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Country Before All Else...

Let me begin by asking the most important question facing us for now. Have you registered to vote? If not, please do. This could be the most important voting cycle in our lifetime and so much depends on each individual vote. Be it national or local. If you are a citizen of this nation, voting is a fundamental responsibility. It is the best way to exercise our rights in recognition of our democracy. We should not take such a privilege for granted, for many people have fought and given their lives to preserve this right, and many around the world still do not have it.

Without getting into the hot heat of political debates or candidate endorsement, which has no place in this publication, we are still responsible to bringing to the attention of our community the importance of voting for the future of this nation that we have chosen to be a part of. To care about its future and prosperity. To be knowledgeable about individuals and issues at hand. And the most important at this time is to go to the voting booth and cast a vote.

In the history of United States, the motto has always been Country Before All Else. Many have sacrificed their lives to uphold this motto, and many have shown great patriotism regardless of party affiliations. I received the following through an email and thought of sharing it with all of you regardless of your party affiliation. It might help somewhat to cool the rhetoric and let us focus on the importance of what should come first.

“Your success now is our country’s success. I am rooting hard for you,” “wrote George H. W. Bush to Bill Clinton on the morning of the latter’s inauguration.

It is traditional for an outgoing president to write an Oval Office letter for his successor. The contents of these missives tend to remain secret, but Bush’s well-wishes to Clinton in 1993 were revealed by Brad Meltzer, author of the novel “Inner Circle.” Bush sent Meltzer a copy of his letter to Clinton.

Brad Meltzer told ABC News that Bush’s words are evidence of his strength of character: “What I love about the letter is here is the following moment where George Bush has every reason to hate Bill Clinton. It is the end of a bitter campaign and instead what George Bush does in this moment is he puts our country above his own personal feelings,” he said.

Here is Bush’s letter to Clinton, reproduced in its entirety via ABC:

Dear Bill,

January 20, 1993

When I walked into this office just now I felt the same sense of wonder and respect that I felt four years ago. I know you will feel that too.

I wish you great happiness here. I never felt the loneliness some Presidents have described.

There will be very tough times, made even more difficult by criticism you may not think is fair. I’m not a very good one to give advice; but just don’t let the critics discourage you or push you off course.

You will be our President when you read this note. I wish you well. I wish your family well.

Throughout the years until now these two Presidents have remained great friends with mutual respect for each other, as well as the work that needed to be done for the benefit of the nation. This should be the thought as to who could and would in any capacity, serve this nation and its people with honor, respect and dignity. Who could and would build a strong future for generations that are ahead. Who could and would make us proud to hold our heads up high to say who we are and where we are from.

PLEASE VOTE…it is about us, our children and generations that will follow. It is about the future of this country.
PCC board of directors holds its board meeting every second Wednesday of the month, the last two taking place on July 13 and August 10, 2016.”

IRANIAN AMERICAN CENTER NEWS
Kourosh Taghavi and his setar students performed a Setar Recital on the IAC stage on June 25, 2016. Kourosh Taghavi and his 11 students put on a show of talent and technique for a full house of a very enthusiastic audience. They played a variety of pieces of different “goosheh” and “dastgah” of Persian classical music.

Sibarg Ensemble
Sibarg Ensemble went on the stage at IAC on August 13, 2016 with a Persian/Jazz Improvisation. Kourosh Tghavi, setar, Nilofar Shiri, kamancheh, Kyle Motl, double bass, Josh Charney, piano, and Hesam Abedini, vocalist. The program was met with a warm reception by the audience.

Docunight
This is a coordinated event to simultaneously present documentary movies by Iranian filmmakers or on Iran related subjects throughout 20 cities across U.S. and Canada on the first Wednesday of the month.
“Alex and Ali” by Malachi Leopold went on screen at IAC for July. The August screening was dedicated to the memory of the great director Abbas Kiarostami with “Abbas Kiarostami: the Art of Living” by Fergus Daly and Pat Collins and “Roads of Kiarostami” by the acclaimed director himself.

Film and Discussion Group
The group skipped its July screening in celebration of the 4th of July holiday.
“A House Built on Water” directed and produced by Bahman Farmanara in 2001, was the movie selection of August 2016. The movie which is Farmanara’s second post revolution production is also the second title in a trilogy on death from the director. The movie enjoys a powerhouse of cast from the young to veteran actors of Iranian cinema and won a number of prizes at the 20th Fajr Film Festival including Best Picture, Best Actor in a Leading Role, Best Actor in a Supporting Role, Best Actress in a Supporting Role and Best Costume Design. The program started with an introduction by Milad Jahadi, proceeded to the screening
Earn Energy Savings

Featured Programs: Energy Management Tools, My Account, Reduce Your Use Rewards & Summer Tips

Article

Earn Energy Savings
According to a state report, there could be a need for greater than normal energy conservation across Southern California on as many as 14 days this summer, mostly in the Los Angeles area. Since the power grid is interconnected throughout the state, SDG&E customers may be asked to help by reducing their energy use. Sign up to get an alert when conservation is needed. Review your information and sign up for alerts at sdge.com/myaccount.

Looking for other ways to conserve and earn energy savings?

• Set some Olympic-sized goals for your home! SDG&E's Energy Management Tools provide details about your home's energy use to build an energy-saving action plan that's suitable for you and your home. https://youtu.be/aoberE17xV4

• During these dog days of summer, learn about SDG&E's My Account and unleash the energy savings! My Account is your one-stop shop for your household's energy information and services. Even if you're not paying your bill online, you can still use My Account to see a forecast of your energy bill, manage your energy use, schedule service appointments and much more. If you're not already a My Account user, it's really easy to sign up. Be sure to have your latest SDG&E bill handy and go to: http://www.sdge.com/myaccount.

• It's too hot, too hot...earn bill credits by saving electricity during certain high-use times with Reduce Your UseSM Rewards! Enroll in alerts and then save enough electricity between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. on a Reduce Your UseSM Rewards day and may earn credits on your SDG&E bill. Also, Single-family homes with wi-fi and central A/C may qualify for a free ecobee™ smart thermostat. This thermostat allows you to control your thermostat remotely through your mobile device or computer. Find out more at http://www.sdge.com/reduceuse.

• Some like it hot but if you don't here are some quick tips to save on cooling & other energy costs w/these 1-minute videos at http://sdge.com/tip-videos!

#espsdge

Jong Report
Jong Farhangi has been a monthly program on the IAC stage for the last two years. It, as any other new program would, took some time to find its own audience and followers, and find it absolutely did. Jong is a live variety show with emphasis on art and culture, the program guests use Jong’s podium to share their views on a variety of art and culture subjects with an eager audience. We are happy to claim the IAC floor does not fail to pique the followers’ interest and the speakers’ enthusiasm.

San Diego Jong Farhangi- July 8, 2016
The July program hosted by Nooshin Khorsandian and Saeid Noori Bushehri opened with its first featured guest, Los Angeles author Fariba Sedighim. Fariba Sedigghim has been published numerous times before with about forty titles of short stories and children's books to her name. This program was dedicated to a discussion and book signing of the author’s first novel “Liora”.

