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Shaghayegh Hanson



A war, a slap, and the notion of mercy

On the big-picture front, things were looking up. COVID was abating, Spring was arriving, and we all deserved a renewal of our spirits. Then Vladimir Putin decided this was a great time to flip off the current world order by invading Ukraine. Not that the world order was in pristine shape to begin with, but at least we were in a familiar holding pattern. Some of us tried to quell this new assault on our nervous system, just for a few hours, by turning to one of our favorite modes of escapism, the Oscars. Alas, it was not to be, as we watched our Fresh Prince slap one of our Kings of Comedy, turning our respite into a kind of dystopian nightmare. For the umpteenth time, I turned on my favorite season of The Great British Bake-Off, the metaphorical “break glass in case of emergency” button on my remote.

Developments since the onset of these two events have me dabbling in a bit of amateur philosophy, namely, the role of mercy in modern society. Mercy means “compassion or forbearance shown especially to an offender or to one subject to one’s power” or “compassionate treatment of those in distress.” (Merriam-Webster) It’s not a word you often see, but it kept popping up in my head as I saw people’s reactions to both the Ukrainian refugees and the slap. And what I concluded, sadly, was that mercy is in short supply these days.

Regarding the slap, most people, including Smith himself, agreed it was wrong and that he should suffer appropriate consequences. It was apparent to me that Smith was behaving out of character and probably needed to address some personal, deep-seated issues indiscernible to us, the public. Which is why I was taken aback by how quick people were to denounce not only the act, but also the man, and then justify that reaction by adding their own self-serving context to the incident. From Fox News claiming the Oscars was not “the ‘hood’” to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar’s opinion piece stating Smith “advocated violence, diminished women, insulted the entertainment industry, and perpetuated stereotypes about the Black community” to people relinquishing their decades-held fandom for Smith, the backlash verged on cruelty. Was there no place for mercy in this public square of rapid-fire opinion? Are we so righteous, our sensibilities so fragile, and our admiration of a beloved entertainer so hollow that one slap in a moment of passion justifies a verbal stoning?

At least mercy was being shown towards the Ukrainian refugees, was it not? They were being welcomed with open arms all around Europe and other countries, like the U.S. While my heart was warmed, my mind was unsettled. It became increasingly obvious that these refugees were being portrayed more sympathetically—and treated far more humanely—than refugees fleeing for the same reasons from other parts of the world. In Europe, countries that had claimed there was no space for Syrian or other types of refugees applied an open border policy to masses of Ukrainians. As one scholar put it, “we cannot underestimate a much more raw and tribal response, and that far too many of us in Europe simply saw refugees when they saw Ukrainians, because they were white and of Christian heritage.”¹ He continued, “For a continent that tries to pride itself on the superiority of pluralism over bigotry, following the awful experiences of the Holocaust, of the Bosnian genocide, and civil rights struggles across the continent and the West more generally, it’s a sad reminder that far too many of us continue to be immensely tribal and racist.” At our San Diego border, Ukrainians were being processed more swiftly than their black and brown counterparts,² prompting one refugee advocate to say, “The little boy from Ukraine is a hero, but what of the 11-year-old from Haiti? Skin color unfortunately is a major factor in who gets protected ... Why do we have to continuously beg for validation of our humanity?”³

In ways big and small, and in circumstances of global significance or not, if we are to call ourselves “civilized,” surely we should be more merciful because “[a]n absence of compassion can corrupt the decency of a community, a state, a nation. Fear and anger can make us vindictive, abusive, unjust and unfair, until we all suffer from the absence of mercy and we condemn ourselves as much as we victimize others.”⁴

1 H. A. Hellyer, a scholar at the Washington, DC-based Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: <https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/16/middleeast/mideast-summary-03-16-2022-intl/index.html>

2 <https://www.borderreport.com/hot-topics/immigration/resentment-grows-as-ukrainians-getting-preferential-treatment-at-the-border/>

3 <https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/29/us/ukrainians-us-mexico-border-cec/index.html>

4 Stevenson, Bryan. *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*. New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2015.

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PCC's Board Meetings

Persian Cultural Center's board of directors holds its meetings every second Wednesday of the month at the Iranian American Center (IAC). The last two meetings took place on March 9 and April 14, 2022.

Iranian School of San Diego's 33rd Nowruz Celebration - March 13, 2022

In preparation for Nowruz, Iranian School of San Diego held a "sabzeh kari" and egg coloring event on Sunday, March 6, 2022, at the school. The Nowruz celebration was held at the Del Norte High School auditorium on Sunday, March 13, 2022. Students performed several dances, music, and songs for over 320 parents and students. During the program, awards for person of the year, honor students, and winners of the "Reading Olympics" were presented.



Persian Cultural Center Annual Nowruz Celebration - March 19, 2022

After two years of interruption, this year PCC celebrated Nowruz at the La Jolla Marriott. At this great event, music was performed by DJ Julius. The music was enhanced by Yara on violin and Ameen Baghallian on saxophone. PCC's Persian Dance Academy performed several beautiful dances. PCC was honored to have San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria and City Councilman Mr. Raul Campillo among the guests. The mayor congratulated the Iranian American community for upholding and celebrating its culture. Councilman Campillo then read the proclamation prepared by the City of San Diego recognizing March 20th as Nowruz Day in the City of San Diego. The proclamation was then presented to PCC.



Sizdahbedar - April 3, 2022

After two dark years of COVID-19, this year PCC, in collaboration with AIAP and House of Iran, was again able to celebrate Sizdahbedar at NTC Park in Point Loma, with music, dance, and plenty of food. This year, several thousands of people attended the park for picnics and enjoyed music performed by DJ Julius, DJ Mohsen, and friends. Several businesses set up booths. Food was provided by Balboa International Market.





Jong e Farhangi - April 15, 2022

The April Jong, hosted by Ali Sadr, was held at the IAC and also broadcast online via Zoom, as well as Clubhouse. The guest of the program was Ali Akbar Moradi, a master musician who spoke about various branches of Persian music. During the lecture, several pieces of Persian traditional music were presented. The in person and virtual audiences then presented their questions in the Q & A session.

Quarantine Night's Poems - April 20, 2022

This virtual event was hosted by Farshad Babakhani and PCC's Poetry & Literature Committee. In the series "One poet-One poem," Sanaei, "the father of mystic poetry," was discussed. Attendees also read their own selected poetry.

Virtual Movie Discussion Series - April 28, 2022

Last Night in Soho (2021), directed by Edgar Wright and starring Themasin McKenzie, Anya Taylor-Joy, Matt Smith, and Michael Ajao, was the selected movie for the April virtual movie discussion. Mahmoud Pirouzian hosted the discussion. The guest of the program was Mazyar Ghalami, actor and director, who reviewed the movie.



Mystery of Tanbur
Kurdish Music of Iran
Ali Akbar Morady Ensemble
 Sunday, May 1, 2022, at 7 PM
 Conrad Prebys Hall at UCSD

Puzzle, a play
 With Borzou Arjmand and Ehsan Karami
 Sunday, May 7, 2022, at 7:30 PM
 Carlsbad City Library



Persian Cultural Center Annual Meeting and Election
 Sunday, May 15, 2022, from 10 AM to 12 noon
 At Iranian School of San Diego

Jong e Farhangi
 Friday, June 17, 2022, at 7 PM

Movie and Discussion
 Thursday, May 26, 2022, at 7:30 PM
 Thursday, June 30, 2022, at 7:30 PM

Poetry Night
 Wednesday, May 18, 2022, at 7 PM
 Wednesday, June 15, 2022, at 7 PM

Iranian Music Concert
 Amirhossain Pourjavadi and Pejman Haddadi
 Friday, May 27, 2022, at 7 PM
 Conrad Prebys Hall at UCSD

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 Fleet Science Center
 March 18, 2022 - ongoing





Iranian Americans as a Designated Minority Group in The U.S.: Yes or No?

By Hooshyar Afsar

The goal of this article is to discuss minority group status and present both supportive and critical points of view. As a member of the Iranian American community, I am for minority group status yet I will present the critical view in the most honest fashion. I shall attempt to make sound arguments both for and against minority group status designation for our community.

What is a Minority Group?

In a society, when a group of people whose characteristics differ from the main group(s) and their interests are in a subordinate state, that group of people is classified as a minority group. A minority group may not necessarily be a minority in terms of numbers compared to the overall population. For example, one could argue that women are in fact a minority in a patriarchal society since their interests are subordinate to the interests of men. This definitely applies to other minority gender groups, such as a person who identifies as transgender or non-binary. Due to their subordinate state in the society, minority groups are susceptible to discrimination.

