

***2020***

***THE FALL OF ISLAMIC STATES***

***&***

***THE RRISE OF A NEW POLITICAL ORDER***

**(IRAN, ISRAEL, ARMENIA UNION)**

***By: Sohrab Chamanara***



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***By: Sohrab Chamanara***

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*You, you may say I am a dreamer  
But I am not the only one  
I hope someday you'll join us  
And the world will be as one.*

«John Lennon»



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## INTRODUCTION

This book chronicles a 2500-year history of the Middle East. It all began in the B.C. era with a period of glorious empire, followed by Arab invasions and Ottoman domination and ending with three genocides of the past century and the totally repressive Iranian Revolution of 1979. That last event ushered in the regime of the corrupt and tyrannical Ayatollahs, led by Ayatollah Khomeini and his successor, Ayatollah Khamenie.

My intent in providing this lengthy, inclusive history, beginning with benevolent rulers like Cyrus, literary masterworks such as the “Shamanah” and peaceful relations among neighbors, has been to demonstrate the dominant civilizing influence of Persia (now Iran) in the region.

If we can see the history of that nation, before the invasions by Arab invaders and the self-interested rule of colonial powers in the 1800s, we can have our minds open to the possibility that an era of conciliation is possible. The only thing preventing such a return to those better, once-before, times are the shackles imposed by our limited historical consciousness.

That worldview, prior to 1979, saw Iran as a Muslim nation, rich in oil and exploited by American and other international petroleum companies for their domestic use. Since 1979, we have seen a nation that has retreated to the Middle Ages with rule by religious clerics also intent on exploiting and abusing the Iranian people for their personal enrichment and misguided religious beliefs. I wish to offer an alternative vision of the land of my ancestors. The

year 2020 is not seen as a strict calendar date. It is, instead, a metaphor for a time in the not-too-distant future in which the people of three, once-unified, nations--Iran, Armenia and Israel--can unite once again in an alliance of similar political and cultural values along with economic interests, a territory that was once the same size as the Persian Empire.

The three nations will keep their current boundaries but acknowledge that they each emerged from the same source and have the same peaceful aspirations for their people and for advancing their common development.

We are living in dangerous, even revolutionary, times. A new century is awakening and wishes to throw off the shackles of the past--old rulers, old ways and outmoded national structures.

The last century brought at least three genuine revolutions: in Russia (1917), China (1949) and Cuba (1959) but countless coups and fascist uprisings in Germany (1933) and Italy (1922). Iran witnessed a coup that overthrew the regime of Prime Minister Mossadegh and replaced it with the Pahlavi dynasty that had ruled since 1926 with the Shah (1953).

The Islamic world today is enduring historic upheavals. The Arab Spring of 2011 in Egypt set off a chain reaction of mass popular protests in other Middle East nations. While none succeeded in bringing in the granting of more political and social freedoms, we have not seen the end of such popularly-generated revolts. The Old Guard is nervous that its decades-long rule and continued legitimacy is under attack.

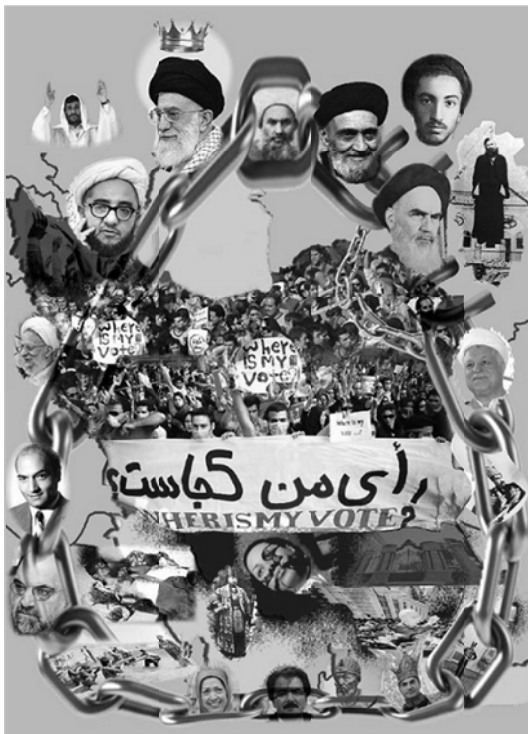
Besides serving as a metaphor, 2020 is an expression used to signify that one has perfect vision. While the exact course of events that will trigger popular revolts for change in the three nations of the Middle East Alliance is unknown, I would like to offer an alternative 2020 vision, one that replaces the current oppression, hatred and violence that now rules in the region.

The hinge on which my vision rests is with change in Iran. Change the future in Iran and peace will come to Israel, Armenia and rest of the Middle East!

After the 1979 revolution in Iran, “the Devil came out of the bottle” in Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq and unleashed what has grown into a worldwide plague of terrorism.

A book, “Iran in the Triangle Chain of Misery”, written in Persian, highlights the country’s past hundred year history and the people’s struggle for freedom and the rule of law.

The colors of the Iranian flag--green, white and red—are, here not in color shown, in the picture below, inside the country’s boundaries.



The green part shows peaceful demonstrations and slogans, over the last hundred years, where the people demand, in the white part, “Where is my vote?”. That question has always been answered, in the red part, with bloodshed by successive Iranian governments through assassinations, imprisonment or suspension of the

Constitution and Parliament (Majles). The clerics, with or without turbans and those supporting the crowned kings, surround Iran.

Only once in the thousand years of Iran's recent history did the people succeed in breaking that chain. That moment is known as the "Constitution Revolution" and it established a parliamentary regime in Iran. However, the Pahlavi Dynasty illegally amended the Constitution and granted dictatorial powers to the Shah.

Now, after the 35-year rule by the Ayatollahs Khomeini and Khamenie, the nation's agriculture has been destroyed and its rivers, forests and industrial production are abandoned. Iran has been turned into a nation of 75 million consumers who are saved only by a single revenue source: the sale of oil.

Among the greater non-monetary losses suffered by the country are the loss of more than a million lives in a devastating eight-year war with Iraq, a severe brain drain of the nation's best young minds and the loss of wide international support except from Syria's Bashar Assad, Vladimir Putin of Russia, Hezbollah of Lebanon, Oscar Chavez of Venezuela and maybe Cuba's Fidel Castro.

The key to opening this chain again is in the hands of the people inside Iran and not any opposition figures outside the country. After almost four decades, the people realize they are battling not only an individual, like the Shah and his cronies, but, even with the death of Islam's leader, Ayatollan Khamenie, there are more than a dozen Ayatollahs to replace him. As former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, once said, "There is no end to the Iraq and Afghanistan conflict and terrorism while the regime in Iran is in power."

