, in its short life, a regular gathering place for writers and literati in Tehran. In our last meeting, Karim gave me a copy of his newly published translations of Sohrab Sepehri's poetry (d. 1980), *The Lover Is Always Alone* (Sokhan, 2003). "Fani, right?" he asked me, then he signed it: *Elahiye*, Nowruz of 1383. Little did I know that Karim was to leave us only a year and a half later.



Leaving Iran was the beginning of my personal relationship with Karim and Goli, one no longer mediated by my mom, Karim's cousin. In California, I began to read his literary translations: *Gastbi-e bozorg* (The Great Gatsby, Nilufar, 1965), the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam (Souffles, 1988), and selected poems of Sepehri, Forugh Farrokhzad (Mage, 1987), and Abbas Kiarostami (Sokhan,

2005). *As past-o boland-e tarjomeh* (The Ins and Outs of Translation, Nilufar, 1993), his writings on the problem of literary translation, written with his distinct lighthearted humor and unmatched precision, was my introduction to the critical discourse of translation and literary studies. Attempting to emulate his style, I began to break my long sentences and articulate complicated ideas with more clarity. Meanwhile, I had begun writing to Goli. In our correspondences, I'd share my literary preoccupations and would frequently send her writing samples. In her prompt responses, she was brief, blunt, and insightful. Above all, she was demanding. She might as well have signed her emails with: *read, read, read*. She still does. After reading each email, I would look forward to our next conversation. And I still do.

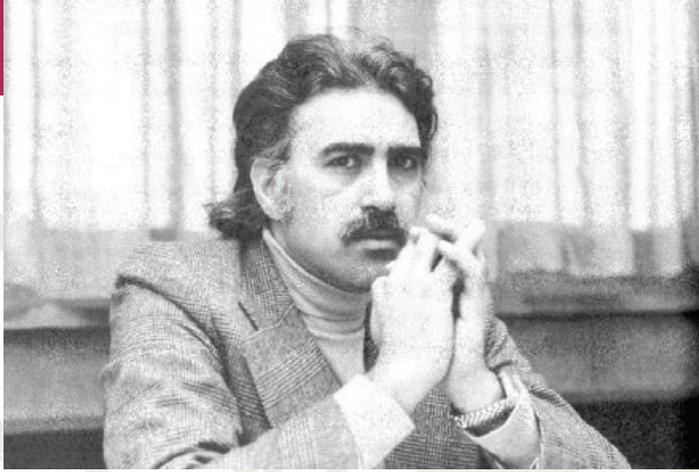
After earning my bachelor's degree in comparative literature, I moved to Latin America to teach English. I returned to the United States to pursue a Ph.D. in Persian literature. In this time, our correspondence only grew. Goli would send me numerous references. Since I have not travelled to Iran for several years now, she has had to mail books as well. It has not been an easy task. Sending books from Iran to Mexico was difficult; she had to mostly send me PDFs. And in the U.S., the Postal Service has been opening all packages from Iran; last time they forgot to reseal the package and two books got permanently lost. Over the years, Goli has generously put me in contact with a wide network of publishers, scholars, critics, and poets in Iran and worldwide. Her vision and kindness have made the distance between California and Iran bearable. Karim and Goli have both mentored me in different ways; they have done all any literary student would need. Having mapped my own routes thus far—Shiraz, San Diego, Mexico, Berkeley—I reflect on how Karim Emami has explored, critiqued, and written on the routes of modernism in the artistic, cinematic, and literary scene of Iran in the 1960s.

In 1962, Karim Emami joined the Tehran-based English language daily, *Kayhan International*. He held a master's degree from the

University of Minnesota in English language and literature, and had previously worked as a photographer, filmmaker, and journalist. *Kayhan International* was read by a marginal number of English-speaking Teheranis as well as foreigners residing and working in the country. During his years at *Kayhan* (1962-68), Karim rose to prominence as a leading cultural observer and literary commentator. He was among the first to translate the work of modernist Persian-language poets and fiction writers to English. A selection of his columns on Persian fiction, poetry, plastic arts, theatre, cinema, and painting has recently been compiled by Goli Emami, edited by Houra Yavari, and published by *Persian Heritage Foundation*. Prefaced by Shaul Bakhash, the collection is entitled *Karim Emami on Modern Iranian Culture, Literature, and Art* (2014); it was launched at the tenth biennial Iranian Studies Conference in Montréal, Canada last August. The publication of this collection is a significant contribution to the cultural, social, and literary studies of contemporary Iran.

The period between the 1940s and 1970s has been characterized by most literary historians as *committed literature*. This is a period during which a new literary culture developed broadly based on the core belief that any work of literature must reflect socio-political preoccupations and champion a particular cause. Although reduced to general trends and tropes by episodic readings, literary commitment—both in theory and practice—is an ongoing and multifaceted debate. It has looked to different sources and traditions, has cultivated different voices and visions, and has had many tools at its disposal. Unsurprisingly, the canonical history of poetic modernism in Persian is intertwined with committed readings. Such readings attempt to locate particular sites of struggle and, consequently, have promoted a limited circle of poets. Most such poets (and critics) have had left-leaning partisan or nonpartisan politics. At worst, such framework marginalizes poets whose oeuvre does not lend itself to committed readings and, at best, it renders them as standalone figures. Contrary to what episodic accounts argue, the literary scene of 1960s Iran is marked by highly diverse and dynamic conversations on a number of compelling and open-ended questions: what does it mean to be a poet? what does it mean to be a politically committed poet? on what levels does poetic modernism rest? The discovery and examination of literary debates counters such reductionist narratives, and the role of the critic in the development of poetic modernism is vital. The critic, his participation and voice, has been underexplored in contemporary Persianate literary culture. The publication of this collection illuminates such a void in Persian literary studies.