The second part of the program was dedicated to a music performance by Hesam Abedini, Niloofar Shirí, and Josh Charney of UCSD. Followed with a discussion by Hesam Abedini about Fusion and its particular application in Persian music. The program ended with a Q&A session.

San Diego Jong Farhangi- August 12, 2016
The August program was hosted by Reza Khabazian and presented in three parts. Part one was a discussion with the acclaimed author Naser Shahinpar about authorship in general, his ideas, and muses and in particular his new novel “Daricheyi Roo Be Dirooz” or “A Portal to the Past™”. The book is an effort to shed a light on the Iran’s post-revolution generation, its social framework, questions, and decisions. The discussion then took a turn towards Iranian history which is Shahinpar’s passion. For the second part, Nazanin Ghazyari, Reza Khabazian, and Mahmoud Behrouzian, play director, stage-read a piece of the novel for the audience.

Local musician, Kourosh Taghavi took to the stage for the third part of the program and treated the audience to his music while Reza Khabazian recited poems written by himself and also the incomparable Rumi. The program closed with a Q&A session.

“Can’t pay, Won’t pay”
Persian cultural center held a stage reading of “Can’t pay, Won’t pay” by Dario Fo on July 9th, 2016, A play translated and directed by local artist, Mahmoud Behrouzian. Mahvash Ajir, Mohammad Bazari, Ali Pirouzian, Mahmoud Pirouzian, Milad Jahadi, and Rana Salimi reading the play. After the reading, the audience members were invited to join in a moderated post-reading discussion. A second reading of this play will be held at IAC on September 11, 2016.

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Persian’s Literary Career in India

Between the eleventh century and the middle of the nineteenth century, Persian established itself as one of the Indian subcontinent’s dominant literary languages. In the next two issues, we will examine the political, social, and cultural forces that rendered Persian’s literary career possible in India. A little over 180 years have passed since the English Education Act of 1835 replaced Persian with English as the language of political administration. However, there are still ongoing questions about the extent to which Persian created a distinct identity in South Asia (from its counterpart in Iran and Central Asia), how it interacted with other literary cultures in the region, and why it began losing ground in the nineteenth century.

The story of Persian’s cultural and political career in South Asia has been told time and again, primarily through the problematic metaphor of rise and fall. Many previous accounts have attempted to trace a single factor for the emergence of Persian and its “sudden decline” in the course of almost a millennium. I will focus less on locating a precise historical moment to mark the “beginning” or the “end” of this prolific and productive career, but rather highlight the forces that sustained it and eventually displaced it at the expense of vernacular literary cultures such as Bengali and Urdu that continue to interact with Persianaire genres, models of historiography and critical lexicon in what can be characterized as Persian’s ongoing afterlife in India.

New Persian, written in the Arabic alphabet, emerged as the language of local polities in Khorasan (in the Tahirid, Saffarid, and Samanid empires) that broadly subscribed to the ‘Abbāsid political ethos. Having appropriated new models of historiography and political lexicon from Arabic, in addition to Persian’s distinct literary lineage that articulated forms of kingship local to West, Central, and South Asia, New Persian was now equipped to accommodate the needs of Turko-Afghan military expansions in Eastern Islamicate lands (Khorasan and beyond). For instance, the composite genealogy of the Shahnameh, produced in Khorasan, inspired by pre-Islamic and perhaps Indian kings’ patronage of allegorical and historical texts, not only echoed the epic of ʿMahābhārata but also facilitated its circulation and appropriation in the South Asian contexts for centuries. The spread of Turko-Persianate polities such as Ghaznavids and Ghurids made preexisting connections between West, Central, and South Asia stronger and, as we see later during the Mughal period, Persian gained even greater circulatory power and resonated well beyond the realm of elites and courtly circles.

By the eleventh century, Persian had reached the frontier of Punjab during the Ghaznavid empire and was a language of literary importance as evident in the oeuvre of such poets as Masʿud Saʿd Salman. Following the Mongol invasion of Iran, even more Persian-speaking elites and later secretaries moved to South Asia. Trained in Islamic jurisprudence and theology—and versed in Persian—the secretarial class rendered itself vital to the political aspirations of Delhi sultans in the form of diplomats and bureaucratic administrators. In the thirteenth century, South Asia was a culturally composite region characterized by tension between new and old Muslim converts and émigrés from the Afghan and Punjab frontiers. In the presence of Arabic and Turkish, each with its well-defined roles, the Iranian and Central Asian secretarial class extended Persian’s function and popularity in South Asia as a valuable language to the Sultanate. The Delhi Sultanate (1210–1526), a series of Turco-Afghan polities that ruled northern India, laid the foundation for the integration of Persian into non-Muslim or émigrés communities. For instance, late Lodis (r. 1451–1526) began making Persian training available to Hindus who, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, produced distinguished munshi (secretaries) and poets. Overall, in South Asia, Persian found a receptive environment, particularly among medieval elites whose engagement with the language formed networks of affinity not contingent on religion, ethnic, or linguistic identity, but primarily by facility and training in Persian and access to artistic patronage.

In addition to the said connections that rendered Persian a potent vehicle for political administration and literary production, the migration of Persian-speaking Sufis was also a major factor that bolstered Persian’s presence in India. Built in the wake of Ghaznavid rule over Punjab, Sufis established their centers by taking anchor in the mystical routes of South Asia and where they found a welcoming and receptive audience. Muslim mystics extended the domain of Persian well beyond courtly and elite circles, as much of the Sufi literary production emerged in vernacular languages at this time. Using such vernaculars as Punjabi or Hindavi, Sufis appropriated theological concepts that previously may have exclusively circulated in the medium of Persian and Arabic. Qawwali, sama‘, and other forms of devotional practices emerged in South Asian vernaculars but incorporated Persian lexicon and aesthetics. On the one hand, Persian had extended well beyond its initial administrative strongholds to become an important medium for literary and religious composition in non-urban areas and enjoyed greater contact with South Asian vernaculars, but its status as a non-madri zabān (mother tongue in Urdu) for the overwhelming majority of South Asians who engaged with Persian on different levels remained the same, arguably even at the height of its career in the seventeenth century.

When Babur (r. 1526-1530), the founder of the Mughal empire, crossed Amu Darya in the sixteenth century and invaded northern India, he—and, later, his successor Humayun (r. 1530-1555)—faced an already established Persian literary and political heritage. Babur, a self-fashioned Chaghatay-language poet who drew his lineage to Timur (r. 1370-1405), arguably had little choice but to invest in Persian at the expense of his mother tongue (as well as local variations of Hindavi, whose literary lineage was not deemed “prestigious” enough by the Mughals). The decision may have been made for early Mughals as far as the language of their empire was concerned; that said, their investment in the language proved to be a turning point for the expansion and
flourishing of Persianate literary culture. By the time Akbar (r. 1556-1605) came to power in 1556, the Mughal emperor had now forged a distinctly South Asian lineage. Akbar spoke a variant of Hindavi in addition to Persian and some Chaghatay. His educational reform, the primary medium of which was Persian, strengthened preexisting patterns of patronage, circulation, and reception. Akbar’s successors built on his imperial policies. By the seventeenth century, Persian had extended well beyond its initial administrative strongholds to become an important medium for literary and religious composition, historiography, and translation.