## **2020'S SEEDS OF CHANGE**

How will these historic change take place? The seeds for a revolution of freedom and regional consolidation in Iran have already been sown. The powerful factors in Iran, among many, currently challenge the current regime. They are: Fast-growing Iranian young populations with rising expectations, increased urbanization and education levels and, finally, tech toys, the internet

and social media, powerful organizing tools for people to share information and foment popular unrest against clerical rule. Iran's challenge is the same faced by other autocratic rulers in the region.

Hopefully, an early sign of change will be taken by the United States Congress. Before the 2016 election, it will pass a resolution urging the President to impose a "Humanitarian Sanction" on Iran, covering nearly two thousand Ayatollahs and their cronies, charging them with human rights violations. It will deny them and their families visas to enter the United States and, in some cases, finding and blocking their assets.

President Obama will enact the sanction and make the resolution one that succeeding presidents renew every year. Canada follows suit, along with European Union but it takes Great Britain, who have extensive Iranian political and economic interests, longer to agree with the sanction.

This blueprint will not unfold swiftly. It may take months or sometimes a few years before these changes unfold. But the momentum created by decisive U.S. action sets the ball in motion.

These actions spur demands for change within Iran, which arise from highly-educated young people, especially Iran's women. They agree on the framework for certain rights that should be incorporated in Iran's future constitution. These items include:

The new constitution must be based on the principles in the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**: Separation of Islam from government involvement; Any Iranian, who has lived two-thirds of his life outside Iran, will not be eligible for any ministerial or government leadership role;

Iran will have a ceremonial Head of State, who may be called Shah, Leader or President. This person will be recommended by the elected Prime Minister and will serve a 10-year term so long as approved by a two-thirds majority of Parliament; The first Head of State will be a woman.

This road map becomes the people's protest agenda.

Before the change of regime, billions of dollars in foreign assets,

belonging to the regime's leadership, are blocked. Since the leaders and their families are not welcome in Europe or America, they have no alternative but to remain in the country and find an alternative solution before popular unrest destroys their assets within Iran.

President Rouhani probably starts discussions with Ayatollah Khamenei and agrees to a transitional government to start negotiation with the uprising's representatives.

As a first goodwill gesture, all political prisoners are freed. It is also agreed that anyone associated with the previous Islamic regime will enjoy immunity from past crimes.

The Islamic regime would next agree to change the Constitution and an election is called for a Constitutional Parliament "Majles Moasesan". They will approve a newly-drawn secular Constitution. Since all discussion of the "Majles Moasesan" are open and the representatives are connected via Facebook and Twitter to their constituencies, a popular referendum is scheduled within one months following approval.

The first order of the new regime's foreign policy is the creation of a Union of the Middle East where the three historic nations who have suffered age-old persecutions and 20th Century genocides--Iran, Armenia and Israel--sign an economic pact that will extend, within five years, to a political alliance as well.

This historic alliance will be one of the new century's most lasting achievements and lead to a period of prolonged world peace.

There is a Persian expression which says: "If you wait, from sour grapes you can make sweet Halwa" or "Good things come to those who wait."

## **A New Grand Alliance--Preface**

While current headlines portray Iran as an international pariah and Israel as its deadly enemy, I wish to proclaim something that will strike many readers as a fantasy. I intend, in this volume by probing into ancient and more modern history, to show that Iran, Armenia and Israel are not the eternal enemies claimed today but

long-standing, natural allies in the Middle East.

If the current regime of religious mullahs, now in power in Iran, is replaced by 2020 with a democratic and secular regime, these three countries could unite and serve as the anchor for peace and prosperity in the region.

Once the union occurs, Iraq, due to its Kurdish population, will join the new alliance. Afghanistan, by means of its history and language ties with the region, will also come on board. Tajikistan has always been part of the union.

Hopefully, by 2020, Israel will enjoy a permanent peace with her neighbors. This historic shift will act as a strong magnet for Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt to come on board. Soon after that, Turks and Indians will join such a peaceful force.

As Europe overcame centuries of war and suspicion to forge an economic and trade alliance known as the European Union, we could witness a similar consolidation of a Grand Middle East Alliance.

The culture of the Middle East has three truly historical, real nations: Iran, Armenia and Israel. Other countries of the modern Middle East are inventions as a result of either the conquest of nomadic tribes or the British and allied powers' interests over the past two centuries.

During the past century, following each of two catastrophic world wars, the victorious allied powers carved up the map of Middle East and created new nations with artificial boundaries, granted independence to their former colonies and installed rulers friendly to their interests. Persia suffered this fate following World War I.

The resulting new geopolitical pattern produced new nations and divisions, including the state of Israel. And more than 60 years of strife and bloodshed between Arabs, Israelis as well as Iranians have been the tragic legacy of colonialism.

However, by 2020, radical Islam's ascendancy in the region will die down. A new era for enlightenment in the region will be ushered

in. People will see these artificial lines separating them for what they are: simply political markers of the moment and not the region's natural or historical boundaries.

Let us feel the power of this political vision and focus our attention on the natural union of Iran, Armenia and Israel. These three nations, throughout history, have been politically squeezed, overrun and occupied by the super-powers of their times. One of them has always been a sanctuary for the other.

For the moment, forget the Iranian Revolt of 1979 and the reign of terrorism it unleashed. Let's follow a journey free from the inflammatory and radical rhetoric that has poisoned international relations ever since.



# Chapter One

## A Peaceful History

As far back as the first civilizations in the lands extending from Egypt to Mesopotamia, popularly known as the “Fertile Crescent”, there had never been any warfare *between* the Iranian, Armenian and Israeli peoples. Instead, their history has been one of sympathy, friendship and sanctuary.

This ancient history has an inflection point, where the founder of the Persian Empire, Cyrus the Great, freed the Jews and recognized the kingdom of Armenia as an ally, ruled by the Satrap of Armenia.

The history of these three nations dates from the time when they shared one constitution, the “Seal of Cyrus”, dating from 2600 years ago.

One element for the popularity of the Persian Empire is the many biblical appreciations for Iran and Persia in the Old Testament.

However, before the Persian Empire, the Aryan immigrants to the Plains of Iran (the residence of many civilizations dating back ten thousand years) and formed the world's first government, Meds, at present, in Kurdish areas and chose Hamadan as their capital.

The Shrine of Esther is in Hamadan.



Cyrus the Great ended five hundred years of the Meds Iranian Dynasty very peacefully when he unified all Iranian Tribes and formed the Persian Empire.

Little is known about the Iranian Meds because the Greeks were not at an historical stage to make wars with them for the record of history books.

Before the conquest of Islam and fall of Iranian civilization, Iran saw the rise and fall of the Greek and Roman empires on her western borders.

Amazingly, there is no mention of a philosopher, writer or scientist in this more than thousand year rivalry with Greece and Rome.

That is not a surprise as the conquest of Islam, fourteen centuries ago, wiped out any trace of the previous civilizations in Iran.