In 1963, Karim wrote an introductory article, entitled "*New Horizons in Persian Poetry*," featured here, offering what he called a "limited and arbitrary" sample of contemporary Persian poetry. Discussed in the piece were Nima Yushij (d. 1960), Fereydoon Tavallali (d. 1985), Nader Naderpour (d. 2000), Ahmad Shamlu (d. 2000), Mehdi Akhavan-e Sales (d. 1990), Forugh Farrokhzad (d. 1967), and Sepehri. Apart from Nima, the rest were then in their twenties and thirties, a few years older or younger than Karim. More than half a century later, almost all those young poets are deemed canonical figures of Modern Persian poetry. In his diverse selection, Karim includes a variety of approaches to form, content, music, and rhyme. At the end, he acknowledges that he has left out many other "moderns" in the field. In this short piece, as with all his articles, Karim gives us a glimpse into the world of writers and poets whose unique routes—artistic, ideological, personal—make up a major part of poetic modernism in Iran. It goes without saying that literary modernism is at once a selective and ongoing process; it is neither imported nor exported. The history of poetic modernism in Persianate literary tradition has yet to be written across its wide world of politics and poetics. Illuminating the artistic milieu of 1960s Iran is a positive step in that direction. Karim left *Kayhan* in 1968 for another position: the English-language editor and cultural director at *Franklin Publishing House*. Karim's own routes have taken him across many lands and fields—Kolkata, Shiraz, Tehran, Minnesota, Paris—and with the publication of this collection, it will take him to wherever his new readers may be.



**New Horizons in Persian Poetry | March 20, 1963 | Kayhan International**

What has come to be called “she’r-e now,” or Modern Poetry in Iran, is a little more than a quarter of a century old, and it has had to fight for every day of its existence. For to vie with the luxuriant foliage of Classical Persian Poetry, with more than twelve centuries of continuous growth behind it, is no easy job for a sapling, especially if you have scores of self-appointed foresters ready to axe you down.

Today the sapling has gained height and stature and beauty, even though the old controversy between supporters of the old and the new still continues, and just recently the old foresters put in another burst of energy which might well be their last spurt. For the foresters have already found out for themselves that the new tree is not vulnerable to their old time-honored hack-saws. And more and more youngsters are learning today to appreciate the fresher, freer and less disciplined forms of the new growth.

The decadence of Persian poetry during the last two centuries--when mostly cliché-ridden exercises in metrics were produced--and the first whiffs of Western culture, which some Iranians were able to detect after the turn of the century, motivated the first attempts to break the shackles of traditional versification.

And even though Iraj Mirza and Eshqi in the years before and after the constitutional Movement took Persian Poetry one step nearer its liberation by adopting the simpler language of everyday speech, Nima Yushij (erstwhile Ali Esfandiari) gets the credit for siring “she’r-e now” by successfully ending the long rule of fixed syllable patterns and rhyme.

To the English reader who for centuries has had rhyme-less blank verse with the flexible line structure, this might sound nothing revolutionary, but to many Iranians the new offspring was a monstrosity which had to be killed without a moment’s delay. They simply could not stomach the idea that Persian poetry could survive without the metrics.

Nima, and his disciples argued on the other hand that rigid syllable patterns and equal rhymed lines were more of a handicap than a help. They felt that metrics should be only a tool for the poet, and not his master. Prosody artifices were permissible, never as an end in themselves, but as a means of enhancing the effect the poet desired to create.

The success of Nima’s first “new” poems among certain literary circles in the late thirties was followed by the post Reza shah era of social consciousness and political activity. And Nima’s “liberated” metrics seemed to lend themselves better to the expression of new ideas for the blossoming left-leaning young poets than the old rigid line. It was during these turbulent years that “she’r-e now” became firmly established.

[Note to reader: Karim’s piece had featured several poems. Here, we only include his translation of a poem by Mehdi Akhavan-e Saless, “M. Omid”]

## باغ من

آسمانش را گرفته تنگ در آغوش  
ابر؛ با آن پوستین سرد نمناکش  
باغ بی برگی  
روز و شب تنهاست  
با سکوت پاک غمناکش

سازاو باران، سرودش باد  
جامه اش شولای عربانی است  
ور جز اینش جامه ای باید  
باخته بس شعله زرتار پودش باد

گو بروید یا نروید، هرچه در هر جا که خواهد، یا نمی خواهد  
باغبان و رهگذاری نیست  
باغ نومیدی  
چشم در راه بهاری نیست

گر ز چشمش پرتو گرمی نمی تابد  
ور به رویش برگ لبخندی نمی روید؛  
باغ بی برگی؛ که می گوید که زیبا نیست؟  
داستان از میوه های سرگردونسای اینک خفته در تابوت پست خاک می گوید

باغ بی برگی  
خنده اش خون نیست اشک آمیز  
جاودان براسب یال افشان زردش می چمد در آن  
پادشاه فصل ها پاییز

تهران، خرداد ۵۳۳۱، از مجموعه «زمستان»

## My Garden

A cloud tightly hugs her sky,  
A cloud with a cold damp sheepskin coat;  
A leafless grove,  
Left alone to her sad silence pure  
All night and day.