Persian’s institutional support was not limited to the Mughals or northern India, but extended to many other local kingdoms, primarily the kingdom of Deccan. Seventeenth-century South Asia prized competitions both between empires and literary circles. As other local kingdoms aimed to assimilate the elite literary culture of Mughals with their own by commissioning manuscripts (and many other art forms) in Persian and South Asian vernaculars (Braj, Bengali, etc.), the Mughal response was to elevate its Persian register by commissioning dictionaries that sanctioned the Iranian parlance as the only “proper” and “prestigious” variant. The Mughal project to keep Persian from mixing with vernaculars failed in many ways, a topic to which we will return. But the main point here is that the Mughal affluence and its rivalry with local kingdoms had a far reaching impact on the reception of Persian, and other literary cultures such as Brajbhasha, outside of the court. For instance, the existence of literary salons, musha’ere or poetic gatherings, standalone bookstalls, Sufi circles, and literary and language tutorials marked an environment wherein Persian operated outside dynastic courts.

Given its deep integration in the social and political cultures of South Asia, it is unsurprising that Indo-Persian forged its own distinct identity from its counterpart in the Safavid empire. Such distinction took form in spite of Persian’s limitations in South Asia, namely its direct association with Mughal sovereignty, its imagined sense of local authenticity in spite of Persian’ tranethnicity which privileged the Iranian parlance, and more importantly its status as a mother tongue of all but a few pockets of people in India. On a linguistic level, Persian, perhaps in spite of Mughal efforts, gained a distinctly South Asian parlance. It interacted with and borrowed words, genres, and expressions from South Asian vernaculars. There are a number of common terms from this period that point in the direction of this distinct linguistic identity: shiveh-ye Hendi (the Indian manner/way), este ‘mal-e Hendi (the Indian usage), and many others.

In order to further outline this Indo-Persian identity, we must answer a simple yet complex question: how does South Asia change Persian? Do we accept the narrative that the coming of Sufis and Mughals (both of whom are preoccupied with Persian) signals a rupture from an orthodox and juridic understanding of Islam and articulates a nonsectarian and humanistic idiom capable of accommodating the ethnic diversity of South Asia, a transition famously articulated by Muzaffar Alam as jahandari (serving the empire and its subjects) as opposed to dindari (serving the faith). This paradigm may crumble under the critical interrogation of such questions as: what are the limitations of Persian as the inclusionary articulation of a softer and less sectarian Islam? What are the terms of belonging to Sufi circles according to their orthodox views and practices?

The answers to such questions may remain inconclusive, but the South Asian intervention in the development of a distinctly Indo-Persian literary culture is visible in the cultivation of particular genres, such as Akhlaq (ethics), preoccupied with debating societal norms and practices. This genre, among others, gained greater attention and circulation during this period. In other words, South Asia had rendered Persian, once used primarily as a language of trade and bureaucratic record-keeping, a medium for the articulation of numerous genres, forms, and debates. In that sense, Indo-Persian expanded the definition of literary. Different faces of this unique literary culture are seen in cross-genre interactions between Persian and South Asian vernaculars. For instance, Persian has informed the formation of devotional modes and devices of Punjabi (performance, qawwali and sama’).

No discussion of Indo-Persian will be complete without considering the poetics of taze-gu’i (Fresh speech), a literary movement that actively canonized Timurid Persian poetry and forged its own poetics of modernism. The proliferation of taze-gu’i has been attributed to a transregional sense of newness. By the end of Akbar’s reign, a sense of “epochal change” echoed well beyond Mughal India. The arrival of the Islamic calendar’s new millennium (1591-92 CE) was all but one part of a multifaceted concept of millenarianism that took form in the post- Timurid period. Literary works of this period embody this newness. The formal innovation of taze-gu’i was a dynamic response to such global developments on the one hand and to the anxieties and criteria of Timurid critics and poets on the other. The poetics of taze-gu’i much later became a site for the denunciation of Indo-Persian literature as a whole in late nineteenth- century Iran and at the hands of such nationalistic scholars as Mohammad Taqi Bahar (d. 1951), who coined the malignant term sabk-e Hendi (the Indian style). The decline of Persian and the disintegration of the Persianate world is a topic to which we will turn.

To conclude, it is no easy task to identify all of the characteristics of Indo-Persian. We have looked at linguistic changes, the proliferation of dictionaries and genres and texts, and the formation of a Persian literary canon at the hands of South Asian poets (or Afghan and Iranians under Indian patronage). But what ties it all together? Since its emergence in West Asia in the eleventh century, New Persian was adopted by hundreds of thousands of South Asians, whether or not affiliated with the court, and regardless of their mother tongue or faith. In many ways, this is the story of a literary culture that comes to a region (South Asia), brings a stock set of idioms and lexicon that dovetails well with its local forms and traditions, and eventually gains a cosmopolitan disposition that allows it to participate in different local and transregional conversations. In the next issue, we will examine Persian’s long afterlife in South Asia.

Share your views with Aria: ariafani@berkeley.edu
Beyond Shahs of Sunset: Second-Generation Iranians

By: Leily Rezyani

An Iranian-American Huffington Post journalist declared, “they’re not the kind of people most Iranian-Americans want representing our community.” Similarly, The New York Times affirmed those claims by saying, “one really unfortunate thing about Shahs of Sunset is the way it exploits, and will in turn amplify, a previously localized phenomenon: the longstanding stereotyping of... Iranian-Americans as vulgar, materialistic show-offs who don’t fit in among... supposedly more cultured elites.” The popular Bravo show, Shahs of Sunset, documents the lives of a group of Iranian-American friends as they juggle between work and social lives, while dealing with family and Iranian traditions. However, how does the Shahs of Sunset’s practice of cultural traditions affect the reputation and pride of Iranians, specifically second-generation Iranians?

To take action on this matter, West Hollywood’s City Council passed a resolution two days subsequent to Nowruz 2012 that condemned the show. Furthermore, two-term mayor of Beverly Hills, Jimmy Delshad, fears that the Shahs of Sunset will give a poor impression of the Iranian community, which, over the years, has worked hard to build a well-regarded class of doctors, lawyers, and business executives in the United States. Firoozeh Dumas, author of Funny in Farsi, told the Los Angeles Times: “Dear God, Noooooo! I never thought Iranian-Americans could get any press worse than what is on the news every night. But now, Americans have a chance to see a slice of materialistic, shallow and downright embarrassing Iranian culture. I just want to shout: ‘We are not all like that!’” Moreover, author and professor of Creative Writing at the University of Southern California, Gina B. Nahai, believes the cast to be “unattractive, unsophisticated, and unproductive,” and that they, “consist entirely of every negative stereotype floating... about the community.” On the other hand, acclaimed Iranian scholar, Reza Aslan, trusts that, “it’s a silly reality show... only the most moronic viewers would watch Shahs of Sunset, and extract an opinion about Iranians and Iran.” Although this may hold true, some second-generation Iranians find that it is difficult to escape the negative environment that the show has created for them. Therefore, second-generation Iranians are misrepresented; yet, in light of this, they realize that there is so much beauty to the culture that the show fails to publicize.