The characteristics that distinguish a minority group consist of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, national origin, religion, etc. A person's identity could be at the intersection of multiple such characteristics. For example, an Iranian American woman who happens to be Zoroastrian is at the intersection of multiple minority groups characteristics in the United States, namely ethnicity, national origin, gender, and religion.

What is Minority Status in the United States?

The federal government of the United States recognizes multiple racial and ethnic minorities through a self-identification process by residents. This is done as part of the U.S. Census that is conducted once every ten years. Two federal government entities, namely the OMB (Office of Management and Budget) and USCB (United States Census Bureau), define the following race and ethnicity categories: White; Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin; Black or African American; American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian (including but not limited to Southeast Asia and South Asia and excluding Middle East and North Africa); and "some other race" with the option to print race.* All these categories except White qualify as a minority.

What are the Implications of Minority Group Status?

According to the OMB, a variety of federal programs that promote anti-discriminatory practices—such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and other programs associated with public health and environmental safety—use the race and ethnicity census data. In a sense, if one ever files a lawsuit claiming discrimination based on race, ethnicity, sex, national origin, sexuality, etc., self-identification as a racial or ethnic minority group will work in favor of such a lawsuit. On the contrary, if one self-identifies oneself as White in the census, that could work against such a case.

The other implication of minority status has to do with minority-owned businesses. Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) is a U.S. designation for businesses that are at least 51% owned, operated, and controlled by one of the following minority groups: African Americans, Asian Americans (excludes people from the Middle East), Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, Pacific Islanders, and women.

Another federal program is the Small Business Administration (SBA) 8(a) minority group status that supports the same above minority groups by providing business planning, loan guarantees, federal government contracts, assistance in contracting opportunities outside of the SBA, training and technical support, and surplus federal government property among other benefits.

As of 1978, the United States recognized people from the Middle East and North Africa, including Iranians and Arabs, as White. Clearly, Iranian Americans are not included in the MBE or SBA 8(a) minority group status. The federal government and certain state governments incentivize MBEs to bid on publicly awarded contracts. According to the Minority Business Development Agency, minorities own more than 9.2 million firms and account for nearly \$1.8 trillion in revenues.**

Being designated as a recognized minority also has other implications. In *Peyk* #198 (March-April 2022), I wrote about students at the University of California, Berkeley, who were able to convince the university to recognize SWANA (Southwest Asian North African) as a racial category in the application process. One result is helping ensure all SWANA applicants (including Iranian Americans self-identified as such during the application process) have fair representation in enrollment and student life rather than being invisible by their dissolution in the White category.

One possible way, and perhaps the most practical way, that Iranian Americans could gain minority status is recognition of SWANA as an official racial category by the OMB and USCB, and by adding this new category to those already recognized by MBE. Such designation will translate to significant financial outcomes for Iranian Americans and all other minority groups that fall under the SWANA category.

Opposing View

Iranian Americans are highly educated and enjoy economic affluence. We need to be grateful for what we have accomplished in this great country without any favoritism or charitable attitude from the U.S. government. That is what we should emphasize as a characteristic of our community that aligns with American values of hard work and good citizenship. This is a source of pride for our community and helps us be better Americans.

We would rather be part of a hard working and accomplished majority than a struggling minority. That is what distinguishes our community from other immigrant communities. The economic affluence we have has not been freely handed to us. We have earned

it by studying hard and working hard as law abiding American citizens. We should use such values to distinguish our community rather than try to lower our standards to the less accomplished immigrant communities that need government help.

The racial category of White for Iranian Americans is part of our accomplishment. Iranians and Europeans share a historical heritage that goes back thousands of years. Some of the Aryan tribes who left present-day Siberia during the last ice age migrated to present-day Iran and some of them went to Europe. As Iranian Americans, we should be proud that the U.S. government finally recognized Iranians as White in 1978 and confirmed the historical ties of Iranians and Europeans. Any attempt to present ourselves as non-White is a misrepresentation of our great Iranian historical identity. Do we really prefer to misrepresent our racial identity so that we could take advantage of government programs and taxpayer contributions? Wouldn't that be unfair to minority groups who need and deserve such help?

A minority status designation that would give us an advantageous position in bidding for government contracts is a misrepresentation of our racial identity and is unethical. The United States has welcomed and accepted Iranian Americans with open arms and has made the American dream available to us. We have achieved the American dream through our commitment to education and hard work. We should continue on that path.

Supporting View

Let's begin by examining the facts. Are Iranian Americans White?

Race and racial categorization is not a very old notion. Whiteness was introduced as part of Enlightenment, which began in seventeenth century Europe. It was invented for social, political, and economic gain. Race is a social construct and it has no biological or genetic basis. Along the same lines, racism and white supremacy were invented and used to justify hundreds of years of colonialism, slavery, and racial injustice. Fortunately, today's science has clearly proven that there is no scientific basis for race. Even the U.S. government recognizes that racial categorization in the census does not have any scientific basis and its aim is to identify disadvantaged minority groups to confront discriminatory practices.

The story of Aryan tribes fleeing the ice age and migrating to present day Iran, present day India, and present day Europe is more of a myth than documented history. It is also contradictory since the proponents of these ideas don't stop to ask, how about those Aryan tribes who migrated to present day India? Why aren't Indians recognized as White? Also, the reality on the ground tells us a different story. Iran itself is a multi-ethnic and multi-racial society to such an extent that we have Iranians who look European, African, Southeast Asian, Indian, and so on. Another historical fact points to the politics of 1930s Iran, when the founder of the last Iranian monarchical dynasty—namely Reza Shah Pahlavi—who was pursuing western modernization of Iran, was also looking for historical ties to Europeans. He took the Aryan race theory to the extreme and became sympathetic to Nazi Germany; he was later forced into exile (ironically under South Africa's apartheid regime) after the allies invaded Iran in 1941.

So, the answer is that Iranian Americans are not White. In fact, up until 1978, Iranians were not recognized as White. As Professor

Neda Maghbouleh documents in her book *Limits of Whiteness*, there are clear cases earlier in the twentieth century when U.S. courts did not recognize them as such. Maghbouleh also conducted interviews with dozens of second-generation Iranian Americans across the United States who shared experiences of racism, prejudice, and discrimination growing up in the United States. Last but not least, Maghbouleh documents anti-discrimination lawsuits by Iranians who lost because they failed to self-identify as a minority group while they were subject to overt discriminatory behavior.

So, the answer is a clear no. Iranians are not White and their attempt to pass as White has its limits. In fact, self identifying as White in the U.S. Census robs Iranian Americans of their rights as American citizens. These categories were created not as scientific designations but as minority group categorization with the declared goal of using the data for anti-discriminatory programs, policies, and practices. Let's be clear, we are not discussing the success or effectiveness of such government programs. We are pointing to why they were created and why as a minority group it is our right as American citizens to take advantage of them. That is good citizenship for you.

Next, let's look at Iranian Americans' high levels of education and economic affluence. As a result of being dissolved in the White category of the census, we do not have comprehensive data on this subject. It seems like Iranians are, for the most part, highly educated and well off. Unfortunately, not everything that seems to be true *is* true. The sun rises from the east in the morning and then sets in the west in the evening and it seems like the sun is rotating around the Earth and we all know that is not true. The notions of "highly educated" and "well off" are extended to the community by many and then used to portray us as "exceptional" and "different" from other immigrant communities. There is also a hidden message here: we are not like those immigrant communities, so don't treat us like them (and by the way we don't really care how you treat them as long as you treat us well). This logic is misguided. Dehumanization and marginalization of our community—as demonstrated by decades of stereotypical portrayal of Iranians as zealot terrorists or, at best, conniving, scoundrel rug merchants—will not end by passing as White. It deprives us of effective tools such as data and minority group status that could be utilized to confront discrimination.

Last but not least, if we ever achieve MBE designation and become included in SBA 8(a) minority group status, our Iranian American owned businesses will receive significant business and financial support plus priority in bidding for certain federal and state government contracts. Such achievement will create a more level playing field for Iranian American owned businesses to thrive and be more successful. Yes, we have worked hard for our accomplishments and that is exactly why we deserve to benefit from all that is available to American citizens.

* Starting with the 2010 U.S. Census, Hispanic is distinguished as an ethnicity and not a race.

** mbda.gov/who-we-are/overview

Hooshyar Afsar is one of the founders of Racism Awareness Project (RAP), an educational program on the history of and present-day racism in the United States and its impact on the Iranian American community. RAP has had a variety of educational forums across the United States. Mr. Afsar has written several articles and book reviews on the topic for Peyk and other publications. He can be reached at hoosh.afsar@rapusa.org.