If not for the Old Testament, very little would be known about Persian and Meds. The Old Testament is a testimony of the good relations of the Meds and Persian with Iranian Jews.

Several centuries later, the Sasanid Persian Empire was formed. The highlight of this 400 year era is the love story of King Kosrow and the Armenian Persian Queen, Shirin. The mythical love story of Shirin and Farhad was more intense than that of Romeo for Juliet.

The written history of Iranians and Israelites appears in the Book of Ezra in the Torah. The peaceful history continues through all the books of the Old Testament, culminating in the love story of Queen Esther and the Persian King, Ahasuerus (Xerxes I).

The Jewish feast of Purim commemorates their deliverance from death by Xerxes. This historical link between Persian and

Jewish history continues today in the designation of Persian Jews as “Esther’s children”.



"Ahasuerus and Haman at Esther's Feast," by Rembrandt

While the Old Testament's Book of Ezra shows the close affinity between the Persian and Jewish people, a similar affinity existed between Iran and Armenia dating from 650 BCE with Cyrus the Great and continued until the fall by Persia and the Eastern Roman Empire by Arab Muslims in 650 AD, which continues up to the present day.

Since 500 B.C, these three people have suffered foreign conquests, occupations and mass killings or genocides where they lost millions of their populations.

No country has been so overrun by so many conquerors throughout history as Iran. First came Alexander the Great (330 BCE), then the Moslems (640 CE) followed by the Mongols (1230 CE) and finally by Central Asian Turk, Timor Lane (1365). The Central Asian Turks, when they established themselves and became Moslems, formed the Ottoman Empire. Although at war with Iranian Shia, they did not commit genocide against their Iranian Moslem brothers, but attacked Armenians and Assyrians who adopted Christianity.

Iran was plundered because it is situated at the crossroads of the Silk Road trade routes. It was termed the “Bridge to Victory” by

## Winston Churchill in the Second World War.

The Arab conquerors, after occupying and committing massacres and genocide, saw their descendants remain in Iran, adopt the Persian language and become Iranian. No other country in the world can claim to have such a long-standing record of ethnic diversity as Iran.

The great Persian writer, Ferdowsi (1000 CE), in his epic history of the Iranian kings, “**Shahnameh**”, written four centuries after the fall of the Persian Empire, said, “there will be a new race of Iranian, who are not anymore Persian but a mixture of Arabs, Turks and Iranian.”

Remember, at the 7<sup>th</sup> Century, the Turks were in their original territories at Central Asia and the Arab Nomads resided in part of the Arabian Peninsula, an area almost the same as Saudi Arabia. Present Turkey was located partly in the Eastern Roman Empire and partly in the Persian Empire.

The spread of Christianity as shown in this map started as Constantine unified the Roman Empire. To counter that religious movement, Persia adopted Zoroastrianism as the official state religion. An ancient belief and philosophy becomes a government tool to rule.



Wikipedia

- Spread of Christianity in Europe to AD 325
- Spread of Christianity in Europe to AD 600

When Christianity became the official religion of the Eastern and Western Roman Empire under Constantine, Europe enters into the Medieval Era until the enlightenments of the Renaissance and 18th Century Europe.

Consequently the two empires' enlightenments entered the "Dark Ages". Religious prosecutions, along with Christian and Zoroastrian fanaticism, prepared an environment where a small number of newly Moslem Arab fighters brought an end to the two empires.

In the Middle East, there was only one empire and it was Persian. For one thousand years, this Empire flourished and advanced, neck and neck, with the Greek and Roman Empires. Zoroastrian philosophy, based on the three commandments of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds, created a prosperous environment, which ruled from Cyrus era (500 BC) to the Khosrow era (500 AC), one thousand years.

One hundred years Zoroastrian priests influence in the Persian kingdom, created an environment in Iran, so that ordinary people, without knowing what was behind the nice slogan of Islamic equality and brotherhood, did not defend themselves when the conquest of Islam began. However this half-and-half Iranian defense took the newly Moslem Arab nomads fifty years to conquer Iran and make it a Moslem nation.

## **Ancient Invasions, Modern Connection**

The conquest by Arab Moslems in the seventh century ended a roughly thousand year history of harmony between Iranian, Jews and Armenians.

These three nations were united again, but this time in suffering in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: each of these people were marginalized and endured a horrific genocide.

While Hitler's Holocaust against the Jews is the most cited

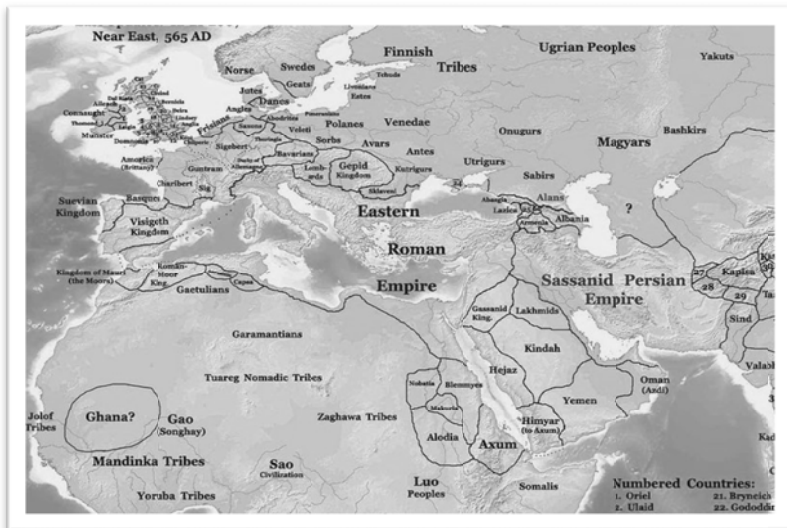
example, millions of Armenians were killed by the Ottoman Turks during World War I and the starvation of nine million Iranians to death by British and Russian followed the end of that war as well.

Seldom has the Shakespearean maxim that the past is prologue proved truer. While Americans' knowledge of even the recent present is so weak, it is just as important to examine equally horrific past events more than a millennia ago to better understand the historical ties that should unite these nations and end the false divisions that current leaders exploit out of ignorance or a will for domination.

## Roman and Persian Empires

During the two decades after Arabia became Moslem, there were constant and exhausting wars between the Roman and Persian empires in the lands of present Turkey and Syria.

Historically, Persia and Rome were the two superpowers. The Arab tribes were never considered a threat. To protect the Persian Empire against looting by Arabian nomad tribes, the kingdom of Lakhmids was established.



(wikipedia) Near East in 565, showing the Lakhmids and their neighbors, making the kingdom a buffer zone between the Persian Empire's mainland and the Arab nomads in the Peninsula. In 325, the Persians, led by Shapur II, began a campaign against this Arab kingdom and consequently removed this defense barrier.