Eric Bremen, a twenty-four-year-old graduate from George Washington University who graduated with an emphasis in Business and Information Technology, is certain that a vast majority of Americans have not been introduced to true Iranian culture and traditions. Bremen finds that Americans’ “idea of all Iranians is shaped by the misrepresentation in reporting from media organizations who perpetuate stereotypes and ignorance.” Although born and raised in Irvine, Bremen struggles with the fact that “many automatically and wrongly assume [he is] Muslim, foreign-born, and that being Arab is the same thing as being Iranian. He’s even been told before “[he’s] not American because [he’s] not white.” Even in social culture, like the show Shahs of Sunset, Iranian-Americans are portrayed as being materialistic and snobby.” However, Bremen believes that learning more about Iranian heritage, history, and culture makes him proud of his Iranian identity: “I have much to be proud as an Iranian since we’ve contributed so greatly to some of the most radical innovations and triumphs of humanity.” Moreover, he looks forward to the future of Iranian-American representation in America by saying that “when our collective impact is widely seen, it will hopefully overwrite the misconceptions of who we are as a people.”

Likewise to Bremen, recent Rancho Bernardo High School graduates Anissa and Nava Elahie face racism as a challenge. Anissa claims that some people have the unpleasant habit of ignorantly stereotyping everyone with the same skin color. “People usually generalize and assign a religion to everyone with the same looking face, and it is upsetting because it is done out of ignorance.” Nava agrees by saying, “Iranians understand that obstacles and dealing with closed-minded people come with living in such a prosperous country. However, America is the country that, despite all the negativity, Iranians are proud to call home.” Despite this, they enjoy sharing cultural values with non-Iranians: “being Iranian has so much diversity. It thrills [Anissa] when people find out [she is] Persian; they get this spark of curiosity and they crave to know more.” Anissa personally loves “to learn about where [she] came from; [her] history and culture remind [her] that as a human race, people are all similar. It doesn’t matter where you come from.” Similarly, Nava believes that her parents’ commitment and dedication to her and her siblings to be successful has made her proud of her heritage. “I admire the Iranian culture of always putting others before oneself. They always welcome everyone with open arms, and contribute the best hospitality. [She has] learned through my parents actions that Iranians are honored with their rich culture, language, and celebrations.”

Similar to the Elahies, Shadi Moayedi believes that her connection to the Iranian-American community during college is what made her most comfortable with her cultural identity: “Gaining further knowledge about my heritage, history and culture does make [her] feel more comfortable.” She completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Maryland, College Park, in Persian Studies and Communications, then received her Master’s degree in a dual degree program with the University of Malta and George Mason University. Moayedi identifies as Iranian-American, “which is different than being Iranian, and different than being American; it is its own unique identity. Through her community building and program management work with the Iranian-American Women’s Foundation, Moayedi is proud to “find that Iranian culture has very deep roots in community and service.”

Saoum Elhaiesahar is delighted when his mother “shares her stories with [him] about Iran, and how it was to be born and raised there. She describes the environment: from the

Continued on next page
Note from Marika Sardar, Associate Curator for Southern Asian and Islamic Art at The San Diego Museum of Art

By Marika Sardar

The Museum’s gallery for Persian Art is closed for refurbishment, so for the next few months our columns will feature intriguing works of art from the collection—which you can visit in December when the new, bigger gallery opens.

We start our series with two paintings by the Safavid artist Mu’in Musavvir, whose career spanned nearly six decades between the 1630s and the 1690s. “Mu’in the painter,” as he signed his works, was a student of the famed artist Riza Abbasi. Mu’in’s style of painting and drawing certainly owe a lot to his teacher’s guidance, but Mu’in is an interesting figure in his own right not only because of his skill, but also because of his penchant for including extensive inscriptions on his works. The most famous of these is a drawing of a tiger attacking a youth—in the lengthy inscription that accompanies this dramatic image, Mu’in describes the attack but also the incredibly cold winter of 1672 when the drawing was made, when there were eighteen snowstorms in Isfahan and everything in the city froze over (this drawing is in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston). The San Diego Museum’s ink drawing of a mountain goat is closely related in style to that well-known work, with evidence of a flowing and assured hand and a keen ability to observe from nature.

The second work in the Museum’s collection is evidence of a totally different style that Mu’in also developed. This painting, from a copy of the Shahnameh, depicts Bizhan’s defeat of Human as part of a battle between the Iranians and Turanians during the reign of king Afrasiyab. Mu’in was responsible for making several beautifully illustrated copies of the Shahnameh, which seems to have been a specialty of his.

Continuing from last page

sights of paykan cars and fashionably dressed women, to the smell of roasted nuts and delectable grilled food.” Elhaiesahar recently graduated, cum laude, with a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration, an emphasis in Management, and a specialization in Entrepreneurship from San Diego State University. He currently works for the internationally recognized Fortune 500 company IBM, in San Francisco. Elhaiesahar believes the Iranian race to be one of the rarest and most beautiful races in the world: “What makes [him] proud of being an Iranian is its rich culture, its mouthwatering dishes, and most importantly, the world’s most warm hearted people.” Although Elhaiesahar immigrated to the United States after being born and raised in Canada, he “was always surrounded by Iranians, whether it was at special events such as Norooz, Sizdah Bedar, Charshanbeh Soori, or on a smaller scale, at mehmoonies. At all these events, one can find hospitable hosts, delectable foods, anything from khoresh to kabob, and Iranians dancing to cultural, upbeat music.” Despite the fact that he has never been to Iran, Elhaiesahar considers himself to be half Iranian and half American because he has “been speaking Farsi from a young age, and enjoying [his] mother’s home cooked Iranian meals at the dinner table. Both of [his] parents have instilled in [him] the pride that comes along with being an Iranian, and provided [him] with a cross-cultural perspective that [he] will be eternally grateful for.” Aside from the negative rhetoric regarding Iranians that shows like Shahs of Sunset create, Elhaiesahar says that he still takes pride in his heritage: “It is always a pleasure meeting fellow Iranians, whether they are family friends, or others [his] age. It gives [him] this feeling of belonging to a country with rich heritage, and amazingly brilliant individuals.” He believes Iranians to be intelligent, artistic, and resilient.

Although some may blame Bravo for extracting profit at the expense of the most absurd members of the community, it is up to the Iranian community to work to diminish the amount of negative rhetoric that is spread. Iranians must continue to remind themselves and others of the beauty and elegance of true Iranian culture, that Shahs of Sunset fails to show on television.

Leily Rezvani is a student at High Tech High School, North County. She is also an intern at USD Institute for Peace and Justice.
Grief and Mourning - In Iran and America

By: Lisa Hildreth

I visited Iran for the first time in 1998. The first morning I woke up in Tehran, the sounds of a robotic auctioneer-type voice echoed repeatedly via a loudspeaker, its owner apparently driving around the streets offering to buy certain household items. I’ll never forget the funny looks I received from my sweet in-laws. I was the curious foreigner who was so excited about all that was new and different.

My husband and I set out on a walk soon thereafter so that he could show me around. The things that I can recall from the first day are: the sounds of the man in the truck, the amazing smells of food cooking, the fast flowing water in the jubes, the painted murals of war martyrs on the sides of buildings, and the overwhelming kindness shown from strangers. The thing that stands out most in my mind, ironically, is a couple of somber pictures posted outside of people’s homes, and another in a storefront of people who had recently passed away. I remember asking my husband several questions about the significance of the pictures and why they were posted outside of someone’s home. This was my first introduction to how Iranians culturally deal with death in a different way than Americans.