An interview with Maestro Ahmad Pejman

By Vahid Jahandari



Born in 1935 in Lar, Iran, Ahmad Pejman created the majority of his work in his home country, although he now resides in Los Angeles. I met him in person when my chamber piece won the first prize at the inaugural Pejman National Composition Competition in Tehran in 2015. This initially-planned biannual contest was organized by a number of Pejman's students and colleagues—mostly by the music faculty at Tehran University of Art or its alumni—to celebrate his legacy and open creative opportunities for the young generation of composers across the country to write pieces influenced by traditional Persian materials, modes, and rhythms. The three winning works were performed at Vahdat Hall, with many distinguished musicians of Iranian traditional and Western classical backgrounds present for the concert, a tribute to Pejman's decades of contribution to elevating Iranian orchestral and chamber repertoire.

During my undergraduate studies, my mentors always praised Pejman for having had indelible moments working with him, remembering his larger-than-life personality, and as a means of music appreciation, by analyzing his outstanding compositions for the ways in which Pejman combined Persian elements with Western classical techniques, honoring his legacy.

Pejman pursued doctoral studies at Columbia University following his graduation from the Vienna Academy of Music and has a wide variety of music in various genres in his portfolio, including ballet and opera. Nonetheless, something peculiar, conventionally known as “fingerprint,” can be noticeably traced in all his archived creations. His works are considered profoundly communicative, and he is recognized as a leading figure in the field. After the revolution, Pejman collaborated with *Tehrangelles* musicians. *Khamosh Namirid* is an album by Dariush Eghbali, in which Pejman arranged the entire project and composed three of the songs. The single “Khakeh Mann” captures a strong sense of belonging to the homeland and many well-known singers of the time, like Sattar and Aref, collaboratively participated in that release.

It has been a few years since Pejman retired; he no longer composes. On the days that I called him for this interview, he shared his concerns about the news regarding the Russian invasion of Ukraine. He clarified that he could not complete his Ph.D. degree at Columbia—though he had progressed to candidacy, due to the emergence of the Islamic revolution, the Pahlavi dynasty's support of Iranian students' studies abroad was abruptly discontinued given the state of political affairs and international relations. Pejman had moved to the United States with his family and children in 1976. Therefore, not having found the financial means to accommodate his family's residency, he pursued other businesses in New York for several years, which caused him to stay away from producing music.

In the early 1990s, Pejman decided to return to Iran and continued with a long-term devotion to scoring films for directors including Majid Majidi, Bahman Farmanara, Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, and Mohsen Makhmalbaf.

Pejman's primary interests in composition have been drawn from Persian literature; he designed the *Siavash* opera from Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* before the revolution. Though he considered Thomas Christian David, the Austrian composer, among his main mentors, he developed the skills of writing music intuitively and believes that music should not be judged based on its style and aesthetics but on the quality and concept it offers, the level of originality and innovation, and how much one offers that distinguishes from the characteristics of others and portrait the author's individual attributes. Pejman shared his enormous admiration for Wagner's music—“*his orchestration, and harmony to where Schoenberg arrived*” and Mussorgsky's—“*though he did not have extraordinary knowledge in theory, compared to his competitors, he was inherently so talented that it overshadowed his shortcomings.*”

I was honored to interview Maestro Pejman for *Peyk*. Given that there are many videos and documentaries available online to learn about Pejman's musical journey, I sought this interview to flow on its own while speaking with him. It has been edited for clarity and space considerations.

Vahid Jahandari (VJ): *How do you see the current situation of music in Iran?*

Ahmad Pejman (AP): Everyone somehow involved with music, from faculty to students in academia or freelancers of all levels, is non-stop complaining about the facilities, yet still doing it so passionately. Much that is needed to produce commonly-accepted “standards” in today's world is available and accessible in the country. In Lorestan, ordinary folk play “dutar” (a Persian two-stringed lute), and that makes you cry. You can't consider that unworthy because it is solo, the instrument is not expensive, or the setting is rather located in a small, undeveloped, and secluded town. That performance connects you to the extent of collectively identifying nostalgia, and the ideology of its existence that speaks volumes beyond words.

Students in academia learn counterpoint, etc., and deny all other genres, assuming this is the “truth,” and all other music is vulgar. Within the mass-produced entertainment industry, there is countless cheap production on a daily basis, but you can still find brilliance every now and then. Vivaldi was revived in the early 20th century after hundreds of years of absence. In the past decades, his music has been considered among the most performed of our current times.

[Pejman further stated the artistic achievement of the Italian composer of the Baroque period, Vivaldi, is timeless due to it being touching the listeners of all ages and the audience being able to relate to his language and way of self-expression effortlessly.]

VJ: How do you determine the logistics that define your musical textures?

AP: There appears to be confusion on the notion of simplicity and complexity in arts in general. In that sense, it wouldn't necessarily be always a benefit to make things more complicated technically, and whatever defines further advancement of that technicality. It doesn't serve and elevate the artwork. For example, in Majid Majidi's *Bide Majnoon (The Willow Tree)*, if I had made the score more complex, it would have taken away its sincere feelings, intimacy, perceived loss, memory, solitude, isolation, departure, and all the other criteria for an immediate impact that includes the specific geography, time and place, the main character's stance on the events, and transitions as the story unveil. The initial idea inspired by the picture is essential in determining the procedures the score accompanies, and sophistication must be equivalent to perfection, meaning the utmost ideal and suitable of the prioritized intent.

VJ: How do your perspectives on such determinations vary?

AP: You can't always categorize music through the German lens, for instance, like Bach. We are from the East and have a different culture and faith. That's where our soul and notion of identity have been formed. Our music should also resonate with who we are, our lifestyle, language, literature, architecture, and the history we inherently represent, not what we manufacture as quick or gradual as one might while being aliens in other nations.

VJ: What do you recommend to artists aiming to express a distinctive voice instead of prioritizing an impossible assumption of targeting certain ears?

AP: Know your audience and build the constructive elements surrounding it. America is capitalist and all about money, fame, and who has the potential to bring that much-needed attention for the given outcome through the platforms that the higher society considers providing. Making life and profession from music, particularly the kind of work we do, is indeed challenging.

VJ: Would you tell us more about the epitomes of classical music?

AP: Beethoven and Bach, I learned so much about them. They intellectualized every detail, not just a stream of consciousness. Very experimental. They aimed to push the boundaries within the constraint of their time and what the circumstance dictated. It's not just about good melody, the entire thing should read fluently when it comes to showcasing your expertise.

Beethoven didn't have Mozart's talent, but was overly sentimental, reflecting on his personal life and ambitions to achieve his purpose. More so, his commitment to remaining immortal overcame the obstacles along the path, whether it was his emotional and physical disability or all other forms of social and political barriers.

[Pejman concluded his conversation by illustrating excerpts of Mozart's music on how he developed an extensive piece of music from small motives and limiting the ideas that assemble the entire work.]

Vahid Jahandari is a musician and composer. He is currently pursuing his doctorate in music composition.



NOTICE

Persian Cultural Center Annual Meeting and Election Sunday, May 15, 2022

The Persian Cultural Center of San Diego will hold its annual meeting and election for members of the Board of Directors on Sunday, May 15, 2022, at Mt. Carmel High School, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Mt. Carmel High School is located at 9550 Carmel Mountain Road, San Diego, CA 92129.

The agenda for the meeting is as follows:

- Welcome by PCC president
- Annual Board of Directors report
- Introduction of the candidates
- Election process and results

If you have been a member for the last year and are interested in running for the board, please contact us immediately. If your membership has lapsed or you would like to become a member, this is the best time to do so and join us in our annual meeting. You can find the membership form on our website at www.pccsd.org.

A list of candidates and instructions for voting will be sent to all PCC members. Thank you for your support. If you are a current member and did not receive a voting package in the mail, please contact us immediately.

Thank you,
Board of Directors of Persian Cultural Center



What's On this Spring at The San Diego Museum of Art

Ladan Akbarnia

Spring has sprung at The San Diego Museum of Art, with a rare opportunity to view a private collection of Impressionist paintings and an exciting new installation by contemporary artist Shadi Yousefian on loan from Advocartsy in the Museum's Arts of Iran gallery. The extraordinary works in *Monet to Matisse: Impressionist Masterpieces from the Bemberg Foundation* were collected by Georges Bemberg (1915–2011), the Argentine-French writer and pianist who bought his first painting—a Pissarro—while studying at Harvard University. The selection, which rarely leaves its permanent home in Toulouse, France, includes works by Paul Cézanne, Edgar Degas, Claude Monet, and Berthe Morisot, while Pierre Bonnard is represented by over fifteen remarkable examples. Impressionism, and the movements it inspired, such as Pointillism and Fauvism, paved the way for Modernism, as illustrated by the early works of Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse in the exhibition.