When Lakhmids were conquered by Omar, the second Caliph of Islam, The messengers of Salman the Persian (close strategic advisor of Prophet Mohammad) made an enormous propaganda campaign among unhappy Iranian with the pressure of the Zoroastrian clergies in the Government, before the invasions starts.

It has been said that, in the first big battle, which took place at 636 AD in Qadisiyyah, the most lethal Persian guard battalions, the Dailamite, stood on the side, witnessing the defeat of the Persian Army.

The Dailamites returned to their land by the Caspian Sea and, for the next fifty years, fought the Arab Moslems for the quest of the entire Iranian territory.

Baghdad, a few hundred miles north of Qadisiyyah, (meaning "God Given" in Persian), a suburb of the Persian capital city of Tisfun, was chosen to be the capital of the New Islamic Empire.

The conquest and colonizing the Persian Empire and the adoption of Islam as the official religion took almost fifty years.

For the next 500 years, the Caliphs, representatives of Allah and the relatives of Mohammed, ruled in Baghdad. A general belief of Moslems is that the Caliph should be a descendant of the Quraysh tribe of Mohammed.

(It shouldn't be hard for us today to understand why people 1400 years ago thought the Caliphs were Allah's legitimate representative on earth when, in our 21<sup>st</sup> Century, there are people in Iran who believe a low-class preacher has been appointed by Allah to rule the nation).

With the collapse of the Persian Empire, the link between Iran, Armenia and Jews was broken and a new race of Iranian took hold.

The **Parthian Empire** succeeded the Achaemenid Empire, Dynasty of Cyrus. It was the revolt of the Babylonian Jews against the Romans under Trajan that helped Parthia prevent its annexation and domination by Rome.



Wikipedia

The **Sassanid Empire** (226 to 634 A.D.) witnessed a resurgence of Iran's Hellenistic influence. The Sassanids elevated the Persian way of life, favoring the Pahlavi language and restoring the old religion of Zoroastrianism. This resulted in the suppression of other religions, including Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism.



Wikipedia



The major reason for defeat of Persia and the Moslem Conquest was that Zoroastrian belief became a Persian government tool to counter Christianity, which became the Roman government tool to unite Eastern and Western parts of the Roman Empire.

When Zoroastrian belief, which was a dominant ideology among Iran's ordinary people from the era of Cyrus The Great when it became a way to govern and a government tool, lost its appeal among ordinary people, it consequently caused the collapse of the Persian Empire by Arabs.

With the Islamic conquest of Persia, the government assigned Jews, along with others, to the status of *dhimmis*, non-Muslim subjects. Dhimmi could practice their religion but were obliged to pay a tax ("jizya") to cover the cost of services that only Muslims were entitled to.

During this period, Jews, viewed as "People of the Book", were exempt from military draft and enjoyed significant religious and economic freedom. Many served as doctors, scholars and craftsmen and gained positions of influence in society. But they did not work in Sharia Law since they were seen as not having the knowledge and qualifications for it.

## **Cyrus and the Persian Jews**

The history of friendly relations between Jews and Persians is long. The biblical book of Jeremiah records three occasions in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BCE on which Nebuchadnezzar exiled the Jews (Hebrews). The first time was in 597 BCE when the Temple of Jerusalem was partially destroyed and many leading citizens were removed.

Eleven years later (584 BCE), the Jews rose up again. Jerusalem was razed to the ground and a large number of dissidents were deported. Jeremiah records a third captivity in 579 BCE. With the fall of Jerusalem, Babylonia became a kind of bulwark of Judaism.

After the overthrow of Babylonia by the Persian Achaemenid Dynasty, Cyrus the Great allowed Jews to return to their native land in 537 BCE. More than 40,000 reportedly did so.

And, unlike previous Assyrian and Babylonian rulers, Cyrus allowed Jews to practice their religion freely, as written in the Cyrus Cylinder.

Cyrus ordered that a new temple to be built on the same site as the destroyed one but died before it was completed. Darius the Great came to power and ordered its completion. The temple's consecration took place in the spring of 515 BCE, slightly more than twenty years after the Jews' return to Jerusalem.

Finally, in the book of Esther, Haman (an anti-Semite noble under the Persian king, Xerxes the Great) and his wife devised a plot to kill all the Jews of ancient Persia. The Persian Jewish Queen Esther foiled the plot. Then the king ordered the hanging of Haman and his ten sons. These events are celebrated as the Jewish Purim holiday.

From the beginning of Jewish history, immigration of Abraham to the Promise Land, 4000 years ago, until sixty years ago, just after the World War II, the Jews have had a normal and relatively happy life only for those Centuries which spans from 537 BC till around sixth Century AC at the end of Sassanid Empire.

During these one thousand years, the Zoroastrian teachings were the dominant thinking of the Persian Dynasties and the people. However, after Christianity became the ruling religion by Constantine and consequently the Sassanid Dynasty made Zoroastrian the ruling religion to counter the Roman, happy life for Jews in Iran was over and a Century later by coming the Arab Moslems, the period of unhappy centuries started.

But the period of genocide and annihilation started when the Central Asian Turkic Mongol came and became Moslem from 12<sup>th</sup> Century.

The killings committed by these Central Asian Nomads, newly adapted Islam, have been so horrific in Iranian history that the conquest of Alexander and Nomad Arabs appears to be child's play.

## **Mohammed and the Quran**

### **Mohammed was born in Mecca in 635 A.D.**

Mecca, at this time, was the most pluralistic city known to mankind. Situated in the trade route between the Roman and Persian Empires South to the Arabian Peninsula and Africa, Mecca and Medina were sanctuaries for all religions and idol worshippers.

Among the idols Arabs used to worship were the three daughters of Allah (Supreme God), Lat, Manat and Oza, who acted as links to Allah. Mohammed's father was Abdullah, meaning servant of Allah while Mohammed means worshipper of Allah.

Mohammed, an intelligent poet, handsome and great thinker, began working for the richest, attractive Arab merchant woman, Khadijah, a Hanif, Jews who believe in Abraham only. Khadijah's cousin, was a close friend of Mohammed and the first person to translate the Old and New Testaments into Arabic.

Mohammed at 25 married Khadijah who was 40. After the marriage, Mohammed, following a revelation by Gabriel, became a prophet and, for thirteen years, he wrote half the Quran.

These are called the Macci chapters, new versions of stories of the Old and New Testament in the most sublime Arabic poetry. The other half of the Quran was written in Medina after Mohammed emigrated there and are referred to as the Madani chapters. In the Macci portion, Mohammed advocates Islam and belief in one God, Allah.

When both his wife and uncle, his powerful protector, die, Mohammed was forced to flee to Medina with his followers, who numbered between twenty and fifty people.

At that time, half the population of Medina consisted of four Jewish tribes. Both Jews and Christians enjoyed the Quran's new, poetic version of bible stories, which praised the Jews as the "chosen people".