A handful of years ago, I lost my father. He was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer over Memorial Weekend and died twenty-three days later. My world seemed to fall apart in less than a month. I had experienced losses in my life prior to this, but this loss was my very own father, with whom I had always been extremely close. In looking back at how I handled it—and at how many Americans deal with death—I would say that I (and my entire family) were very stoic. My mom and I, and my husband and I, cried and fell apart together behind closed doors, but in front of others, we were very pulled together, stoic, and in control of things.

Recently, I lost my father-in-law. My father-in-law was as much of a father to me as my own. He was beyond amazing. We were now faced with death on the same level. This time, Iranian-style.

Grief and mourning in Iran is quite different. Iranians, in my view, are the opposite of stoic during death and grieving. They wear their emotions on their sleeve, and everywhere else. Emotions run wild and are expressed overtly and loudly, especially by grieving women. Tears flow and wailing is commonplace. Death in Iran feels far more emotional and overwhelming than at an American funeral/service.

Another difference is the method with which the deceased are buried. The grieving period in Iran is longer and more formal. The immediate family members typically wear black for the first 40 days, and up to a year. Also different are the funeral customs. Here in the states there is typically a viewing or “wake” where close friends and relatives come and pay their respects to the family of the deceased. The viewing is either “open casket,” where the deceased body is embalmed and cosmetically displayed for family and friends to say their last goodbyes, or “closed casket,” in which the coffin is closed. There are typically many photo displays and/or personal items to show the happy times of the deceased person’s life.

This varies greatly to Iranian tradition. In Iran, there is no viewing of the deceased. There is also no coffin. Instead, the body is washed with soap and water and then wrapped in a white cloth. The body is placed directly into the earth during the burial ceremony.

Although death and grieving is expressed and dealt with differently in Iran versus here in the States, the five stages of grief (known as the Kübler-Ross model) seem to be experienced by the survivors all the same. The five stages include: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Either way, we get there all the same.

My father always said “Honey, dying is just part of living.” Although this is true, it sure is tough for those of us who are left here on earth. May we all hold tight to the special memories of those close to us we have lost.

Lisa Hildreth possesses a Master of Science degree in Counseling and is a licensed therapist for children and families both in private practice and school settings.

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DOCUNIGHT
Docunight September 7, 2016 at 7:00pm at IAC
Docunight October 5, 2016 at 7:00pm
at the Iranian-American Center (IAC)
Documentary films about Iran or by Iranians

Jong-e Farhangi
Friday, Sept 9, 2016 Jong-e Farangi, hosted by Ali Sadr
Friday, October 14,2016  Jong-e- Farhangi, hosted by Reza Khabazian
Iranian-American Center • 6790 Top Gun St. #7, San Diego, CA 92121
Info: 858-552-9355

Setar Class by Kourosh Taghavi
Registration and info: (858) 717-6389

Tombak Class by Milad Jahadi
Registration and Info: (858) 735-9634

Daf Workshop
Sundays 11am-12 at Iranian School of San Diego (ISSD)

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

Iranian School of San Diego
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Branch I, September 11, 2016 10am-12noon
Branch II, September 8, 2016  6-8pm

Persian Dance Academy of San Diego
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Dollar a Month Fund
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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)
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San Diego International Film Festival
Date: September 28 – October 2, 2016
San Diego, CA   619.818.2221
http://www.sdfilmfest.com/

Annual Coronado MainStreet Garden Party
Date: September 10 - September 10, 2016
Time: 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM
1114 Ninth Street, Coronado, CA 92118
http://www.coronadomainstreet.com/

Julian Music Festival
Date: September 17 - September 17, 2016
Time: 1:00 PM to 7:00 PM
1150 Julian Orchards Road, Julian, CA 92036
http://www.julianmusicfestival.com/

La Mesa Oktoberfest
Spring Street and La Mesa Boulevard
La Mesa, CA 91942
http://www.thelamesaoktoberfest.com/

Tour de Fat San Diego
2590 Golden Hill Drive, San Diego, CA 92102
http://www.newbelgium.com/events/tour-de-fat/san-diego
Date: September 24 - September 24, 2016
Time: 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM
For example, glucose and galactose make lactose (the milk sugar). When two monosaccharides combine, they form disaccharides. Glucose, fructose, and galactose (also known as monosaccharides).

Introduction
Nutrients include carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, minerals, and water. Only carbohydrates, fats, and proteins can produce energy. The importance of fats and fat derivatives such as Omega 3 and 6 fatty acids and cholesterol were reviewed in Peyk № 159, 160, and 161. Some facts about proteins were discussed in Peyk № 162. In this issue, we will review some facts about carbohydrates.

Understanding carbohydrates
Carbohydrates (commonly known as carbs) are one of the major organic molecules that naturally occur in plant-based foods and some animal products. Plants synthesize carbohydrates from CO2 from the atmosphere and H2O from the soil, during photosynthesis. Some of the solar energy is captured in the bonds of carbohydrates and other nutrients. Consumption of carbohydrates produces energy for cellular functions. Common sources of carbohydrates in plant-based foods include fruits, nuts, grains, seeds, legumes, and a variety of vegetables. Animal sources of carbohydrates include milk and glycogen.

Are carbs necessary for good health?
According to Mayo Clinic reports, “carbohydrates are essential part of a healthy diet. In fact, your body needs carbohydrates to function well.” In humans, carbohydrates are used as the main fuel source and provide quick energy for optimum metabolic reactions in the body cells. Glucose, a simple carbohydrate, is the main source of quick energy for all cells of the body. The brain is totally dependent on glucose for energy.

Problems with carb-free diets
Elimination of carbohydrates from the diet can result in severe health problems. When there is no carbohydrate in the diet, the body uses its protein and fat sources as fuel. In the absence of carbohydrates, proteins break down into amino acids (reviewed in Peyk № 162), and amino acids can be converted to glucose for production of energy. As a result, the body may lose muscle mass. Research shows that consumption of 50 to 100 grams of carbohydrates per day prevents muscle loss. Additionally, when carbs are eliminated from the daily diet, the body may also metabolize fats to produce energy. As a result, a lot of ketones and keto acids will be produced in the cells. Accumulation of ketones in blood can cause nausea, fatigue, loss of appetite, and ketoacidosis, which can have serious consequences such as coma and even death.

Types of carbohydrates in diet
Carbohydrates may be categorized in three types: sugars, starch, and fiber.

Sugars: The word sugar refers to simple carbohydrates such as glucose, fructose, and galactose (also known as monosaccharides). When two monosaccharides combine, they form disaccharides. For example, glucose and galactose make lactose (the milk sugar).

Glucose and fructose make sucrose (table sugar). The combination of two glucose molecules makes maltose, which has a hint of sweetness, found in Persian Samanu.

Generally, the sweet-tasting monosaccharides and disaccharides are referred to as sugars, and are known as simple carbs

Starch: Starch is made from a combination of many simple sugars, and is therefore referred to as polysaccharide. Starch is abundant in potatoes, beans, rice, corn, and other grains.