Monet to Matisse ends at the entrance to SDMA's Arts of Iran gallery, where visitors will be greeted with works of different media made in Iran and the Iranian diaspora over the last several centuries. Every 6-12 months, the Museum will feature new examples of Iranian contemporary art, some of them acquisitions to the permanent collection and others featured on loan. This spring, SDMA is delighted to feature three works from the *Fading Memories* series by San Francisco-based artist Shadi Yousefian. Yousefian's work addresses issues of loss, dislocation, cultural identity, and memory—all of which stem from her personal experiences as an Iranian immigrant. Her artistic practice includes mixed media, combining photographic prints and other materials. In *Fading Memories*, the artist explores memory as both fragmented and willfully reclaimed. Cutting up negatives of old photographs collected from albums of family and friends, Yousefian then rearranges the fragmented strips into "negative collage" prints. The destructive act of cutting negatives and detaching the pictured subjects from their original environments resembles the breaking down and distortion of memories of people, places, experiences, and attachments over time. The meticulous reconstruction of the strips into collaged prints, however, illustrates the power to reclaim fading memories and connections by rebuilding and re-viewing them.

On loan from the Los Angeles gallery Advocartsy, *Fading Memories* will be on display at SDMA through September 2022, while *Monet to Matisse* is on view until August 7, 2022. Please visit www.sdmart.org for times and tickets.



Claude Monet. *Boats on the Beach at Etretat*, 1883. Oil on canvas Bemberg Foundation. ©Bemberg Foundation



Shadi Yousefian. *Fading Memories 1*, Edition 2/2, 2019. Archival prints of 20 individual negative collages. ©Shadi Yousefian



Shadi Yousefian. *Fading Memories Negatives 2*, *Lightbox 2*, and *Lightbox 4*, 2021. Original negative collages in lightbox. ©Shadi Yousefian



Ladan Akbarnia, PhD, is curator of South Asian and Islamic Arts at San Diego Museum of Art.



Recipe from: Samin Nosrat, *Epicurious Online*, June 2013

SEASON OF CELEBRATIONS
WEDDINGS & GRADUATIONS

Jeweled Rice

6 Servings

“Yes, making this rice is a time commitment and a labor of love. But the ingredients aren’t difficult to find, and the finished dish is stunning.”

Ingredients

1/4 cup unsalted, shelled raw natural pistachios; 1/4 cup slivered almonds; 2 cups basmati rice; Kosher salt; 1 orange; 1/2 cup sugar; 2 medium carrots, peeled, cut into matchstick-size pieces; 1/4 cup dried barberries or 1/2 cup dried cranberries; 1/4 cup raisins; 1/4 teaspoon saffron threads; 2 tablespoons unsalted butter; 4 tablespoons olive oil, divided; 1 medium onion, finely chopped; 1/4 teaspoon ground cardamom; 1/4 teaspoon ground cumin; 1/4 teaspoon ground turmeric

Preparation

Step 1 Preheat oven to 350°. Spread pistachios on a rimmed baking sheet and toast until just beginning to brown, about 4 minutes. Transfer to a plate, let cool, then coarsely chop. Spread almonds on the same baking sheet and toast until golden brown, 5–8 minutes; let cool. Set nuts aside.

Step 2 Place rice in a fine-mesh sieve and rinse under cold water until water runs clear. Cook rice in a large pot of boiling salted water, stirring occasionally, until grains have lengthened but are still firm, 6–7 minutes; drain and rinse under cold water. Spread rice on another rimmed baking sheet; let cool.

Step 3 Meanwhile, using a vegetable peeler, remove zest from orange and thinly slice lengthwise (reserve flesh for another use). Bring sugar and 1 cup water to a boil in a medium saucepan, stirring to dissolve sugar. Add orange zest and carrots, reduce heat, and simmer, stirring occasionally, until carrots are tender, 15–20 minutes; drain and set aside (discard syrup).

Step 4 Combine barberries and raisins in a small bowl and cover with hot water; let soak 10 minutes. Drain and set aside. Place saffron in another small bowl and add 1/4 cup hot water; set aside.



Step 5 Heat butter and 1 tablespoon oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onion, season with salt, and cook, stirring often, until soft and beginning to brown, 8–10 minutes. Add cardamom, cumin, turmeric, and 1 tablespoon saffron mixture. Cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 1 minute.

Step 6 Reduce heat to low, add barberries and raisins, and cook, stirring often, about 3 minutes. Stir in reserved nuts and orange zest and carrot mixture; season with salt. Set fruit and nut mixture aside.

Step 7 Heat remaining 3 tablespoons oil in a large wide heavy pot over medium heat. Add half of rice, spreading evenly; top with fruit and nut mixture, then remaining rice, spreading evenly. Using the end of a wooden spoon, poke 5–6 holes in rice all the way through to bottom of pot (to help release steam and help rice cook evenly).

Step 8 Drizzle remaining saffron mixture over rice. Place a clean kitchen towel over pot, cover with a tight-fitting lid, and secure loose edges of towel on top of lid, using a rubber band or masking tape.

Step 9 Cook until pot begins to steam, 5–8 minutes. Reduce heat to very low and cook, without stirring, until rice is tender and bottom layer of rice is browned and crisp, 30–40 minutes.

Step 10 Scoop rice into a wide serving bowl, breaking bottom crust into pieces.



The 72nd FIFA Congress in Doha, Qatar: A Short and Sweet, but Serious Summary

By Danial Golforoush

Football Stands with Ukraine

At the time of writing, just more than one month has passed since the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the world of football has taken a stance against this act. While it would be untrue to say that this is the only ongoing war around the world, the footballing community has not wavered from its position. Within a few days of the initial attacks, football's governing body, FIFA, released a statement extending rumored and temporary measures: "FIFA and UEFA have today decided together that all Russian teams, whether national representative teams or club teams, shall be suspended from participation in both FIFA and UEFA competitions until further notice." This statement was then followed up with "temporary employment and registration rules to address several issues in relation to war in Ukraine," which provided players and coaches of Ukrainian teams and foreign nationals working in Russia the flexibility to temporarily break their contracts and move if necessary. The ban meant that the crucial UEFA Europa League match between Russia's Spartak Moscow and Germany's RB Leipzig was canceled and RB Leipzig went directly to the next round of the competition! Teams across the world demonstrated their support for the people of Ukraine in one way or another as well. The captains of Chelsea and Liverpool walked on the pitch with yellow and blue wreaths in hand before their match as the fans around the stadium held signs of support. West Ham United, who had given their Ukrainian star Andriy Yarmolenko time off to tend to his personal needs, wore his number 7 jersey during the warm-ups of their match against Wolves.

The support from the fans has not faded away in the past month and it is still carrying strong. This was proven once again as there were pleas to "stop conflicts and wars" during the 72nd FIFA Congress in Qatar. The recorded message from Andriy Pavelko, the President of Ukrainian Association of Football, was played with Russian delegates present—setting the tone for the meeting. "We have regularly received sad news of the deaths of members of the Ukrainian football community... They have been killed by the aggressors' rockets from one of the biggest armies in the world. Football has taken a back seat in our country," said Pavelko. His remarks were then later addressed by Alexey Sorokin, the Russian delegate at the meeting, who mainly brushed off Pavelko's comments, saying: "It is difficult for them, we understand that... But I'm here not to discuss politics or military activities or anything, I am here in the FIFA Congress." Sorokin followed up by questioning the bans against Russia and its teams: "We are not hiding. We have every right to be here... We find it kind of strange that the Russian team was not allowed to play in



this qualification... It's strange. We feel that our football players and football lovers have nothing to do with [the war]."

No immediate decisions or changes were made during the meeting, however, due to the ban in place because of the war. The Russian National Team were disqualified automatically from their qualifying game against Poland, which all in all means that they will be missing out on this year's World Cup in Qatar. On the other hand, Ukraine can still qualify with their final games postponed to June with the hope that the team will be able to compete for their spot then.

Ukraine will face Scotland in their next match, which the winner will play against Wales. The winner of that match will qualify for the 2022 World Cup and will join England, Iran, and the United States in Group B!

Qatar's Humanitarian Record Brought Under Question Again

There was no question that the Russian invasion of Ukraine and its effect on football would be a point of discussion, however, it was the passionate speech of the Norwegian Football Federation president that turned some heads. Lise Klaveness, a lawyer and retired footballer, rose to the stage and demanded FIFA step up and uphold its members to the highest of standards.

She began: "Football can inspire dreams and break down barriers, but as leaders we must do it right, to the highest standards... Last year Norway debated boycotting the World Cup in 2022. Instead, we voted for dialogue and pressure through FIFA as the best way to work for changes. Our members question ethics in sport and demand transparency. FIFA must act as a role model."