There was, most importantly, a change in the tone of the Quran after Mohammed met Salman Parsi, a Persian scholar in Medina

and a follower of Mazdaki ideology. Mazdaki was a religion with an ideology similar to communism.

For more than one thousand years, the Iranian people adapted the teaching of Zoroastrianism, a philosophical belief, based on three principal commands of “Good Thought, Good Deed and Good Word”. Most European thinkers believe it had no place in the government.

But when Zoroastrianism became part of the government after the unification of Roman Empire by Constantine, it lost its purity and gave rise to many protestant religions such as Mazdaki. There was a large persecution of Mazdakis and Salman, luckily, escaped the persecution and sought sanctuary among the Jewish tribes of Medina. An atheist and full of hatred, Salman Parsi meets Mohammad. He finds the Madani Verses an ideal tool to bring down the Persian Empire.

In the Macci chapters, the word “Jihad” was used only once and had the meaning to strive and personally persevere. In the Madani chapters, after Mohammed meets Salman, the same word is used forty times with the meaning changed to war. Thus, the good relations between Jews and new Moslems came to an end.

The first Madani chapter advocates attacking non-Moslems and confiscating their property and women. Furthermore, a unique and special place in Heaven was promised for jihadist warriors if they are killed pursuing jihad.

After one year, almost all the Jews had fled Medina. They were either deported without their belongings or forced to convert or executed. Eight hundred adult men of the Bani Ghorazah Jewish tribe were beheaded in one day by Ali, cousin and son-in-law of Mohammed.

The view that not one Jew should live in the Arabian Peninsula took hold after that time.

By the time of Mohammed’s death in 698 A.D., ten years after his arrival in Medina and following twenty-three wars, all of the Arabian Peninsula was totally Moslem.

## **Shiite vs. Sunni Split**

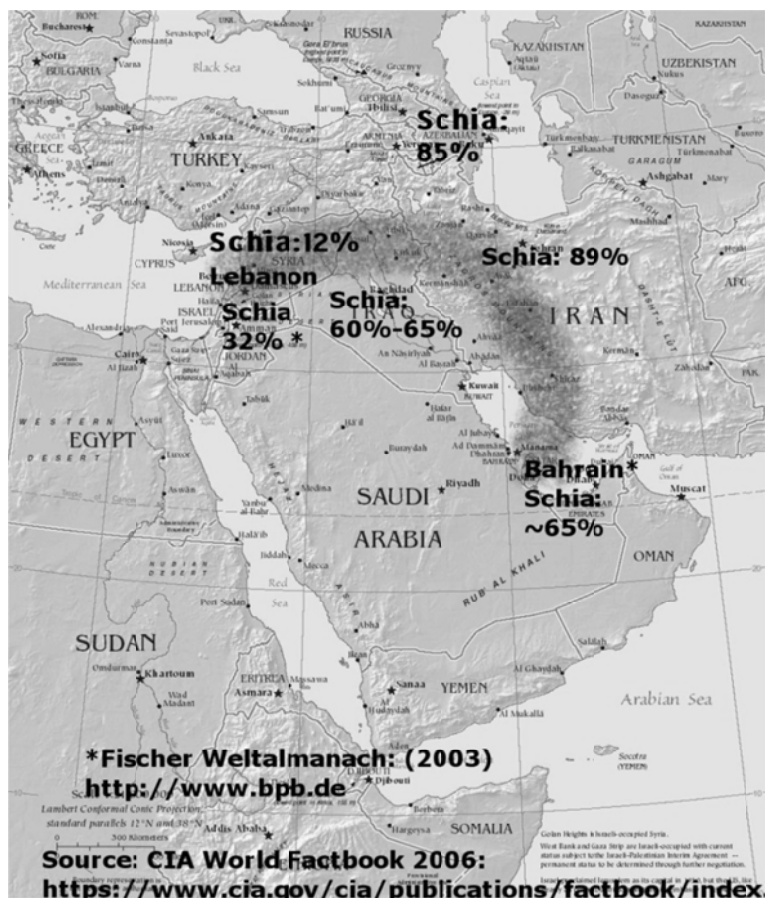
Shia means follower in Arabic. It referred to anyone who was a fan or follower of Mohammed's Caliphs. However, several centuries after Mohammed's death, it changed to refer only to followers of Ali, Mohammed's cousin and the 4th Moslem Caliph.

This exaggerated role for Ali was started by Abdullah Ebn Saba, a Jewish scholar who converted to Islam. When the 3<sup>rd</sup> Caliph, Osman, did not grant Saba a position in the Caliphate, he went to Egypt and began ridiculing Osman and promoting Ali.

Ali was always in battle with his rivals and killed many Arabs who reviled him. The Iranians took the fables of Saba that idolized Ali and fought back against traditional Sunni Islam.

When Ali died, Iranians made a shrine for a burial place in the eastern province of Khorassan, northeast of present-day Afghanistan, which they called Mazar e Sharif (Holy Shrine). Thus Shia spread all over lands which once represented the center of the defeated Persian Empire.

We can see the effect of this sectarian split today in the enmity between Iran (and its allies, Iraq, Syria, Southern Lebanon, Bahrain), which is predominantly, and belief of Saudi Arabia (and its allies), which is Wahabi (the original Sunni or salafi).



## Mongol Rule (1256-1318)

After the mass killings by Arab nomads in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century, at the end of 50 years struggles at the last battle in which 30,000 Iranians were beheaded following their defeat in the battle of Gorgan, the next Iranian invasion was by Turkic Mongols, led by Genghis Khan, started at February 1220 ended at 1258 when grandson of Genghis occupied Baghdad.

Genghis Khan defeated the Iranian Army at 1220, but when he died, Mongols, led by Hulagu Khan, invaded parts of Persian in 1255 and in 1258 captured Baghdad. They established a division of the Mongol Empire known as Ilkhanate. Mongol rulers abolished

the inequality of dhimmis.

After the death of the Ilkhanate ruler, Arghun Khan in 1291, Persian Jews suffered a period of violent persecutions from the Muslim populace that was instigated by the Muslim clergy. Jews were relegated to the status of dhimmis once again. The Mongol leader, Oljeitu, destroyed many synagogues and decreed that Jews had to wear a distinctive mark on their heads; a practice also forced on Christians. Hitler resurrected this decree with the Jewish star marking.

## **Next Come the Turks**

When Mongols conquered Baghdad, they put the Arab Caliph, the holy descendant of Mohammed, representing Allah on earth, in a bag and bit him by lashes to death. That ended a 600-year rule by Arabs of the Islamic Empire.

The Mongol Empire rulers adapted nationality of nations they occupied such as India, China and Iran. But small tribe of Mongols settled in Sogut, in Western present Turkey at 1299 with leadership of Osman. This was the start of the Ottoman Empire.