Rains make her music;  
Winds sing to her in chorus;  
Her garment, the raiment of nakedness;  
And for an over-garment,  
If she need one,  
The winds have woven her a robe  
With flaming threads of gold.

Grow what will, die what won't  
Germinate  
What where can take root.  
No gardener tends her;  
Nor a visitor of despair  
Expects never another spring.

Never a warm look in her eyes,  
Nor ever smiling buds on her twigs,  
She is but a leafless grove.

Yet who dares deny her beauty?  
She tells tales of lofty fruits once kissing the  
sky  
Now lying low in the lowly sepulcher of the  
earth.

A leafless garden,  
Her daughter, only tear-stained blood.  
And...towering above the flowing mane  
of his

Yellow stallion,  
There forever rides  
King of all seasons--  
King Autumn!



You may purchase Karim’s book on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).  
Share your views with Aria: [ariafani@berkeley.edu](mailto:ariafani@berkeley.edu)



## Celebrate and Educate: Nowruz in America

By: Lisa Hildreth, LMFT

Not being a traditionalist or a religious person, I have often struggled with holidays and their traditions. Now that I have a young daughter, it feels as though it is almost expected to participate in every American holiday. This includes the decorating that accompanies each one. Let's face it; it's pretty difficult to say no to an excited, cute little girl who is eager to participate in everything her friends are celebrating.

One holiday I do LOVE preparing for, however, is Persian New Year (*Nowruz*). Perhaps it is because it is something different from what I grew up celebrating. It is particularly fun now that our daughter is old enough to understand Nowruz, the customs, and traditions. Last year we brought in a haft-seen and educated her classroom about Nowruz. A couple of weeks prior, we brought in lentils and showed the class how to grow sabzeh (*adas*). This year, at her new school, we will do the same.

When researching for credible and pertinent resources to present in my daughter's class (educational setting) regarding Nowruz, I did not expect to find much online. I could not have been more wrong. Instead, I found "Celebrating Nowruz: A Resource for Educators" guide written by Harvard University – Center for Middle Eastern Studies (<http://cmes.hmdc.harvard.edu/files/NowruzCurriculumText.pdf>). The curriculum includes: Introduction to Nowruz, an overview of its historical beginnings, Persian cultural roots, rituals/traditions, special foods, and the conclusion of Nowruz (*Sizdeh Bedar*). The guide includes everything an educator or a classroom mom/volunteer needs to educate on Nowruz.

Included are activities to conduct in the classroom, categorized by age/grade level.

- Activity 1: Create a Nowruz Greeting Card
- Activity 2: Grow Your Own *Sabzeh*
- Activity 3: Create a Personal *Haft-Seen* Table
- Activity 4: Color Eggs
- Activity 5: Creative Writing Project

Also included is a list of books on Nowruz ranging from ways to celebrate, cooking for Persian New Year, and the history of Nowruz.

Thanks to the Iranian School of San Diego, the Iranian-American children who attend in San Diego are able to learn and participate in all things that go hand-in-hand with Nowruz. I would challenge all those reading this to get involved in your community and educate those around you on Nowruz. Arrange to do a cultural presentation at your child's school. Ask your neighborhood library if you can set up a haft-seen. Educate those at your workplace by sharing some tasty Nowruz treats...



Margaret Mead, famous American cultural anthropologist, once said: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Be that person. Create change. Bridge a cultural gap. Use the joy of Nowruz to create change and educate!

### Public Announcement



## Sharing is CARE-ing

SDG&E's bill discount program – CARE- offers a 20% energy bill discount

By simply conserving energy we can all reduce our monthly energy bills but for some families it still isn't enough. This month we are CARE-ing by sharing the word about SDG&E's CARE program which offers a minimum 20% discount for qualified families. There are 2 ways to qualify for the CARE discount:

- Total household income
- Participation in a qualifying public assistance program (CalFresh, WIC, and more)

For more information or to apply visit [sdge.com/care](http://sdge.com/care) and remember to share this program with someone you CARE about too.

#epsdgdge

Please go to our **WE CARE San Diego** Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/wecaresandiego> and then "like" and/or "share" on Facebook and your other social media networks.



# Events in San Diego

## Persian Cultural Center

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



If you are in the neighborhood of the following public libraries, please check-out our Nowruz and cultural presentations.

- Carmel Valley Branch Library: 3919 Townsgate Dr. San Diego, CA 92130
- Linda Vista Branch Library: 2160 Ulric Street, San Diego, CA 92111
- Rancho Peñasquitos Branch Library: 13330 Salmon River Rd, San Diego, CA 92129
- Pacific Beach Branch Library: 4275 Cass Street, San Diego, CA 92109
- North University Community Branch Library: 8820 Judicial Dr. San Diego, CA 92122
- College-Rolando Branch Library: 6600 Montezuma Rd, San Diego, CA 92115
- La Jolla/Riford Branch Library: 7555 Draper Ave, La Jolla, CA 92037-4802

### Charshanbe Soori, with HOI and AIAP

Tuesday, March 17, 2015 6:00 to 10:00 pm  
NTC Park, 2455 Cushing Rd., San Diego, CA 92106

### Nowruz Celebration, with AIAP Saturday, March 21, 2015 at Annual Nowruz Celebration

Featuring Persian Dance Academy & DJ Julius & Tehran  
Marriott La Jolla • 4240 La Jolla Village Drive, La Jolla, CA 92037  
6:00pm-12:00am, **RSVP: Tel: 858-552-9355**