Klaveness continued: "In 2010 World Cups were awarded by FIFA in unacceptable ways with unacceptable consequences. Human rights, equality, democracy: the core interests of football were not

Continued on page 13



in the starting eleven until many years later. These basic rights were pressured onto the field as substitutes by outside voices. FIFA has addressed these issues but there's still a long way to go. The migrant workers injured, the families of those that died in the build-up to the World Cup must be cared for. There is no room for employers who do not secure the freedom and safety of World Cup workers. No room for leaders who cannot host the women's game. No room for hosts that cannot legally guarantee the safety and respect of the LGBTQ+ people coming to this theater of dreams... Initially FIFA hesitated [to sanction Russia but], international pressure forced a reaction.

"FIFA must set the tone and lead," she ended.

Her remarks were then followed up by Hassan al-Thawadi, the secretary general of the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, who defended Qatar's progress and commitment to change in the past 12 years, saying "even our harshest critics such as Amnesty recognise our commitment." He also pointed out that the World Cup will highlight the region not as a war torn area, but a thriving one at that! He concluded his speech by demonstrating his disappointment with the Norwegian FA's lack of initiation of direct dialogue with the Qatari SC and perpetuation of stereotypes.

The events that followed were controversial as the FIFA president presented a video that demonstrated the improvements in the life of the workers and the start of dialogue about the safety of the LGBTQ+ fans once the tournament begins.

In hindsight, much of the dialogue, improvement, and guarantees provided by the host nation must have been in place before their selection! FIFA and the greater footballing community ought to take this moment and establish a robust plan and policy for the future.



Public Announcement

3 REASONS ELECTRIC VEHICLES (EVs) ARE THE PERFECT CHOICE FOR YOU

Celebrate Earth Month when you drive an electric vehicle (EV)! You might not realize it, but there are lots of reasons an EV could be the perfect fit for you. Whether you're looking for the ideal road trip companion or just looking for something you can rely on day-to-day, there's an EV that has just what you're looking for. Here are three reasons to LOVELECTRIC and embrace the EV lifestyle.

1. **EVs go wherever you want to go.**

EVs are more than capable of taking you on your daily drives. Many EVs have ranges of more than 200 miles per charge. Plus, there are over 3,000 public chargers in SDG&E's service territory. You can find them at Park & Ride locations, plus there are many chargers already available at schools, parks and beaches.

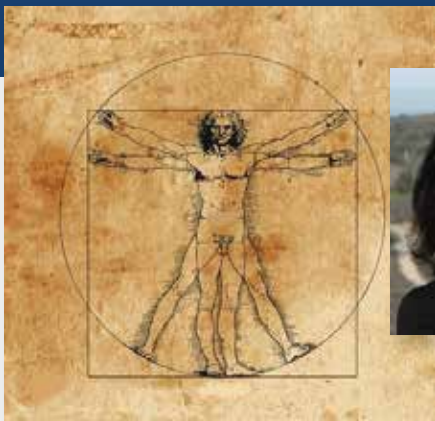
2. **EVs are low maintenance.**

EVs have significantly lower maintenance costs because they don't need oil changes, coolant, transmission fluid, belts or costly engine parts. Estimates show EV drivers can save up to 30% on annual maintenance costs. Check out more savings at sdge.com/EV-Compare.

3. **There are many low-cost options.**

With federal, state and local incentives, the cost to buy or lease EVs are lower than you might expect. Make sure to check out what's available at sdge.com/EV-Incentives including the statewide Clean Fuel Reward that offers up to \$750 when you purchase or lease a new EV.

Falling in love has never been easier! For more resources and information about why it's time to love electric vehicles, visit sdge.com/LovElectric.



By Sanaz Majd, MD



Top 9 Causes of Hair Loss

The Will Smith/Chris Rock Oscars debacle has recently created a lot of buzz around the topic of alopecia, the general medical term referring to hair loss. Actor Will Smith's wife, Jada Pinkett-Smith, reportedly suffers from a subtype of alopecia, the subject of Chris Rock's controversial jokes for the evening which culminated in a shocking physical confrontation initiated by Will Smith.

So what is alopecia? Well, here is a review of some of the top causes:

Alopecia Areata:

Alopecia areata, although not a very common subtype of alopecia, is the specific type that has affected Jada Pinkett-Smith. It is a condition that causes a rather sudden loss of specific, distinct, round/oval patches of hair on the scalp. It is an autoimmune disorder, which means the body erroneously regards parts of itself as "foreign" (in this case, the hair follicles) and mounts an immune response which can sometimes also cause hair loss on other parts of the body, such as eyelashes and eyebrows. However, about half of people with alopecia areata will regrow their hair within one year. Overall, it is a cosmetic condition that is not life-threatening but can certainly cause great emotional distress and a psychosocial impact.

Besides alopecia areata, however, there are numerous more common causes of hair loss. Whereas alopecia areata tends to create distinct, round losses of hair on the scalp, other types of hair loss tend to be less distinct, more diffuse, and often more gradual. Here are some of the culprits:

Alopecia Androgenetica:

By far the most common cause of hair loss in both men and women, this subtype of hair loss has not only a genetic component (hence, the term "genetic"), but also a hormonal one (hence, the term "androgen," which refers to hormones). Again, the pattern is often a diffuse thinning in women and a "male-patterned" loss in men that seems to worsen with age. Family members are often also affected, most especially one or more parents and the genes are passed down from one generation to the next.

Thyroid Disorder:

Hypothyroidism can also cause diffuse hair thinning. There is also a genetic component, such as Hashimoto's, also an autoimmune condition but one in which the body regards the thyroid gland as "foreign" and mounts an immune attack. As a result, the thyroid gland shuts down the production of thyroid hormone and slows down our metabolic processes. It can also cause constipation, cold intolerance, depression, weight gain, fatigue, and hair loss. Everything slows down.

Chronic Iron Deficiency:

This is more of a concern for menstruating women who tend to bleed more -- either more frequently, with greater duration, or simply with increased flow. Strict vegetarians who lack iron in their diet are also at risk for this. However, all iron-deficiency anemia requires close observation and follow-up with a doctor, most especially in those aged 40 and above, as microscopic loss of blood in the stool is a more serious concern.

Medications:

Certain medications can also cause hair loss, such as chronic corticosteroids used to treat various autoimmune disorders (such as rheumatoid arthritis and lupus), hormonal contraceptives, hormone replacement therapy, lithium, and amiodarone (an anti-arrhythmic), anticonvulsants, and chemotherapy. It is typically reversible, however, as discontinuation of the medication does often result in hair regrowth.

Stress:

Experiencing a traumatic or highly stressful life event causes hair loss about 3-6 months down the line. However, it is also reversible and the hair will regrow once the stressor has been resolved.

Traction:

Interestingly, chronic traction on the hair follicles can also cause hair thinning. This is most apparent in women who tend to wear their hair up in a ponytail or bun consistently. If the hair loss tends to be more apparent towards the front of the scalp, try wearing your hair down for a change.



Nowruz at the City Libraries

Every year during the month of March, PCC sets up haft-seen along with Iranian handicrafts in several city libraries. This is part of our outreach program to share Nowruz and Iranian culture with the community at large.



Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS):

PCOS is quite common as reportedly 1 out of 10 women tend to suffer from it and many go undiagnosed. It is also very common within the Iranian population. PCOS is a hormonal imbalance that causes irregular menstrual periods, acne, hirsutism (excessive hair growth on the face or body), easy weight gain, difficulty losing weight, and diffuse scalp hair loss.

Pregnancy:

Interestingly, women tend to experience an increase in hair growth during pregnancy. However, after giving birth there is a sudden demise in various hormone levels which can also cause sudden hair loss. Fortunately, most women gradually do return back to their pre-pregnancy hair status through time, however.

There are numerous other causes of alopecia, such as syphilis (a sexually transmitted infection), lupus (another autoimmune disorder), and tinea capitis (a fungus infection of the scalp), however they are much less common. An initial visit to your doctor can quickly rule out the more common causes listed in this article, typically with a blood test. But if a cause is not easily discernible, a referral to a dermatologist is another option.

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

Peyk

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Dietary Fiber Benefits



By Mohammad Ahrar, PhD



Introduction

Fiber is a kind of carbohydrate found in plants. Unlike some other forms of carbohydrates that are highly digestible in the human body, fiber isn't digested and passes relatively intact through the gastrointestinal tract and out of the body. So, what is the benefit of fiber?

Dietary Fiber Composition

Dietary fiber is defined as "all plant polysaccharides and lignin which are resistant to hydrolysis by the digestive enzymes of man."

(1) Fibers are technically considered complex carbohydrates or polysaccharides made of chains of simple sugars such as glucose. Fibers are found only in plants and foods of plant origin. Animal food sources do not have fiber.

Plants produce carbohydrates and other nutrients during the process of photosynthesis—carbon from atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂) and hydrogen from water (H₂O), absorbed from the soil, are put together in plant cells using the solar energy to form glucose (with 6 carbon atoms). When several glucose molecules bind together, they form a chain of polysaccharide such as fiber. The major dietary fibers include cellulose, hemicellulose, and pectin. Plant foods can contain all forms of fibers in varying amounts or have more concentration of one type of fiber.