Fiber: Fiber is a type of polysaccharide that provides the structure of plant tissues and occurs in all plants and plant–based foods. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, and peas are among foods that are naturally rich in fiber.

How carbohydrates are used in the body
When sugars and starches are consumed, they will be broken down into simple sugars and absorbed by the small intestine, then enter the capillaries surrounding the intestine, and ultimately enter the liver. Hepatocytes (liver cells) convert fructose and galactose to glucose before entering the systemic blood circulation. Glucose, therefore, is the main source of cellular chemical energy, known as ATP (Adenosine Tri Phosphate). All living organisms need ATP, and without it no life can sustain. The liver also uses glucose for production of other compounds, such as glycogen and triglycerides. When blood glucose falls, the pancreas releases the hormone glucagon, which stimulates breakdown of glycogen into glucose. Interestingly, each glycogen molecule attracts many molecules of water, so a little weight gain following Iranian parties may be due to water gain.

Use of fiber in diet
Humans do not have the enzyme to digest fibers. Therefore fibers will pass through the small intestine undigested. The local bacteria in the colon, however, can ferment the fibers, and produce substances such as short chain fatty acids, different gases and some B vitamins, and vitamin K. Although fiber adds almost no fuel or energy value to the diet, it plays an important physiological role. Fiber promotes regularity of bowel movement and reduces the risk of diverticular disease and some form of cancer (4). Reports from the Mayo Clinic indicate that a “low fiber diet… results in narrowed colon, increased pressure on walls of the colon, and can become diverticula (herniation of internal lining of the large intestine).”

Is too much fiber in diet beneficial?
The recommended daily adequate intake of fiber by the Food and Nutrition Board (2002) is about 25 grams for women and 38 grams for men. Research shows that eating more than 50 grams of fiber a day can interfere with mineral absorption which can lead to problems such as anemia and osteoporosis.

Glycemic Index (GI)
The Glycemic Index (GI) is a measure of how fast the blood glucose level increases following consumption of carbohydrates. The theory behind the GI is simply to minimize insulin-related problems, such as diabetes, by identifying and avoiding foods that have the greatest effect on blood sugar. The GI uses a scale of 0 to 100, with higher values given to foods that cause the most rapid rise in blood sugar. Pure glucose serves as a reference point, and is given a score of 100. For example, if you eat a medium size apple on an empty stomach, it can increase your blood sugar 39% compared to if you would eat 50 grams of pure glucose. Some research centers use white bread as the reference for GI. In any case, foods with high GI raise the blood sugar level very quickly, and the insulin level elevates drastically as well. Food sampling
method and measurement procedures for GI may vary in different institutions, and can give different results.

The following chart shows the GI of some selected foods, adopted from the Department of Nutrition at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. In this cart, scores of 55 or below are considered low.

### Factors that affect GI
A food’s GI is influenced by its preparation method and how much it is consumed. Foods that contain fiber, protein, or fat will generally reduce the GI of a meal, mainly due to a slower digestion process. The grinding method of grains also influences the GI response; for instance, breads, bagels, biscuits, and cakes, whether whole grain or white, have a high GI, because the flour is finely ground and is therefore digested faster. Fruit juices tend to have higher GI than whole fruits. Overripe fruits, especially bananas, have much higher GI than its non-overripe counterparts. In addition, eating habits have a major effect on GI; for example, if you eat 75 grams (5 tablespoons) of cooked white rice, you would expect a lower GI than if you eat 150 grams of rice. Consumption of one small pita bread (about 60 grams) would have much higher GI than when you eat half of it (about 30 grams). So, the amount of carbohydrates consumed has a major effect on GI. For this reason, some research centers use Glycemic Load (GL), which considers the amount of carbohydrate consumption on raising the blood sugar.

### Why is GI important?
Use of GI as a guide to food selection specifically benefits those with diabetes. Foods with high GI raise the blood sugar level very quickly. As blood sugar rises, the pancreas releases copious amount of insulin into blood circulation. Insulin binds with special receptors on the membrane of the body cells, and helps glucose’s entry to the cells, therefore lowering the blood sugar level. Insulin also activates adipose tissues (fat cells) to produce more fat, which can results in weight gain. The increased level of blood insulin on a continuous basis can desensitize the insulin receptors on the membrane of body cells, resulting in insulin sensitivity. Insulin sensitivity is reported to be the major cause for onset of type 2 diabetes.

### Eating habits and GI
In most cultures, people use a combination of high fiber foods with starchy items (such as white rice) and the mixed meals tend to dilute the GI of foods. Besides, most foods contain proteins and fats which slow down the digestion and absorption of nutrients. There are also some individual differences in glycemic response from person to person. It’s important to remember that the GI is only a rating of a food’s carbohydrate content. Using the GI as the sole factor for determining your diet can cause you to easily end up overconsuming fats, proteins, and total calories.

### Artificial sweeteners
There are different types of sweeteners in the market; some food labels use the term sugar alcohol, which can have various names, such as sugar replacers, sorbitol, xylitol, and mannitol. These products are used to replace sugar in commercial products, and add some bulk and sweetness to the products. They are incompletely absorbed in the digestive system.

Other types of sweeteners are the intense sweeteners, including aspartame (trade name NutraSweet) which is more than 200 times sweeter than sucrose. Saccharine is another artificial sweetener that is added to some commercially prepared foods. Incidentally, high doses of saccharine were shown to cause bladder cancer in male rats, but there is no evidence that it causes cancer in humans. Sucralose is a non-caloric sweetener (600 times sweeter than table sugar), and it is very poorly absorbed.

### Summary
Carbohydrates are essential to a healthy diet. Ingested carbohydrates are broken down into simple sugars and absorbed by the small intestine. Glucose is the main source of chemical energy in the cells. Some foods raise the blood glucose quickly which coincides with sharp increased level of insulin. GI is a measure of how fast the blood glucose level increases following consumption of carbohydrates. Although the GI is not the primary strategy for food/meal planning system, it helps people, especially those with diabetes, with their meal planning and weight control. (Calorie intake and weight management will be discussed in future issues of the Peyk).

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2) Susan G. Dudek, Nutrition essentials for nursing Practices, 20006, Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, New York.
3) Tortora, G and Derrickson, B; Principles of Anatomy and Physiology, 14 ed. 2013, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
5) http://www.health.harvard.edu/diseases-and-conditions/glycemic_index_and_glycemic_load_for_100_foods
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A(nother) Visit to the Doctor
By Marriam Zarabi

This nonfiction story is inspired by accompanying elderly Iranian relatives to the doctor. Raised to respectfully listen to the doctor and openly receive medical advice, this practice was questioned the more I accompanied elderly Iranian relatives and witnessed their humorous rejection of and resistance to medical advice.

Azizzam, lotfian Dr. Aflatooni-o zang bezan. Zanoom gerefte. Chashm, Ameh Badri
I grab my cell phone and call Dr. Aflatooni’s office. Hi, I’d like to make an appointment for my aunt. Yes, Ameh Badri. Yes, it is her knee again. She says her pain has increased in the two weeks since we’ve seen Dr. Aflatooni. Great, see you soon.