**Sizdeh bedar** with AIAP and HOI • March 29, 11AM to 5 PM  
NTC Park, 2455 Cushing Rd., San Diego, CA 92106

### Art Exhibition Open to Public

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

### Movie Nights

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



### Jongeh Farhangi- Feb 13, 2015

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

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

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

### Parsa Pirouzfard workshop Class at IAC at 3-7 pm

April 4, April 11 and April 18 • RSVP: 858-552-9355

### Setar Class by Kouros Taghavi

Registration and info: (858) 717-6389

### Tombak Class by Milad Jahadi

Registration and Info: (858) 735-9634

### Daf Workshop with Ali Sadr,

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

### Santour Class by Arash Dana

Registration and Info: (619) 278-1851

### Piano Class by Farid Afshari

Registration and Info: (858) 349-1913

## Iranian School of San Diego

858-552-9355

### ISSD Nowruz Preparation

Sunday March 8, 2015  
Mt. Carmel High School From 10am-12 pm

### ISSD Nowruz Celebration

Sunday March 15, 2015 from 4:30-7:30 pm  
Mt Carmel High School Auditorium  
Mount Carmel High School  
9550 Carmel Mountain Road • San Diego, CA 92129



## Persian Dance Academy of San Diego

(858) 552-9355 www.pccus.org

## Dollar a Month Fund

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



## Nowruz Bazaar

March 8, 2015 from 10am – 12 pm  
At Mt. Carmel High School

## Association of Iranian-American Professionals (AIAP)

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



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

www.istaucsd.org

## House of Iran

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



## Day of Iran

March 22, 2015 11am – 5pm at Balboa Park



## Iranian-American Scholarship Fund

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



## Mehrgan Foundation

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

## PAAIA

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



## NIAC

National Iranian-American Council  
www.niac.org



## Book Club Meeting

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

## Iranian-American Life Science Network (IALSN)

www.ialsn.org

PCC and AIAP present:  
**Nowruz Celebration**  
 Saturday March 21, 2015  
 La Jolla Marriott Hotel  
 For more information and tickets, please contact PCC (858) 552-9355

Our web site at [www.pccus.org](http://www.pccus.org)

# AIAP Begins to Introduce Distinguished Iranian Professionals in San Diego

Arsalan Dadkhah, Ph.D.

Every month, the Association of Iranian American Professionals (AIAP) in San Diego will be inviting distinguished Iranian professionals as its special guests. The purpose of this action is for AIAP's members and our community to become acquainted with these successful and accomplished individuals.

At the January 2015 meeting, the special guests introduced were:

Ms. Sarah Aghassi of the County of San Diego, and Dr. Massih Tayebi of Biotech Investment Group



Ms. Sarah Aghassi

Ms. Aghassi is Deputy Chief Administrative Officer and group General Manager for the County's Land Use and Environment Group (LUEG).

The group consists of the departments of Public Works; Environmental Health; Planning & Development Services; Agriculture, Weights and Measures; Parks and Recreation; the Air Pollution Control District; Farm and Home Advisor, and San Diego Geographic Information Source. LUEG employs approximately 1,450 people, has 1,700 volunteers, and an annual budget of nearly \$420 million.

LUEG unifies the County's efforts in environmental conservation, environmental land use planning, environmental safety, consumer and public health protection, land use and economic development, and infrastructure development and maintenance. Staff work every day to preserve and enhance the environment, provide recreational opportunities, provide stewardship for many of our most important environmental and public infrastructure assets, encourage responsible development, improve air and water quality, foster economic growth, and ensure compliance with local, state, and federal laws that protect the public's health, safety, and quality of life for current and future generations.



Dr. Massih Tayebi

Dr. Massih Tayebi is employed at Biotech Investment Group. He serves as the Chief Executive Officer and President of Rapid Bridge, as well as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of BridgeWest, LLC.

He co-founded Wireless Facilities, Inc. (WFI), and served as its Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. Dr. Tayebi is also the co-founder and former chairman of several businesses, including Business Corporation International (BCI), Qthink, and MIR3, Inc. He serves as the Chairman of the Board of Skyriver Communications, Inc. He served as Chairman of the Board at Kratos Defense & Security Solutions, Inc. He also serves on the Advisory Board for Shelter Capital Partners and served as Member of the Advisory Board at Prodea Systems, Inc. Prior to founding WFI, he served on the senior faculty of the Engineering Department at the University of Paisley in Great Britain.

Dr. Tayebi was awarded the Ernst and Young 2000 Entrepreneur of the Year in San Diego; the 2000 American Electronics Association High Technology Industry Recognition Award for telecommunications services; and the 1999 Venture Capital Success Story award by the San Diego Venture Group. Dr. Tayebi holds a Ph.D. and Masters of Science degree from the University of Strathclyde in the United Kingdom.

## Note from Marika Sardar, Associate Curator for Southern Asian and Islamic Art at The San Diego Museum of Art

Eid-i Nauruz Mubarak from the San Diego Museum of Art! We hope you will come celebrate Spring and the New Year by attending events for Art Alive, Friday, April 24 – Sunday, April 26, 2015. A beloved tradition for 34 years, Art Alive is The San Diego Museum of Art's signature fundraiser and annual floral exhibition. This year's festivities will feature more than 100 exquisite floral interpretations of the works of art in our collection, and three days of special events.