Physiological Properties of Fiber

Depending on the type of chemical bonds between sugar molecules, a variety of carbohydrates are formed. For example, the bonds between glucose molecules in the starch (a polysaccharide) are formed in such a way that they can easily be broken down (hydrolyzed) by the enzymes in the human digestive system. The chemical bonds between the simple sugars in fibers are different, so that they cannot be hydrolyzed by human enzymes. Instead, fibers can pass through the small intestine virtually undigested. When fibers reach the large intestine, most of them can be digested and metabolized by the bacterial flora in the colon and produce a variety of compounds, such as short chain fatty acids, vitamins K and B12, hydrogen, methane, and other gasses. Some short-chain fatty acids, such as butyric acid, are the primary fuel source for cells in the lining of the colon.

Types of Fiber

Dietary fibers are diverse in chemical composition. Some are made of 6-carbon sugars, mainly glucose. Some others are made of 5-carbon sugars and/or combined with other types of sugars or different compounds.

Fibers can be categorized as soluble and insoluble. Soluble fiber dissolves in water and can form a viscous, gel-like material in the

digestive system. Insoluble fiber is not dissolved in water and, when consumed in the diet, contributes to the bulk of the contents in the large intestine, which in turn helps with movement of the undigested materials in the colon. Fibers can also be categorized based on their physiological activities into viscous and fermentable fibers, which are essentially the same as soluble and insoluble fibers. Both types of fibers, regardless of the definitions, are found in most plant food sources in a variety of proportions and we use both definitions interchangeably.

General Functions of Dietary Fiber

Dietary fiber has numerous important physiologic effects on the organs. For example, in the upper gastrointestinal tract, an important attribute of fiber, especially soluble fiber, is its viscosity, which may lead to a delay in gastric emptying. Soluble (viscous) fibers slow down the emptying of the stomach and small intestine which can help delay or prevent abrupt rise of glucose levels in the blood. Soluble fiber may also help with the delay of fat absorption in the small intestine.

In the large intestine, the fermentability of fibers means they are good bulking agents and promote the movement of undigested foods through the digestive system, helping regularity, laxation, and the prevention of constipation.

Sources of Dietary Fiber

Most plant sources contain both soluble and insoluble fibers in a variety of levels.

Soluble fiber: Generally, soluble or viscous fibers are more concentrated in seeds such as oats, barley, peas, beans, lentils, chia seeds, and flax seeds. Certain vegetables such as broccoli, carrots, sweet potatoes, and onions are also high in soluble fiber. Fruits such as figs, avocados, plums, prunes, berries, ripe bananas, apples, quince, and pears contain more soluble fiber than insoluble fiber.

Insoluble fiber: These fibers are usually more concentrated in whole wheat, wheat bran, corn, nuts, vegetables (such as cauliflower, green beans, carrots, cucumbers, and celery), unripe bananas, and some dried fruits. Grapes, plums, peaches, apples, and similar fruits have more insoluble fiber concentrated in their skin or the outer membrane. Tomato skin, potato skin, popcorn, and brown rice contain high proportions of insoluble fiber.

Effect of Fiber on the Digestive System

Because fiber is not digestible by human enzymes, it passes through the stomach and the small intestine rather unchanged. The presence

of viscous fibers in the stomach can delay the rate of emptying of digested foods from the stomach into the duodenum (the first portion of the small intestine) by forming a viscous, gel-like consistency which delays absorption of some nutrients such as glucose.

When fiber reaches the large intestine, its digestion depends on the physicochemical properties of the fiber and the colonic microflora. Fiber sources such as oat bran, fruits, and vegetables are rich in hemicellulose and pectin, which are more fermentable types of fiber. Wheat bran and some cereals contain cellulose and are poorly fermented in the digestive system. The poorly fermentable fibers contribute more to fecal bulk, and as they absorb water, they help regularity and contribute to laxation which can prevent constipation. Studies suggest that a high-fiber diet helps to lower gastric acid and reduce the risk for gastroesophageal reflux disorder and ulcers.

Fiber's Effect on Glucose Intolerance and Diabetes

Studies show that the gel-like environment in the small intestine produced from consumption of viscous fibers found in fruits and most vegetables inhibits the activity of enzymes associated with the digestion of fats, carbohydrates, and proteins. As a result, the intestinal absorption of these nutrients can be reduced or delayed with fiber consumption. In people with diabetes, dietary fiber—particularly soluble fiber—can slow the absorption of sugar and help maintain blood sugar level. Delayed gastric emptying as a result of fiber consumption has been shown to reduce the rate of carbohydrate digestion and reduces the glycemic index of meals (discussed in *Peyk* #165), which in turn reduces the risk of type 2 diabetes.

It is well documented that diets high in sugar and low in fiber can cause sudden increases in blood sugar levels, which over time may increase the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. A Harvard study on both female nurses and male health professionals found that a low-fiber diet more than doubled the risk of type 2 diabetes when compared to a diet high in cereal fiber and low glycemic-index foods such as fiber-dense diets. (2)

Fiber and Heart Disease Prevention

Results of large-scale studies showed a protective effect of dietary fiber against coronary heart disease (CHD) by lowering blood cholesterol, attenuating blood triglyceride levels, decreasing hypertension, and normalizing blood glucose level. Epidemiologic studies support the relationship of all types of fiber-containing foods with a decreased risk of coronary heart disease. In a Harvard study of over 40,000 male health professionals, researchers found that a high total dietary fiber intake was linked to a 40 percent lower risk of coronary heart disease. (2)

Fiber's Effect on Blood Triglycerides and Cholesterol

Researchers at Mayo Clinic have found that beans, oats, flaxseed, and oat bran may help lower total blood cholesterol levels by lowering low-density lipoprotein (LDL), or “bad” cholesterol levels. (3) The study also has shown that high-fiber foods may

have other heart-health benefits, such as reducing blood pressure and inflammation. One study confirmed that regular intake of soluble fibers from oats or barley lowered blood levels of LDL cholesterol, a risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

Dietary Fiber and Colon Cancer

Effect of dietary fibers on cancer prevention is controversial. Some medical studies show that eating plenty of dietary fiber can reduce the risk for diverticulitis, hemorrhoids, and provide some relief for irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). When fruits and vegetables that contain more fermentable fiber are consumed, they not only provide vitamins and other nutrients, but they also produce large amounts of short-chain fatty acids including butyrate. This 4-carbon fatty acid not only provides a good source of energy for the colon epithelium but also may decrease the growth of human colon cancer cells by decreasing the growth of cancer cells and/or increasing the cells death.

Is Fiber a Good Source of Energy?

Because fibers are not digestible in the small intestine, they do not produce a significant amount of energy in the body (only 1.5-2.5 Kcal/g). Replacing high fiber foods with a portion of calorie-condense foods may be a good practice in planned weight loss practice.

Fiber Supplements

Fiber supplements such as Metamucil, Citrucel, and FiberCon help relieve constipation, but they don't provide vitamins, minerals, and other beneficial nutrients that dietary fibers do.

Some Fiber Tips

Eating whole fruits instead of drinking fruit juices provides more fiber to the diet. If you peel an orange the way you peel an apple you can get more soluble fiber than just peeling the fruit in the regular way. Whole grain products and plant-based foods not only provide fiber, but they are also rich in nutrients and antioxidants that boost the immune system, which can aid in the fight against some kinds of cancer cells. Because the amount of soluble and insoluble fibers varies in different plant foods, eating a variety of fiber-dense foods can have great health benefits.

Summary

Fibers are complex carbohydrates or polysaccharides, made of simple sugars such as glucose, and found only in plants and foods of plant origin. Fiber isn't digested by enzymes in the human digestive system, but does absorb water and increases viscosity, which can help regularity and laxation. Health benefits of dietary fiber include a healthy digestive system, reduced glucose intolerance and risk of type 2 diabetes, reduced blood triglycerides and cholesterol, and reduced risk of heart disease.

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An Immigration Story:

An Interview with Mr. A

Leaving your homeland and residing in another—with a totally new culture, language, and set of laws and regulations—is very challenging and requires a lot of adaptation that, in most cases, is also very frustrating.

But, looking back at those challenges many years later makes some of them look funny, some amazing, and some, of course, sad. The truth is, no matter how we feel about them, the challenges are, for sure, part of the history of immigration that needs to be documented for use by our grandchildren or simply by historians to picture the hardship that first-generation Iranians had to go through to meet those challenges.

Peyk kicked off this column in 2021 with Reza Khabazian's story, with a goal to encourage our readers to start telling their stories so we can present a diverse documentary. Now that Mr. Khabazian has published his six-part story, it is time for new stories and new voices.