The Turks were highly skilled warriors but lacking any religious ideology. When they learned the basic tenets of Islam, they found it to be an ideal system. Its principles of attacking others who were more wealthy, claiming their assets and women and enslaving their workers, served their goal for conquering the world.

Not only did they not try to convert Moslems to their beliefs (worshipping Sun) but they themselves became Moslem and very fanatic Sunnis.

Prior to their defeat, Arab conquests extended into central Asia where they brought many Turkic children and slaves back to Baghdad and trained the children as fighters for their future conquests.

A mixture of Mongol Turks and Moslem Turks later resulted in the formation of the Turkic Ottoman Empire by 1400 A.D. The devastations of Iran's regional civilization and death by Central

Asian Turks and Mongols over subsequent centuries numbered in the order of millions.

When the Turks became Moslem, they became more fanatic than the Arab Moslems. Genghis Khan, Tamerlane and Sultan Mahmood Ghaznavi were responsible for mass killings of several millions in Iran and India.

Nishapoor, the world's largest city in 12<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. lost about one million residents when Genghis Khan occupied the city. When Timoor Lane (a fanatic Turkic Moslem who could read Quran backward by heart) occupied Isfahan, he ordered a hill to be built from the heads of the surrendered. The conversion of Indians to Islam in the 10<sup>th</sup> Century is credited to Sultan Mahmood another fanatic Turk from Central Asia.

Following formation of the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish Mongols turned their eyes on European conquest for several centuries. This was the most frightening period for European Christianity when the Turks reached near Vienna by 1500.

The devastation of Europe ceased with a savior, gifted by God, as many historians and churches in Europe believed, appearing in Iran. This hero, and the founder of New Shia Iran, was Shah Esmael Safavi.

Shah Esmael used Shia beliefs as a tool to defy Arab & Turkic rule and fight the rigid Islamic ideology adopted soon after the death of Ali. Esmael made New Shia a political religion to revive Iranian patriotism and the Persian language. He also made a great effort to reintroduce Ferdowsi's "Shahnameh" (Epic of the Iranian Kings). The Nation of Iran was reestablished.

The Shahnameh consists of about 60,000 poems written between 977 and 1010 A.D. The work is of central importance in Persian culture, regarded as a literary masterpiece, and the definitive expression of the ethno-national cultural identity of Iran.

It starts with the creation of the universe, contrary to the Ibrahimic Religions belief in Adam and Eve, a scientific description of Earth cooling, growth of vegetables and human evolution and details how the first Iranian king, who ruled the world, made fire. It



continues how the world was divided into the true three nations: Iran, Turan (Mongols and Turks at the East) and Rome at the West. The book tells of prehistoric relations between these three nations and Iranian kings until the kingdom's collapse with the Arab invasion.

At the book's end, Ferdowsi predicts no sign of the original Aryan Iranian race will exist and a new race, a mixture of Iranian, Turks and Arabs, will live in Iran. Since Shahnameh is a history book of events before the conquest by Arabs, there is no mention of Islam aside from the last few pages.

The work is dominated by the philosophy of Zoroastria. Zoroastrianism is the pre-Islamic belief of Iran, whose Shia are greatly influence by it. Its stories are about battles of good and evil and it proclaims the three basic principles of Zoroastrianism: Good Deeds, Good Thoughts and Good Words.

Shah Esmaeil was a Sufi and the founder of the Safavid Dynasty. The New Shia with twelve Imams began with the new birth of Iran in 1500. Bravery and morality were the foundation of the Sufi Kings lives. The Safavid Dynasty enjoyed its peak with Shah Abbass who chose Isfahan as the capital of Iran and created a suburb in that city, called, Jolfa for the Armenians.

## **Safavid and Qajar Dynasties (1502-1925)**

During the reign of the Safavids (1502-1794), they proclaimed Shi'a Islam the state religion.

Shi'a was a tool in hand of the founder of Safavids Dynasty, Shah Esmail, to resurrect a dead nation of Iran from the ashes of history. For two hundred years the newly born Iran started to prosper and became a threat to the Ottoman Empire, by which saved the Europe from a total destruction.

At the beginning of eighteen century, when Europe was entering into Industrial Revolution, The Safavid kings allowed the Shi's clergies to enter into Government.

Dark Centuries in Iran started and reached to its climax at 1799.

This led to a further deterioration in their treatment of Persian Christian and Jews. Safavid Shi'ism places great importance on issues of ritual purity. Thus, non-Muslims, including Jews in some period of time are seen as unclean and any physical contact would require Shi'as to perform ritual purification before doing daily prayers.

Persian rulers, and the general population, sought to limit physical contact between Muslims and Jews. Jews were excluded from public baths used by Muslims. They were forbidden to go outside during rain or snow, as an impurity from them might wash upon a Muslim.

Toward the end of Shah Abbas' reign, Shi'a clergy persuaded the Shah to require a badge on clothing and headgear. In 1656, the shah ordered the expulsion of all Jews from Isfahan under the guise of their impurity recommended by Shia clergies. In the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, there were massacres of Jews in Mashhad, a Shi'ite holy city.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, European colonial powers began noting numerous forced conversions to Islam and massacres, usually incited by Shi'a clergy. The Jews of Tabriz were massacred in 1830. The same year saw the forcible conversion of the Jews of Shiraz. In 1839, the Jews of Mashhad were coerced into converting to Islam.

Mashhad's ruler had ordered his men to enter Jewish homes and to foment attacks on the Jewish community. Synagogues were burned down, homes were looted, and girls were abducted and between 30-40 people were killed. Many converted, taking on Muslim names while some left for other Jewish communities or fled to Afghanistan.

J.J. Benjamin wrote about the life of Persian Jews in the middle of the century, describing conditions and beliefs that went back to the 16<sup>th</sup> Century: *"They are obliged to live in a separate part of town....for they are considered as unclean creatures....Should they enter a street, inhabited by Moslem mans, they are pelted by the boys and mobs with stones and dirt....If I Jew is recognized as such in the streets, he is subjected to the greatest insults. The passers-by spit in his face, and sometimes beat him....Sometimes the Persians intrude into the dwellings*

*of the Jews and take possession of whatever pleases them. Should the owner make the least opposition in defense of his property, he incurs the danger of atoning for it with his life."*

Driven by these persecutions, thousands of Persian Jews emigrated to Palestine and the territory of modern-day Israel in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20 centuries.

## **Persian-Armenian Relations**

Since antiquity, there has always been much interaction between ancient Armenia and Persia. Prior to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D., no other neighbor had as much influence on Armenian life and culture as Persia. They shared many religious and cultural characteristics and intermarriage among Iranian and Armenian nobility was common.

Armenia's conversion to Christianity in 301 alienated them from the Persians, who were mostly Zoroastrian and the subsequent conversion to Islam in the 7<sup>th</sup> century deepened the rift.