The Spring also brings a series of exciting exhibitions to the museum. On view will be *Divine Desire: Printmaking, Mythology and the Birth of the Baroque* (March 28 to June 30, 2015), featuring prints of mythological subjects by sixteenth and seventeenth century European artists. For those with an interest in photography, another exhibition will feature the contemporary artist Lalla Essaydi (March 28 to August 4, 2015). Having trained in Paris as a painter, this Moroccan artist considers herself heir to the European academic traditions of the nineteenth century. Essaydi, though, responds quite specifically to the Orientalist paintings of the era, the works that depict Middle Eastern or North African subject matter, and that often focused on scenes in the 'harem,' that legendary place where Europeans believed that Muslim women were freed from the rules of modesty that guided their public behavior. Much of her art seeks to counterbalance these notions, by using the type of imagery familiar to Western audiences, but unsettling it by changing the background, adding Arabic calligraphy, and inserting a strong feminine presence. Lalla Essaydi will speak at the museum on Saturday, March 28th at 10:30 a.m. (free with museum admission).

Coming soon: At the end of June, new collections will go on view in the Persian Art gallery. My next column will explain the conservation work done on the ceramics and manuscripts in the gallery, and will highlight those community members who helped fund this work.

Feel free to contact me with any questions you have about the museum: [msardar@sdmart.org](mailto:msardar@sdmart.org).

Illustration:

Les Femmes du Maroc #1; Chromogenic Print; 2005.

© Lalla Essaydi/Courtesy Jenkins Johnson Gallery, San Francisco and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York.





By Sanaz Majd, MD



## The Measles Controversy

Vaccines must be one of the most miraculous medical inventions of our time – just ask your grandparents and/or great-grandparents who lived in an era when polio and measles were likely threatening their daily lives. The recent measles outbreak in California and 17 other states has triggered some good questions in regards to vaccinations. In order to best protect ourselves and our children, who should get vaccinated with the MMR (Measles Mumps Rubella) vaccine and when? Do you need a booster as an adult? Why aren't parents vaccinating their children? Let's find out.

### How do Vaccines Work?

Vaccines typically protect us from two main bugs, viruses and bacteria. Examples of viruses that we can vaccinate against are polio, hepatitis, chicken pox (or varicella), and measles. And examples of bacteria we currently have vaccines to prevent are pertussis (or "whooping cough," which is currently a declared epidemic in the state of California, among other states), meningococcal disease (causing meningitis), and pneumococcal disease (causing pneumonia).

How do vaccines protect us against these bugs? There are two main types of vaccines:

1. **Particles taken from a killed bug:** Patients are injected with a "protein" that is specific to that particular pathogen, typically a particle taken from the surface of that virus or bacteria. A good example of this is the flu shot – case in point why it's a myth that the flu shot can "cause" the flu. It cannot – the vaccine is devised of a dead viral particle.
2. **Live Attenuated:** Patients are injected with a virus that is technically alive but is modified and weakened so that it does not cause the illness itself but activates the immune system instead. Examples: MMR (measles mumps rubella) vaccine and varicella ("chicken pox") vaccine.

Once a vaccine is administered, the body's immune system recognizes the injected particles as "foreigners" and initiates a defense response. This response culminates in the body's production of special immune system fighters called "antibodies." These antibody "soldiers," created the first time the body is exposed to that foreigner, are easily and much more quickly generated the next time that person is exposed to the same pathogen, thereby rendering a person "immune." That is, the body typically fights off that bug so rapidly that the infected person doesn't have time to feel the symptoms.

### The Controversy Over the Current Measles Outbreak

Since the creation of the MMR vaccine in 1963, measles cases in the U.S. have remained below 100 per year on average...until the past 2-3 years. Just to provide some perspective, 2014 had a highly concerning total of 644 cases. And as for this year, as of Feb 6, 2015, there have been a total of 121 reported cases of measles in 17 states and Washington, D.C., according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The reason this is concerning? It involves only ONE outbreak stemming from Disneyland, and we are only in our second month of the year. It's a reflection of the contagiousness of this serious illness.

### Why the Resurgence of Measles?

There was a publication written in 1998 by a physician in the United Kingdom that erroneously blamed the MMR vaccine as the cause of autism. That paper has since been retracted after having been found

to fraudulently falsify data, and later reports of conflicts of interest were discovered involving its main author. Numerous studies since have failed to reproduce this purported link. But since then, celebrities have gained media attention by supporting these claims. And unfortunately, the public has followed suit.

The attention-seeking news outlets and media love to oversensationalize medical issues and run with it. Has anyone seen the movies "World War Z," "28 Days," or "I Am Legend," as just a few examples? Not to mention the recent Ebola coverage, which has produced, as of February 13, 2015, a total worldwide death count of about 10,800 ever in history—as compared to the flu virus that kills anywhere between 3,000 to 48,000 people a year in the U.S. alone. The media understand that over-hyping any terror-provoking illnesses that threaten our common sense and instill fear in our minds will attract a larger audience. For some celebrities, fame is the goal of reaching out and scaring that larger audience (not to mention increased sales of their books and paraphernalia). Autism is a fear-provoking illness for any parent.

There is no doubt that the reason we are seeing increased rates of measles and pertussis in this country is due to parents' refusal to vaccinate their children. Unfortunately, the public is misinformed about this topic...I don't blame them, though. But I am one of those 97% of physicians who fully vaccinates her children – that's a pretty astounding statistic. If physicians are vaccinating their children, that should tell us something.

Oh, and did I mention that I have a sister with autism?