It was a Sunday afternoon when I visited Mr. A, after so many years, in a government housing unit to record his immigration story. Before I begin reflecting on our conversation, it is necessary to mention that—due to the sensitive content of his immigration story, with respect to his privacy—we can not mention his last name. This interview has been edited for clarity and space considerations.

Reza Khabazian (RK): *On behalf of Peyk, I would like to thank you very much for allowing this interview to take place.*

Mr. A: You're quite welcome.

RK: *Let's begin with years ago, I mean before the revolution, and ask you to give us a little background of yourself and your family.*

Mr. A: (long pause) Well, I don't know where to start?

RK: *Let me ask you a more direct question: what were you and your family doing at that time, your occupations, your status?*

Mr. A: Oh, we were married a few years before the revolution. I was employed by the ministry of justice and my wife was an elementary school teacher in a public school. A few years after our wedding, with the help of my uncle, who was a successful businessman, we purchased a small house in an ordinary and inexpensive part of our town.

RK: *So, you both were government employees!*

Mr. A: Yes.

RK: *When did the idea of leaving the country emerge in your thoughts?*

Mr. A: I think nobody likes to think of leaving his or her homeland. We were no exception, but you know, when you are a member of a religious minority, you always pray for peace and quiet in the country. If you study our recent history, any time that our country

went through any social or political turmoil, the members of all religious minorities were harassed, attacked, or even killed.

RK: *What do you think was the reason for that?*

Mr. A: First, as you know, the prejudice against religious minorities always existed in our society. In other words, minorities have always been victimized without playing any role in creating the social or political problems. That was the reason that we were always praying for peace so we can get along with our normal life. Normally, it did not mean that everything was 100 percent pleasant—we had minor problems here and there—but, overall, the situation was manageable. Second, I think they believed we were part of the government. Why they thought that way, I don't know.

RK: *When did you realize the situation was moving in the wrong direction?*

Mr. A: After a couple of uprisings in a few cities. I think it was late 1977 or early 1978 that the issue entered in our daily talks at dinner tables or at our group gatherings.

RK: *In these dinner table discussions, did everybody share the same worry or not?*

Mr. A: The older generations were more worried than the younger ones—they were worried that there was a chance for history to repeat itself. But, the younger generation argued that the era of such adverse actions was long gone. Based on their arguments, today's people of Iran are more educated, more open to accept the rights of all minorities.

RK: *What about you? Which side were you more leaning toward?*

Mr. A: Personally, I was more in agreement with the older generation and my wife more in tune with younger ones. She was criticizing me of being too pessimistic. Unfortunately, it did not last too long that her opinion changed drastically as well as the opinion of most people in our religious group.

RK: *Please tell us what happened that caused the opinion to change? (In asking this question, suddenly I felt the air in the room got too heavy. Mr. A took a long pause, kept looking at a distance, and then continued.)*



Mr. A: It was almost late 1978, the entire country was on strike. The entire country was under martial law, all schools were closed, government offices were shut down, demonstrations against the government were a daily activity all over the country, news of deadly clashes between the demonstrators and the army became the subject of every conversation. Me and my wife were quietly sitting at home in that late afternoon of an autumn day, both worried about the future of the country as well as our own future when, all of a sudden, we heard a big bang on our front door. We both looked at each other in a panic. I stood up and hesitantly started to go toward the front door while asking my wife to stay in the room. The banging got louder and louder. I saw the door was pushed harshly open. Right before I got a chance to open the door, it opened by force and an angry crowd of probably 15 to 20 people rushed themselves into our front yard—some carrying picks and shovels, some carrying huge yard sticks, and one carrying a gas tank! I started to scream at them:

What the hell are you looking for?
Get lost you bastard!
 You are a bastard , get out of my property, NOW!
Clear the way you Filthy (Najes), we are here to carry
“Shariah” law. Come on guys, start!, he said while
 pointing at the crowd.

I looked at my wife watching us from the window, terrified and pale! I told her to come down and stay with me. The crowd started going to our rooms and a few minutes later some exited carrying our belongings—a radio, TV, rugs, dishes, clothes, whatever they could get their hands on.

RK: *What about your neighbors? Did anyone come to help?*

Mr. A: Some were watching from their windows and a couple rushed in to help. Our neighbor said, “I swear to God, Mr. A, they are not Moslem, this is not what ‘Shariah’ teaches us,” as he was trying to get us to his home for safety. He turned to one of the mob and shouted: “You must be ashamed of yourselves, hope you all burn in hell!” When we got to the alley, it was full of people, just watching.

RK: *Just watching?*

Mr. A: Just watching and nodding.

RK: *I am so sorry to hear that. It is awful!*

Mr. A: Yes, it is awful. It took only a few minutes before we saw smoke coming from our living room. The mob exited our house and rushed to burn another house and another house. In no time, smoke filled the entire alley. Immediately, I called our relatives and informed them about the incident so they could get prepared. After the mob’s departure, some other neighbors came to put the fire out. So, in just less than half an hour, we became homeless, with a house half burnt and most of our belongings gone. That was it. It did it. It made my wife change her way of thinking.

RK: *Where did you stay that night?*

Mr. A: At our neighbor’s home until the next day when my uncle and parents came to see us right after the martial law allowed them.

“Look at my son. Thank God you two are alive and safe,” said my uncle, while holding me in his arms, my parents were both crying. “Do not worry about the damages, I will help you to put the house in order, repair, and also replace all of your belongings that you lost. Let’s go to our house, our place is safe. We are next door to the police station.”

We had no choice but to move to my uncle’s house, hoping to have the worst behind us. Unfortunately, we did not know that this incident was just the tip of the iceberg...

Mr. A’s immigration story will continue in the next issue of *Peyk*.

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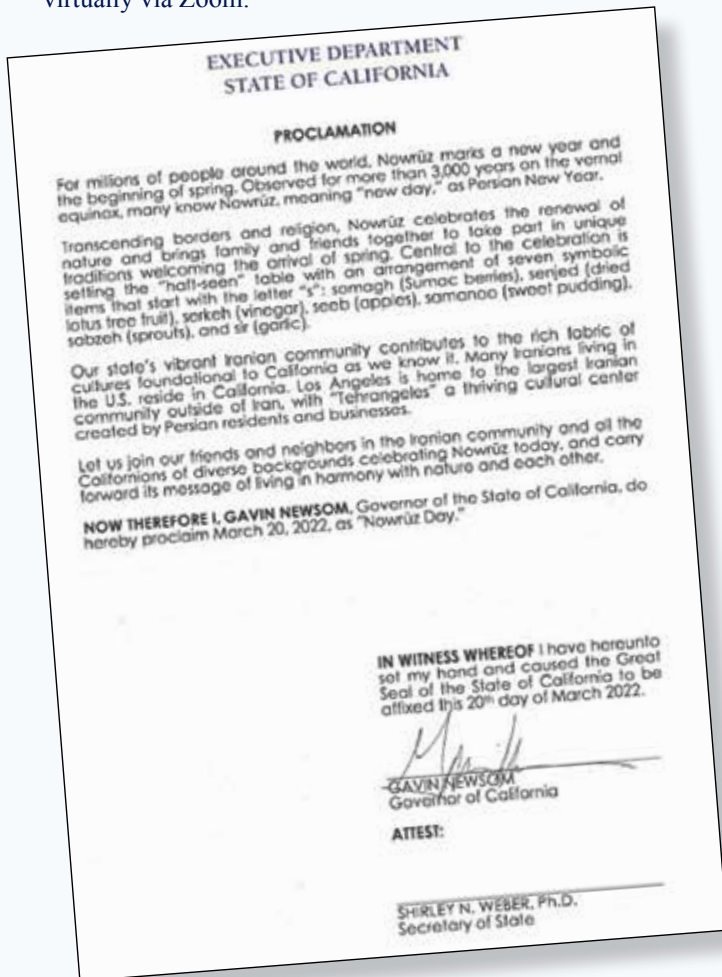
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Nowruz Around Town

The San Diego County Board of Supervisors presented a proclamation for Nowruz that was announced on March 15, 2022, at the County Administration Center. County of San Diego Middle Eastern Employee Resource Group (MEERG) Board invited members of the community to join them in person or virtually via Zoom.



California Governor, Gavin Newsom has proclaimed March 20 as Nowruz Day.

The San Diego City Council has also declared March 20 Nowruz Day and issued a proclamation in this regard. The mayor, Honorable Todd Gloria, and Councilman Raul Campillo attended the PCC's Nowruz Gala at the La Jolla Marriott on March 19, 2022, and presented the proclamation.