Ameh Badri, bezar walkeretoono beeyaram ke rahattar rah berin.
Na, na, na, paham ke az walker estefade konam!
Ameh Badri takes thoughtful steps toward the car, adjusting her weight one foot at a time, waddling until we reach the car. Ameh Badri, asaa-etoonro avordam agar ahyanan bekhayn estefade konin.
Na, na, mohem nist, she says, swiftly rejecting the offer. Rah toolani nist az mashin be matabe doctor. Mersi asalam.
As I park the car and make my way toward her door, Ameh Badri pushes the door open with her foot. Ameh Joon, namak bayad kamtar bokhorin.
Doctor, magar mishe? Ghaza bi namak aslan maz e nadare Daleel-e varame-toon az namak haast. Agar namaketoono kam bokonin, khali komak mikoneh
Doctor, aslan che harfiey-e? Gofin rejim begir, gereftam. Gofin vitamin bokhor, daram mikhorm. Tahala nashnidam namak varaan beyar-e. Khodetoone namak estefade nemikoneen?
Baleh Maloomeh!
Khob, option-e dige in-e keh metoonim shot-e cortisone har domah be do-mah bezanam Ampul dard dareh?
Baleh Aslan. Ghors nist?
Mikhayn ghors enteham bokonin, valey namaketoono kam kohnin as hamechi salem-tar hast.
Doctor, cheghad azyat mekonin!
In the middle of this dance, Dr. Aflatooni’s cell phone rings. Without excusing himself and without moving, he answers. Hi Sara, I’m with a patient. Lunch? Sure. Chinese sounds good. No, tell him he can’t have peanut butter. Put him on the phone. Armon, you know you are allergic to peanuts. Don’t bother, Sara. Goodbye.
Dr. Aflatooni gets up from his chair, opens the examine room door, and yells to his nurse down the hall to order him Chinese food for lunch. Embarrassed at the irony of his lunch choice and by his candor, I fixate on the tiles to distract myself from laughing and overanalyzing how routine these interactions have become.
Still having Chinese on Tuesdays, Dr. Aflatooni?
Always. Would you and Ameh like some? We are happy to order more!
Thank you, that is very kind, but maybe next time. Chinese is high in salt, and with her knee, maybe we should wait? Ah, yes. Salt. Very good.
Vanilla-Almond Ice Cream with Cherries and Pistachios

From Food & Wine June 2016 – Justin Chapple

It is always a good season for ice-cream. This recipe got my attention as it is made without an ice cream maker. The combination of cherries (now in season) and pistachios sounds so delicious. Enjoy

ACTIVE: 45 MIN  TOTAL TIME: 6 HR 45 MIN  SERVINGS: MAKES ABOUT 1 QUART  TIME(OTHER): PLUS OVERNIGHT FREEZING

INGREDIENTS

- 6 large egg yolks
- 1 1/2 cups heavy cream
- 1 1/2 cups whole milk
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise and seeds scraped
- 1/2 teaspoon pure almond extract
- 3/4 cup fresh cherries, pitted and halved
- 1/4 cup shelled pistachios, coarsely chopped

HOW TO MAKE THIS RECIPE

- Set a medium bowl in a large bowl of ice water. In another medium bowl, beat the egg yolks until pale, 1 to 2 minutes.
- In a medium saucepan, whisk the cream with the milk, sugar, salt and the vanilla bean and seeds. Bring to a simmer, whisking, until the sugar is completely dissolved. Very gradually whisk half of the hot cream mixture into the beaten egg yolks in a thin stream, then whisk this mixture into the saucepan. Cook over moderately low heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until the custard is thick enough to lightly coat the back of the spoon, about 12 minutes; don’t let it boil.
- Strain the custard through a medium-mesh strainer into the bowl set in the ice water; discard the vanilla bean. Let the custard cool completely, stirring occasionally. Stir in the almond extract. Pour into a large re-sealable freezer bag and seal, pressing out the air. Lay the bag flat in the freezer and freeze until firm, at least 8 hours or overnight. Working quickly, in batches if necessary, transfer the frozen custard to the bowl of a food processor. Pulse at 5-second intervals until smooth.
- Transfer the custard to a chilled 9-by-4-inch metal loaf pan and fold in the cherries and pistachios. Cover with plastic wrap and freeze until firm, about 6 hours or overnight.

MAKE AHEAD

The ice cream can be frozen for up to 1 week.

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Bebakhshin Ameh, Armon gharare nahar beyad matab, zang zad bebine nahar chi sefaresh bedim. He navigates his way through a lengthy story about Armon’s piano recital and his school play, showing us pictures along the way. This was our routine doctor exam. “Swollen” knees are really bi-weekly check-ins and picture show-n-tells. Wow, oh my gosh, seventh grade; yes, he looks just like you! I have my own routine as well—I have my routine words and routine exclamations for this portion of the appointment—and I know well enough that right before the second offer for tea and right after he writes Ameh’s prescription, I get out of my chair and assist Ameh off hers as well.

Fekr mikoni Dr. Aflatooni halesh koobeh? Negaranesh hastam she says, lightly squeezing my hand as we walk to the car. Namak? Ha ha.

She sits in the car while I pick up her prescription and opens her medicine as soon as I give it to her. I think examining her medicine is her favorite part. She opens the bottle and a few of the tiny, red pills spill into her open palm. Small and round, each pill has a small letter on either side. You can take one with your vitamins, I tell her. Na, in-a fayde nadaran. Ghermez hastan.


Worried about my aunt’s knee and her refusal to try her medicine, I try to focus on lunch and how to reduce our tar ’ooof time as we decide where to go. We settle on one of her favorite lunch spots, a restaurant known for salads. I am relieved she wasn’t craving anything high in salt, or overly processed.

Mersi Ameh Badri, I say as our lunch arrives to our table.

Noosh-e jaan!

Settling into my salad and quietly reflecting on the day and Ameh’s health, I look up to find her dumping salt on her salad. I’ll save it for the next appointment with Dr. Aflatooni, I think to myself, and smile.

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

Whether male or female, pregnant or not, the Zika virus must have surely caught your attention at some point in recent months. This nasty virus has been linked to one of the most devastating congenital fetal anomalies, called microcephaly. “Micro” means small, and “cephaly” refers to the brain. Therefore, “microcephaly” is a congenital defect that reflects an abnormally small brain. Sometimes this defect is not compatible with life, sadly causing death in the womb or thereafter. The Zika complications in pregnant women are truly one of the worst parental nightmares.

Unfortunately, the virus has spread explosively in certain areas of the world: Brazil, numerous other Latin American countries, Puerto Rico, the Caribbean, and Samoa. Until recently, there had been no cases of the virus that had originated in the U.S. – all infected were either those who had travelled to endemic areas, or whose sexual partners had been exposed through their travel.

But, as of early August 2016, there have been six new cases of the Zika virus that have originated in the United States.

What is this mysterious Zika organism? Should you be worried? How can you protect yourselves and your loved ones from it?

What is Zika?

First and foremost, note that Zika is not a bacteria. It is a virus. Therefore, antibiotics cannot cure these dreadful bugs.

It is also categorized as a “vector borne” virus, which simply refers to one that is transmitted from a living organism to humans, or from animals to humans. Similar to Dengue and Chikungunya, Zika is spread from the bite of an infected Aedes mosquito to a human.