### Who Needs the MMR Vaccine?

Measles is a highly contagious virus that hospitalizes roughly 1 out of every 3 people infected, and kills 1-2 children per 1,000 infected. It's a concerning disease, no doubt. The good news is that it is preventable...via a vaccine.

But you may be wondering if you are due for a booster? Who needs a vaccine, especially given the rising number of measles cases in our communities? Here are the recommendations:

1. **Children:** All children should receive 2 MMR vaccines, one at age 12 months and a booster at age 4 to 6 years.
2. **Adults:** Adults who are uncertain if they've ever received at least one MMR vaccine in their lifetime, or have never had the measles infection.

### Who Does Not Need the MMR Vaccine?

1. Adults born before 1957 in the U.S. (they tend to have a natural immunity due to the prevalence of measles at that time).
2. Adults who know they received at least one MMR vaccine in their lifetime.
3. Anyone previously infected with lab-confirmed measles.
4. Pregnant women.
5. Anyone with positive blood titers for the measles antibody in the past (no need to check titers before vaccinations, as it's recommended to simply get the vaccine rather than the blood test if you are unsure of your protection status).

For the recommended schedule of vaccines for both children and adults, please visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/easy-to-read/index.html>

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



Traditionally at Nowruz time, a special menu is prepared for the first meal after the arrival of the New Year, including Sabzee Polo and Mahi (herb rice with white fish, *Peyk* 114); Kookoo Sabzee (fresh herb quiche/soufflé, *Peyk* 108); and Ash e Reshteh (noodle and herb soup). These dishes all represent earth, Mother Nature, and the arrival of Spring. At this special time of the year, in celebration of Nowruz and the arrival of Spring, the staff of Noush-e-Jan wish you a Happy New Year, Happy Eating in good health ...Nous-e-Jan!

## Ash-e-Reshteh (Thick Noodle-Legume Soup): From cdKitchen

### Ingredients:

**Ash:** 1/4 cup dry red kidney beans, soaked; 1/4 cup dry navy beans, soaked; 1/4 cup dry chickpeas, soaked; 3 onions, finely sliced; 3 tablespoons oil; 2 teaspoons salt; 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper; 1 teaspoon turmeric; 10 cups water; 1/2 cup lentils; 1 cup beef broth; 1/2 cup chives or scallions, coarsely chopped; 1/2 cup dill weed, chopped; 1/2 cup parsley, coarsely chopped; 2 cups spinach (fresh or frozen), chopped; 1 beet, peeled and chopped in 1/2 inch pieces; 1/2 pound flat egg noodles or Persian noodles (Reshteh); 1 tablespoon flour; 1 cup liquid kashke or sour cream, OR 1/4 cup wine vinegar

**Gheimh Garnish:** 1/4 pound beef, cut in 1/2 inch cubes; 1 small onion, chopped; 3 cloves garlic, crushed; 2 tablespoons oil; 1/2 cup water; 2 tablespoons yellow split peas; 1 teaspoon tomato paste; 1/4 teaspoon saffron, dissolved in 1 tablespoon hot water; 1/2 teaspoon salt

**Mint Garnish:** 1 onion, finely sliced; 3 cloves garlic, crushed; 1 tablespoon oil; 1 teaspoon dried mint flakes

### Directions:

**Ash:** In a large pot, brown onions in oil. Add salt, 1/4 tsp. pepper, and turmeric. Pour in water and add kidney beans, navy beans, and chickpeas. Cover and simmer 45 minutes. Add lentils and broth. Cook 35 minutes. Add scallions, dill, parsley, spinach, and beet. Stir occasionally and cook 20 minutes or until done. Correct seasoning (add the rest of the pepper if needed) and add more water if too thick. Add noodles and flour, and cook until noodles are done--about 10 minutes. If using kashke or sour cream, set aside a heaping Tbsp. for garnish. Stir 2 Tbsp. of soup into remaining sour cream. Stir this mixture slowly into soup. Reheat just before serving, adding more water if it's too thick.

**Gheimh:** About 1/2 hour before serving, prepare gheimh garnish. Brown meat, onion, and garlic in oil. Stir in water and split peas. Cover and cook 20 minutes over low heat. Add tomato

paste, saffron, and salt. Simmer covered for 10 minutes.

**Mint:** While gheimh is simmering, prepare mint garnish. Brown onion and garlic in oil. Remove from heat. Crush mint flakes in hand and stir into onion mixture. Pour soup into tureen, garnish with gheimh and mint garnish and reserved sour cream by floating them on top.

In preparation for Nowruz, many families have the tradition to gather and bake together and enjoy getting ready for the arrival of the New Year. Here is a simple recipe for our famous Walnut cookie from *Food for Life* by Najmeh Batmangelij.

**Walnut Cookies (Nan-e-gerdui):** Makes 20 pieces; Prep time 30 min; Cooking time – 15-20 min.

**Ingredients:** 5 egg yolks; 1/4 tsp vanilla extract; 2 Tbsp. ground pistachios for decoration; 3/4 cup confectioners' sugar; 2 cups chopped walnuts

### Directions

1. In a mixing bowl, beat egg yolks until creamy. Add the confectioners' sugar, vanilla, and walnuts. Beat thoroughly for a few minutes with a wooden spoon.
2. Preheat oven to 300 F. Grease a cookie sheet. Drop batter by the teaspoonful onto the sheet, leaving about 2 1/2 inches between cookies. Decorate each one with ground pistachios.
3. Bake 15 to 20 minutes in the center of the oven. Remove the cookies from the oven and cool. Lift the cookies off the sheet and arrange on a serving dish.