In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Seljuk Turks drove thousands of Armenians to Iranian Azerbaijan. After the Mongol conquest of Iran in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, many Armenian merchants and artists settled in Iranian cities that were once part of historic Armenia such as Khoy, Maku and especially Tabriz.

Iran's Armenian community emerged when Shah Abbas relocated ten of thousands of Armenians to an area of Isfahan known as New Julfa in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. New Julfa became an Armenian quarter.

Iran recognized the Armenians' facility for commerce and that community became active in the nation's cultural and economic development. Iranian-Armenians are Iranian citizens who are ethnically Armenian. Iranian-Armenians were very influential in the modernization of Iran during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. At the start of the last century, Armenians played a dominant role in Iranian life. They numbered 3 million or near 30% of Iran's population.

Today, Armenians are Iran's largest Christian religious

minority. Yet, their numbers no longer are in the millions but are less than one hundred thousand followers. An estimated 80,000 are mostly concentrated in modern-day Tehran and Jolfa district. That steep decline in population is because the Armenian provinces and territories were separated from Iran by Russia and also provides an indication of the brutality of the Genocide against this ethnic group.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Three Historic Genocides**

One million Armenians and nine million Iranians died during 1918-19. Twenty years later, in 1940, it was the Jews turn to face another Holocaust, the third of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

It is worth noting that Iran was also occupied during the war.

That coincidence, though a small detail, once again shows the true bond of Iran with her natural ally, the Jewish people.

To understand the first two genocides, the largest in history suffered by both Iran and Armenia, a look at Armenian history, beginning in 1600 up to 1919, is imperative.

### **Armenia**

The Armenian Genocide, also known as the Armenian Holocaust and, traditionally among Armenians, the Great Crime was the Ottoman government's systematic extermination of its minority Armenian subjects from their historic homeland in the territory known in the present day as the Republic of Turkey.

It was carried out in two phases: mainly the killing of the able-bodied male population and then the deportation of women,

children, the elderly and infirm on death marches to the Syrian desert. The total number of people killed has been estimated at between one and one-and-a-half million.

It is the second most-studied case of genocide after the Holocaust. The word genocide was coined to describe the brutality of such events. The Armenian Genocide is held to have begun on April 24, 1915, the day when Ottoman authorities arrest some 250 Armenian intellectuals and community leaders in Constantinople.

The Turks' actions uprooted Armenians from their homes and resulted in the creation of many Armenian Diaspora Communities. To date, twenty nations have officially recognized the events of that period as genocide, though Turkey denies the word is an accurate description of the events.

Armenia was the first state to declare Christianity as its official religion in 301 A.D. The Armenian Apostolic Church is the world's oldest national church. It came under Ottoman rule during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

There were three million Armenians living in the empire in 1878. Close to three-quarters of that number lived in the rural countryside. In the areas outside Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul), Armenians were subject to the whims of their Turkish and Kurdish neighbors who overtaxed them, subject them to kidnapping and forced labor and forced them to convert to Islam.

They were essentially second-class citizens, referred to as *gavours* in Turkish, a word meaning "infidel" or "unbeliever". Christians were not considered equal to Muslims. Testimony in courts of law against Muslims by Christians and Jews was inadmissible. Their houses could not overlook those of Muslims and their religious practices were severely curtailed.



Wikipedia

The German ethnographic map—Armenians in blue with population concentrated in the East of Ottoman Empire.

## **Reforms and Resentment Toward Armenians**

Beginning in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century, the three major European powers—Great Britain, France and Russia—increasingly pressured the Ottoman government (known at the Sublime Porte) to treat all citizens equally.

In 1876, with the declaration of a constitution, the Ottoman authorities implemented a series of reforms, known as the Tanzimat, which was intended to improve the condition of minorities but its provisions were largely aborted. The Muslims were against seeing Christians as their social equals.

The date almost coincides with rise of Bahai faith in Iran, acceptance of Wahabi belief by Saudi family and establishment of Saudi Arabia and rise of Mormonism in the US.

By the late 1870s, the Greeks and other Christian nations in the Balkans, with help from the Great Powers, broke free of Ottoman rule. In Armenia, from the mid-1860s and early 1870s, an Armenian intellectual class, educated in Europe of American missionary schools, began to question their status and asked for

better treatment.

The Great Powers intervened to protect the violent suppression of the Ottoman Empire's Christian minorities in 1875 claiming the Treaty of Paris of 1856 gave them the right to intervene.

Following the end of the 1877-78 Russo-Turkish War, Armenians looked more toward Russia to guarantee their security. The Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, Nerses II, convinced the Russians in 1878 to insert an article in the Congress of Berlin negotiations concluding the war

The Ottoman government promised to institute reforms but they were never implemented. Instead, Sultan Abdul Hamid II created a paramilitary unit known as the *Hamidiye*, made up of Kurdish irregulars, who were told to "deal with the Armenians as they wished".

Whenever Armenians rebelled at their harsh conditions, the Hamidiye responded with oppression and periodic massacres. The Great Powers forced Hamid to sign a new reform package to curtail the Hamidiye in October 1895. The outcome, like the Berlin treaty, was that the reforms were never implemented.

On October 1, 1895, 2,000 Armenians assembled in Constantinople to petition for implementation of the reforms but it was broken up. Massacres of Armenians soon followed in Constantinople and throughout Armenian provinces. Estimates on the violence, known as the Hamidian massacres, ranged from 100 to 300,000 Armenians.

On July 24, 1908, the next stage in Armenian's push for equality seemed positive when a coup d'état by young Army officers removed Abdul Hamid from power and restored a constitutional monarchy form of government.

The Young Turk movement wanted to combat corruption and modernize the empire to European standards.





Wikipedia

Two of the three leaders of the Young Turk triumvirate, Enver Pasha, *middle* and Djemal Pasha, *right*, in a visit to Jerusalem in 1915, then a part of Ottoman Syria.

A counter coup, aimed at restoring rule to the Sultan and operating under Islamic law broke out in April 19. It resulted in pogroms against Armenians who were perceived as supporting the constitution. By the time army troops put down the violence, an estimated 15-30,000 Armenians were killed in the “Adana Massacre”. These preliminary anti-Armenian actions, when joined to the Ottoman’s defeat in the First Balkan War of 1912, stoked the tinderbox of anti-Armenian sentiment that erupted in the Armenian Genocide following World War I.

The Ottoman Empire’s defeat in the 1912 Balkan War resulted in the loss of 85% of its European territory. This led to the mass expulsion of Muslims from the Balkans. Turkish nationalists came to see Anatolia province as their last refuge.

As many as 850,000 refugees settled in this region where Armenians were a significant minority. The Muslims resented the status of their more prosperous neighbors and these refugees played

a pivotal role in the killings of Armenians and confiscation of their properties during the subsequent genocide.