Mosquitos jump from human to human, biting as they go. A non-infected mosquito will first bite a human infected with the Zika, become infected itself (subsequently, carrying the virus), and then spread it to the next human through future bites. This is likely how the recently original Zika-ridden mosquitos in Miami, Florida, came about.

Less frequent reports of Zika’s transmission via blood transfusions and sexual contact have also been reported. But, unlike the common cold and flu viruses, simply touching or breathing the same air as someone infected with the Zika virus cannot transmit the virus.

Zika Symptoms

Surprisingly, once infected, most patients remain asymptomatic. Only roughly twenty percent of those infected will exhibit symptoms. In those who do, within one to two weeks of the mosquito bite, they can develop such symptoms as:

- Fever
- Muscle pain
- Joint pain
- Rash
- Pink eye

Furthermore, of those twenty percent who display symptoms, most experience only a mild illness that self-resolves within a week. This is reminiscent of the common cold and flu viral courses with which we are all too familiar.

A more serious, yet rare, complication of the virus is Guillen Barre syndrome, an illness that develops due to a triggered immune response. The immune system attacks the nervous system, and these patients experience a frightening paralysis that begins in the legs and moves upward. This is not unique to Zika, however. Numerous other viruses can also cause Guillen Barre, including the common cold and flu viruses.

Epidemiology of Zika

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the leading national public health institute of the United States, as of August 3, 2016, there have been a total of 1,825 cases of Zika in the United States. However, only six of those have been locally acquired mosquito-borne illnesses, and sixteen were sexually transmitted.

To provide a little perspective, let’s compare this to the annual flu virus that wreaks havoc every winter, killing up to 50,000 people in the U.S. each year. As with Zika, pregnant women are also at higher risk of flu complications and death. Fortunately, we do have an available vaccine to help prevent the flu each year. But there is no vaccine for Zika.

Treatment of Zika

Unfortunately, there is no cure for Zika. Prevention is key. Although vaccines are currently being studied, they are as yet unavailable and unapproved for use.

How to best prevent Zika contraction without a vaccine? Prevent the mosquito from biting in the first place.

If you are a female of child-bearing age who is sexually active, may possibly be pregnant, is contemplating pregnancy, or is currently pregnant, abstain from travel to Miami and involved countries/regions. The CDC has released a travel alert warning pregnant women to avoid any travel to Miami, Brazil and numerous other Latin American countries, Puerto Rico, the Caribbean, and Samoa for fear of contracting this potentially tragic virus.

If you are a male traveling to these regions with any sexual contact either pregnant or not. Or at the very least use a condom… every single time.

But for those living in Miami or those regions of the world without a choice, a daily use of a mosquito repellent containing the ingredients DEET, picaridin, IR3535, and oil of lemon eucalyptus are useful. Wear long-sleeves, a hat, and avoid skin exposure. Turn on the air conditioner and install window and door screens. Mosquitos lay eggs near water. Therefore, routinely and frequently clean and change water from flower pots and pet dishes, buckets, toys, pools, birdbaths, and trash cans.

Also, please consult your obstetrician before you contemplate pregnancy if living in endemic regions. It is now recommended for obstetricians to screen every pregnant female at every prenatal visit for potential Zika exposure.

To learn more about the Zika virus, please visit the CDC website at: http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/index.html

Dr. Sanaz Majd is a board-certified family medicine physician who podcasts and blogs at http://housecalldoctor.quickanddirtytips.com.
The Shortest Way to the Truth: Kiarostami Remembered

By Mehrnaz Saeed-Vafa

I first met Abbas Kiarostami when he screened his early feature *The Report* (1977) in Tehran. Thinking back on this work, I realize it anticipates the dark and disturbing view of romantic relationships that he would revisit—with less intensity but comparable despair and ambiguity—in his final films, *Certified Copy* (2010) and *Like Someone in Love* (2012). But my impression of him in those years was not that of the anguished auteur this film might have led me to expect. During the revolution of 1979 and the beginning of the Iran–Iraq War, I had a few scattered encounters with him in the hallways of Kanoon, also known as the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, where he was then working and where I was trying to resolve some production issues on my own film. He always wore a sweet, carefree smile, and unlike some other filmmakers of the period, he looked serene, friendly, approachable.

During the years after the revolution, when cinema was under intense scrutiny and there was a great demand for political films, many of Kiarostami’s contemporaries were leaving the country, but he stayed in Iran making his own subtle brand of philosophical and humanist cinema. Though we had been acquainted since the 1970s, our one-on-one conversations did not begin until after I had moved to the U.S. and had a chance to interview him at the 1992 Toronto Film Festival, which was presenting a selection of eighteen Iranian works that included his films *Where Is the Friend’s Home?* (1987), *Close-up* (1990), and *Life, and Nothing More . . .* (1992). He shared stories about his production process, and I was surprised to learn that *Close-up* was shot so quickly, in about forty days, and that despite its echoes of Jacques Tati’s zigzag roads and Roberto Rossellini’s documentary style, he had not been influenced by either of those filmmakers. During that festival, I also encouraged my friend, film critic Jonathan Rosenbaum (who would soon become one of Kiarostami’s most passionate champions), to view his work. Our initial discussions ultimately grew into the book we wrote together on Kiarostami, published in 2003.

Over the next two decades, I was lucky enough to have several formal and informal meetings with Kiarostami in Tehran, as well as in Europe and the U.S. I was his host when he came to Chicago for the promotion of his Cannes Palme d’Or winner, *Taste of Cherry*, and while serving as his interpreter for press interviews, I learned what an engaging and inspiring presence he was. In 2010, I got the chance to discuss Kiarostami with Jonathan again when we recorded our audio commentary for Criterion’s release of *Close-up*. And while I’m deeply inspired by all of the master’s work, it is this film in particular that continues to leave me awestruck. A profound influence on a generation of Iranian filmmakers, many of whom have taken up its theme of cinema’s relationship to audiences, *Close-up* stands as a testament to Kiarostami’s belief that the shortest way to the truth is a lie. This exploration of the deceptive power of the movies in people’s lives centers on an insightful portrait of Hossein Sabzian, an impoverished man who impersonated the famous filmmaker Mohsen Makhmalbaf in real life. Inflected with Kiarostami’s unique sense of humor, the story unfolds in an elliptical structure that challenges our expectations and critiques cinema’s ability to draw viewers into their own delusions.

Not only was Kiarostami fascinated by the misleading role of the media, he was also aware of his participation in it, and his 1999 film *The Wind Will Carry Us* finds him at his most self-questioning. His influence can be felt throughout contemporary Iranian cinema, in its move toward realistic, slice-of-life stories, its focus on ordinary people, and its mix of documentary and fiction. But just as important is the sheer beauty of his films, their knack for revealing the souls of his nonprofessional actors and Iran’s magnificent landscapes. Despite their minimalism, his films are somehow both deceptively simple and highly philosophical, playful and despairing at the same time, drawing profundity from their multitude of contradictions.

Mehrnaz Saeed-Vafa is a filmmaker and film professor at Columbia College Chicago. Her book *Abbas Kiarostami*, cowritten with Jonathan Rosenbaum, was published by the University of Illinois Press in 2003. This article was first published in The Criterion Collection website.