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# Healthy Eyes

By: Arash Mozayan, MD

The voice of my grandmother still rings in my ears, “drink this, it’s good for your eyes,” as she handed me a cup of fresh carrot juice almost 30 years ago. When asked to write this article, I couldn’t stop thinking about how deeply our culture is linked to a necessity to always learn more and better ways to stay healthy. Particularly we are concerned with the health of our eyes.

The role of a scientist is to always ask questions, act as a skeptic in the face of all knowledge presented. I will provide you here with some of the things we are all told growing up in a Persian family, and try to link those pieces of advice to scientific knowledge.

I will now divide the rest of this article into a section covering the Top 5 Tips to keep your eyes healthy and the second part will discuss 2 of the leading causes of blindness in our community, diabetes and macular degeneration.

## Top 5 tips for eye health!

### Run, Forrest, Run

Myopia, or nearsightedness, has become an epidemic in the world. We are all stuck to our phones, iPads, and it seems the highest amount of calories we burn is while watching a football or basketball game, instead of going out and playing ourselves. Physical activity has become less and less present in our lives. The best advice I give to parents when they ask what they can do for their kids is: “Drop the iPad, go to the park or the beach and run/play, and take in some fresh air.” There is something about not having to concentrate at a near distance for long periods of time that is postulated to decrease the progression of myopia.

Myopia in Iran affects about a third of the population, far from the 80% noted in high school or college students in China. Although not as alarming as our Chinese counterparts, the increase rate of myopia all throughout the world appears to be related to changes in our environment. A plethora of studies are looking at the reasons behind why our changes in activity cause a growth of the eye that translates into myopia. In the meantime, exercise more and go to the park with your family—it will also decrease your risk for diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease, all known diseases that can affect your eyes.

### Eat natural, eat fruits

Recently, I was at a conference where Dr. Robert Lustig, a health guru and physician at UCSF, who in my view is one of the strongest voices in the health media, talked about the importance of choosing what we eat and staying away from foods high in sugar or that are processed. In this conference for eye doctors, he made the link between what we eat and the metabolic syndrome or as he calls it “mitochondria overload syndrome,” and how by making simple changes in our diet we can improve our general health, including our eyes.

More specifically, eating a diet rich in dark-leafy vegetables, such as kale, spinach, or collard greens, and foods high in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon or tuna, is known to be beneficial to your eyes. Oranges, lemons, and berries are rich in vitamin C, which plays an important role as an antioxidant in decreasing your chances of getting macular degeneration or cataracts. My



grandmother might not have known that carrots are rich in beta-carotene, but research has shown that it is critical for night vision. Any Persian will be happy to learn that eye doctors’ nut of choice is the pistachio, as it contains lutein and zeaxanthin which are protective for your retina and important for patients at risk for macular degeneration. I still remember my parents sending me to school with pockets filled with pistachios!

### Stop smoking

Half a century after the landmark Surgeon General’s report on the risk of smoking, tobacco smoking-related diseases continue to cause the death of more than half a million adults in the U.S. annually. Smoking has been linked to an increased risk of macular degeneration and cataracts, in addition to having detrimental effects on your general health, ranging from loss of endurance while exercising to lung cancer. Smoking will also worsen dry eyes as it is an irritant, so if you suffer from dry eyes syndrome, next time you’re in a room with a smoker politely ask them to stop smoking and tell them they might run the risk of getting healthier.

### Wear sunglasses

We are blessed with eternal sunshine here in California. However, it is important to protect ourselves from UV radiation, which can damage tissues of the eye and also worsen cataracts. UV radiation can cause a pterygium, which is a growth of abnormal tissue from the conjunctiva, the white part of the eye, onto the cornea, the transparent layer that holds most of the refractive power of the eye. Sunglasses will also provide a protection against evaporation of the tears that are coating the surface of the eye to keep it lubricated and decrease dry eye symptoms. I recommend all my patients wear sunglasses that block 99% or 100% of UV radiation.

### Take a break from the computer

Long periods of computer work will worsen dry eyes as we don’t blink as often when we are concentrating. It can also cause eyestrain or headaches and the inability to focus at a distance. I recommend for every 20 minutes of computer work to look away at the distance for 20 seconds, and for every 50 minutes of computer work to go for a 5-minute walk. Not only will it provide a break for your eyes, but it will also pump some blood throughout your body and decrease neck or back pain.

## The window to the soul...

The retina is the layer all the way in the back of the eye that translates light energy from our outside world into electrical and chemical energy that the brain can understand to see. This layer that is about twice as thick as the diameter of a human hair can be affected in about all diseases of the human body. The poet talks of the eye as “the window to the soul.” I like to think of the eye as “the window to the human body” as most diseases can express themselves in the retina. Eye doctors in many situations are the first ones who can diagnose systemic diseases and refer patients to internists for further evaluation, which is why it is important to visit your eye doctor even if you don’t have any eye problems just as a baseline. Two of the most common diseases that affect our community are diabetic retinopathy and macular degeneration.