خوانندگان گرامی:

پیک

در صورت اطلاع داشتن از خبری که دانستن آن برای ایرانیان سن دیگو مهم است، با ما تماس بگیرید، چه خوب و چه بد: خبر فوت، تولد، ازدواج، موفقیت و هر آنچه هست را همراه با یک عکس به آدرس pcc@pccsd.org برایمان ارسال نمایید.

با سپاس پیک



The City of San Diego Proclamation



The San Diego City Council Proclamation



The County of San Diego Chief Administrative Officer approved the County Administration Center lighting on Sunday, March 20, in green, white, and red in honor of Nowruz at the request of the Persian Cultural Center.



President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden with the White House Sofreh Haft-seen



House of Iran celebrates "Roos e Iran" at Balboa Park (March 27, 2022)



In collaboration with PCC, AIAP and HOI, thousands of Iranian Americans and friends gathered at NTC park to celebrate Sizdahbedar and Nature Day.



Persian Cultural Center Nowruz Gala (March 19, 2022)

San Diego Chief of police David Nisleit (right) and Assistant Chief Bernie Colon (left) with Ali Sadr at Roos e Iran in Balboa Park



آقای منصور احدیان از میان ما رفت.

مردی که که آرزوی زندگی شاد و سعادتمندی را برای همگان داشت، مردی که سراسر زندگی‌اش صلح و آرامش و خشونت پرهیزی را در زندگی فردی اجتماعی و خانوادگی‌اش می‌خواست و به کار می‌برد. او با ذهنیت بازش فهم حقوقی از آدم‌ها و حیوانات داشت که در هم نسل‌هایش شاید کمتر کسی از این دست پیدا می‌شد، رابطه‌ای روشن همراه با متانت و درستکاری را همانطور که در مورد بچه‌ها و نوه‌ها و خانواده پیش می‌برد، برای دیگران نیز قابل بود. آدمی علاقمند به فرهنگ و ادبیات فارسی و سرنوشت میهن‌اش (ایران). آقای احدیان جان و روانی آرام و سبکبال باروحیه‌ای شاد و خندان زیست، همراه ذهنیتی آزادخواه و آزادمنش. یاد و نامش گرمی باد.



Photography Contest (Nowruz Haft-seen)

مدرسه ایرانیان سن دیگو
Iranian School of San Diego



For our recent school photography contest, we asked students to send us a picture of their haft-seen. We received 22 entries by the deadline. They were all beautiful and we decided to print them all. A few entries were in video format that we could not show here. We sincerely thank the participants and their parents for encouraging and helping the students submit their photographs.





ملا حسن می‌گوید که طالبان فقط برای حکومت کردن آمده و اگر کسی در حکومت آنان از گرسنگی بمیرد مقصر شما هستید چون وعده رزق داده‌اید. آیا همین‌طور است؟ اگر چنین باشد که شما همین حالا عهد خود را شکسته‌اید و هزاران کودک و زن و مرد را گرسنه به بستر خواب می‌فرستید.

آیا برنامه ندارید جو یا گندمی برای این مردم بفرستید؟

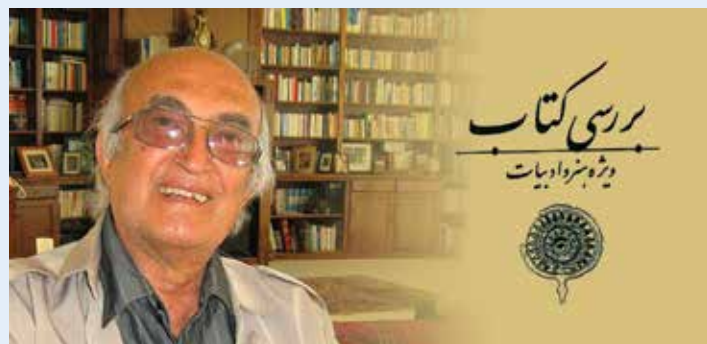
خدا جان!

اگر شما طالبان را به قدرت رسانده‌اید چرا دست‌شان را نمی‌گیرید که این‌ها بتوانند چند صبحی آبرومندانه‌تر حکومت کنند؟ چرا به این‌ها یک قواره درست ندادی که کودکان ازشان نترسند؟ چرا خودت مستقل عمل نمی‌کنی که از طریق جنرال فیض حمید وارد معامله می‌شوی؟ چرا آمریکا را همان‌طور بی‌دردسر بیرون نکردی که یک ملت را با بشکه‌های زرد منفجر کردی؟

خدا صاحب!

این‌طور که ملا حسن پای تو را وسط کشیده، دیر یا زود مردم ازت دلخور می‌شوند. مردی که به خاطر رزق و روزی وعده داده شده تو مجبور شود دخترش ساله‌اش را بفروشد دیگر احترامش را نسبت به تو از دست می‌دهد! دختری که به خاطر دستورات تو نتواند به مکتب برود تا چند ماه دیگر قید تو و پیامبرانت را می‌زند! زنی که به خاطر کمک تو به طالبان مجبور شود کارش را از دست بدهد و تن به روسپی‌گری بدهد دیر یا زود روی تو خط می‌کشد! خواهش می‌کنم بیا از خودت دفاع کن. بیا بگو تو با طالبان و القاعده و بوکوحرام ارتباط نداری؛ بیا بگو که حکومت‌داری یک علم است و «کار هر بز نیست خرمن کوفتن». بیا مداخله کن که آبروی تو و جان یک ملت در خطر است. لطفاً بیا. آدرس را همان بالا نوشته‌ام.

با احترام
یکی از عاشقانت
طنزی از موسی ظفر



یکصد و هشتمین شماره فصلنامه بررسی کتاب، ویژه هنر و ادبیات منتشر شد. امسال سی و یکمین سال انتشار این نشریه در آمریکا است. بررسی کتاب پیشتر به مدت بیست و پنج سال هم در ایران منتشر می‌شد.

برای آقای مجید روشنگر ناشر این فصلنامه وزین آرزوی موفقیت روزافزون داریم
پیک

محترم خدا صاحب!

می‌دانم آدرس دادن به شما اشتباه است چون شما همه آدرس‌ها را می‌دانید اما از آنجایی که ما در یک موقعیت کور قرار گرفته‌ایم و اغلب احساس می‌کنیم از نظر لطف شما پنهان می‌مانیم، می‌خواهم آدرسی بدهم که اگر ضرورت شد از ما یک احوال بگیرید.

کهکشان راه شیری را که گرفتید، پیش بیاید؛ از طرف راست در خط سوم و از طرف چپ در خط دوم یک منظومه شمسی هست با هشت یا نه سیاره. وقتی داخل منظومه شدید، بعد از مریخ یک سیاره آبی می‌رسد که اسمش را ما زمین گذاشته‌ایم ولی خودت یک زمان در مسج خود ازش به عنوان «ارض» یاد کردی.

در این سیاره موجودات پچولی زندگی می‌کنند که دوست دارند زمین تکه‌تکه باشد. این تکه‌ها از خود نام دارند. اگر به حساب الفبای انگلیسی یا از روی جدول غمگین‌ترین کشورها ببینی، نام این کشور بالاتر از همه می‌آید اما اگر به حساب آرامش و رفاه و اعتبار پاسپورت و هر چیز خوب دیگر ببینی کشور آخر است: افغانستان.

به این کشور که رسیدی، پایین ببین. آدم‌هایی که در به‌در و خاک‌برسر می‌گردند، مردم عادی‌اند؛ آن‌هایی که چند متر رخت توهم را بر سر پیچانده، سلاح به شانه دارند و صورت‌شان پر از پشم است طالب‌اند. فراتر از تقسیم‌بندی آدم و طالب چیزی نداریم.

حالا این طالبانی که گفتم از خود یک رئیس دارند به اسم ملا حسن آخند. عیب گرفتن خوب نیست اما این آدم را که خلق کرده‌ای بعضی پرهیزهایش را نصب نکردی؛ از جمله پرهیزای که باعث می‌شود این بدبخت گپ بزند. خدا جان! من شیطانی نمی‌کنم. ولی همین آدم که ذکرش شد دیشب به قدرت تو و اشاره جنرال باجوه به گپ آمد. راست و دروغش به تو معلوم است ولی یک سری اتهام‌هایی را به شخص شما وارد کرد که اگر راست باشد، خاکم به‌دهن، انگار شما رسماً با تروریست‌ها و مافیای مواد مخدر همدستید.

ملا حسن می‌گوید که به کمک شما افغانستان را تصرف کرده است؛ راست می‌گوید؟ یعنی شما کمک کردید که او و همدستانش مردم افغانستان را بکشند، مکاتب را بسوزانند، جاده و پل را انفجار دهند و یک کشور نیمه سالم را به قهقرا ببرند؟ ما تا حال فکر می‌کردیم خلیزاد این کار را کرده. حالا انگشت به سوی شما بلند شده. نمی‌خواهید چیزی بگویید؟