### Diabetic retinopathy

Diabetes is the leading cause of blindness in working-age Americans. One of my relatives lost sight due to diabetes when I was a child and the way it affected my family happened to inspire me to become a retina surgeon so others wouldn’t have to face what my relative went through. Unfortunately, diabetes is a disease that all too often is diagnosed after it has caused damage to several organs. The good news is that we now have medications and technology that have revolutionized our field and can restore vision in many cases that were deemed lost in the past. A family of “miracle drugs” that we now use is called anti-vascular endothelial growth factor (anti-VEGF) drugs. They act by decreasing the levels of VEGF in the eye, improving vascular stability and decreasing the growth of abnormal blood vessels that can bleed inside the eye and severely affect vision. In addition to these drugs, lasers can be used in the treatment of diabetic retinopathy. If you have been diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes, you should get a dilated eye exam at the time of your diagnosis, and for people with Type 2 diabetes, the recommendation is for a dilated eye exam within 5 years of your diagnosis.

### Macular degeneration

Macular degeneration has now become the most common cause of blindness in people over the age of 60. Macular degeneration is divided into 2 main categories.

“Dry” macular degeneration: mainly caused by deposits of cellular debris under the retina, which can progress to loss of photoreceptor cells (the cells that catch the light in the retina) and thus cause loss of vision.

“Wet” macular degeneration: caused by new abnormal blood vessels that grow under or in the retina and which can leak or bleed and cause swelling of the retina and ultimately loss of the photoreceptor cells which can cause loss of vision.

Physical activity and a diet rich in antioxidants are crucial in the prevention of macular degeneration. The Age-Related Eye Disease Study (AREDS), a study sponsored by the National Eye Institute established that the intake of vitamins C, E, lutein, zeaxanthin, and zinc could decrease the risk of developing advanced macular degeneration.

Finally, I would like to wish all of you a happy new year filled with joy, inner peace, health, and happiness. Let this spring season be a renewal of a healthier you and don’t forget to go see your local eye doctor for a comprehensive eye exam regularly!

Arash Mozayan, MD is a Vitreoretinal Surgeon and Founder Eyeinformations.com

## 8 foods and drinks that will soothe spring allergies:

From MSN Healthy Living

### Turmeric

This golden spice is packed with anti-inflammatory properties, and has been used in Ayurvedic medicine for thousands of years.



### Red bell peppers

Delicious bell peppers are packed with inflammation-fighting vitamin C, as well as immunity-supporting carotenoids.



### Fish

“Fish contain omega-3 fatty acids which are the best types of oils for inflammation,” wellness expert Dr. Nicola McFadzean Ducharme of Restor Medicine tells us. Studies have suggested that the fats in fish are excellent for immune boosting.



### Red grapes

These sweet treats are a great source of resveratrol, an antioxidant that may help reduce inflammation.



### Olives

“The best anti-inflammatory foods are ones rich in healthy fats,” Dr. Ducharme tells us. Olives are also packed with immune-boosting properties, and some medical practitioners even recommend using olive leaf extract as a supplement.



### Avocados

It is thought that avocados’ extremely wide range of carotenoids is one important factor in its anti-inflammatory benefits.



### Kale smoothies

“Eating plenty of greens in particular, but all fruits and vegetables, with lean meats and healthy fats gives the body the best ingredients for immune health,” Dr. Ducharme says. Try a kale smoothie with tofu, almond butter, or yogurt for a protein and vegetable boost.



### Honey-ginger tea

Just loosening your phlegm with some warm tea may help, but try a mix of fresh sliced ginger and honey for a little teason filled with the very potent anti-inflammatory





## Second Biennial Persian Language Educators' Symposium

May 23-24, 2015

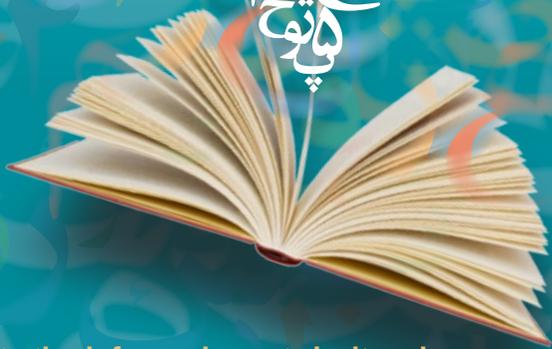
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دومین گردهمایی آموزشگران زبان فارسی

۲۳ و ۲۴ ماه می ۲۰۱۵

برکلی - کالیفرنیا

چهارشنبه سوری  
سیزده بدر



Design: Saeed Jalali

### Registration is free and open to heritage language educators

The second biennial Symposium brings together Persian language educators who teach heritage speakers from pre-school through high school.

To Register: [www.iranianalliances.org/community/language-symposium](http://www.iranianalliances.org/community/language-symposium)

### Organizing Committee:

Chicago Persian School, Golestan Center for Language Immersion and Cultural Education, Berkeley, Pardis for Children, New York, Iranian School of San Diego



### 2015 Iranian Events

#### Charshanbe Soori and Sizdeh bedar

NTC Park

2455 Cushing Rd., San Diego, CA 92106

#### Charshanbe Soori

Tuesday, March 17, 2015 6:00 to 10:00 pm

#### Sizdeh bedar

March 29, 11AM to 5 PM

کانون فرهنگی ایرانیان، خانه ایران وانجمن متخصصین ایرانی

### چهارشنبه سوری

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از ساعت ۱۰ صبح

NTC Park

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April 2016

کارگاه بازیگری

پارسا پیروزفر

در

سن دیگو

در

کانون فرهنگی ایرانیان سن دیگو



info: (858) 552-9355

[persianculturalcenter@yahoo.com](mailto:persianculturalcenter@yahoo.com)

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کلاس ها در روزهای

شنبه ۴ آوریل،

شنبه ۱۱ آوریل و

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از ساعت ۳ تا ۷ بعد از ظهر برگزار می شود



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