World War I began in the Balkans at Sarajevo but the Middle East theatre was the scene of the battle action, most prominently in the Persian Campaign.

**The Persian Campaign** was a series of engagements at northern Persian Azerbaijan and western Persia between British Empire and Russian Empire forces against the Ottoman Empire beginning in December 1914 and ending in October 1918. The Russian Revolution of 1917 forced the replacement of the Russian Caucasus Army with Armenian units and the Allies' Dunster force.

Armenian volunteer units joined the Russian armed forces in the summer of 1914. They were sent to the European Front and played an instrumental role in the battles of Dilman and Van.

The Ottoman Minister of War, Enver Pasha, strategized that, if the Russians could be defeated in Persia's key cities, it could provide an open route to Azerbaijan, to Central Asia and India. This was known as his Pan-Turanism project.

Note: Azerbaijan is the northern province of Iran, which also includes Aran, with its major city, Baku. After the Second World War, Stalin annexed Aran to the Soviet Union and named it Azerbaijan to claim and occupy the other province.

The prehistoric and Iranian mythology indicated by Ferdowsi in Shahnameh that the world was divided into Turan, Iran and Rome. The Turks came from Central Asia, Turan.

**Pan-Turkism** was a political movement for the union of not only all Turkic peoples but also the unification of a wider Turanid race to include all peoples speaking Turanian languages. This idea of Turanian brotherhood was borrowed from the "Slavic brotherhood" of Panslavism.

Turkish nationalists claimed this racial group covered the Ottoman Turks of Istanbul and Anatolia, the Turkomans of Central Asia and Persia, the Tartars of South Russia and Transcaucasia, the

Magyars of Hungary, the Finns of Finland and Baltic provinces, the aboriginal tribes of Siberia and the Mongols and Manchus.

Enver Pasha didn't believe any of the colonial powers could withstand the pressures of a world war and maintain their direct rule in the Asian colonies. However, he was proven wrong and the decolonization of Enver's dream never materialized. Not withstanding Turkey's defeat in the war, he continued with his ambition after the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire until his death in 1922.

## **World War I Battles**

On February 25, 1915, in an action that laid the seeds for the later genocide, Enver Pasha ordered that Armenians in the active Ottoman forces be demobilized and assigned to the unarmed Labor battalion. He publicly blamed his early defeats on Armenians having actively sided with the Russians.

In April, 1915, the First Expeditionary Force, under the command of Khalil Bey, moved toward northern Persia with the objective of capturing the city of Dilman. Dilman was the site of one of the fiercest battles between the Armenians and the Turks. Bey was forced to retreat.

Fewer than two thousand armed Armenian civilians and self-defense units held a line against Ottoman forces in the walled Siege of Van that May. The Ottoman commander ordered the town to furnish 4,000 soldiers. The Armenian population sensed his goal was to massacre the able-bodied men of Van so there would be no defenders.

In November, 1915, two Russian columns advanced into Persian, province of Azerbaijan. One, under the command of General Nikolai Baratov, moved southward through Hamadan to Kermanshah, on the way to Baghdad.

Remember, wherever, here there is a mention of Azerbaijan, it is the northern province of Iran. The country Azerbaijan, which gained an independence from the Soviet Union originally was

“Aran” another providence of Iran at north of Azerbaijan.

When Aran was occupied by the Soviet Union forces after the World War II, Stalin ordered this province to be named Azerbaijan, with a plan to annex the Persian Azerbaijan to this providence.

In January, 1916, Baratov forces occupied Hamadan and then occupied Kermanshah in late February.

By the next month, Baratov overran Kharind. He reached the Ottoman frontier, 150 miles from Baghdad by the middle of May. A Cossack company left Baratov's division on May 8, crossed several mountain passes and connected with the British front on the Tigris on May 18.

Baratov hoped to move on Baghdad as well but, in battles with Ottoman forces, in which they defeated him at Khanaqin in June, Baratov had to retreat north having lost half his men.

The February and October revolutions in Russia put a stop to all Russian military operations. Baratov's forces suffered desertions through the year. On December 16, a Peace agreement of Erzincan was signed that ended hostilities between the Ottoman Empire and Russia's Special Trans-Caucasian Committee.

Ottomans and Germans began to dispute possession of the provinces along the border between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. Enver Pasha believed Germany had disregarded Turkish interests during peace agreement negotiations and so moved to disregard German interests, sending armed forces to Persia.

The purpose was to stop the British advance in Persia and to keep them from helping the Bolsheviks and, if necessary, to help recapture Baghdad. Meanwhile, Van was completely cut off from the Allies and Armenians were left to hold Van on their own.

During 1918, the British invited Armenians to hold out and organized a select group of officers and non-commissioned regulars under the command of Lionel Dunsterville at Baghdad. This unit was named the Dunster force whose goal was to reach the Caucasus via Persia.

In April, Armenians of Van were evacuated and retreated

eastward toward Persian Azerbaijan. Retreating Armenian forces from Van made a stand near Dilman but retreated southward around Lake Uremia, west of Tabriz, Azerbaijan, Iran.

The Ottoman forces of the IV Corps faced an Armenian volunteer force of 4,000 men coming from Van on June 8. A week later, the Turkish force defeated the Armenian unit north of Dilman.

By September, the Ottomans consolidated their control over northern Persia, between Tabriz and the southern shores of the Caspian Sea. They lost the rest of the region to the British. On October 30, 1918, the Ottoman Empire the Armistice of Mudros and all military operations stopped.

We pause here and ask: In these battles between British, Russian, Turks and Germans, called “The Persian Campaign” where were the Persians? The answerer is a bit strange as Iran was under the rule of the Ghajar Dynasty, one of the most corrupt and useless kings in its long history. Ahmad Shah was always vacationing in Europe and the country was under the influence of the Russian and British powers. The country was divided into two “zones of influence” in North and South between the two colonial powers.

Following the Ottoman Empire’s loss in World War I, a partitioning of its empire followed shortly thereafter. Enver Pasha’s Pan-Turkic political vision lay in ruins. The immediate outcome of the Persian Campaign was the signing of the Anglo-Persian Agreement, which guaranteed British access to Iranian oil fields.

Britain also attempted to establish a protectorate in Iran. In 1921, a military coup, aided by the British, established Reza Khan as dictator and then hereditary Shah of the new Pahlavi dynasty. Reza Shah secured Tehran, he negotiated a treaty with the Bolsheviks for the removal of Soviet troops from Persia.

## **Persecution of Armenians**

While the Turks were waging war against the Allied Powers, they were also engaged in an internal campaign against their

Armenian population and armed forces.

Enver Pasha, the war minister, held the Armenian volunteer forces fighting with the Russians as responsible for their defeat at Sarikamis. Initially, these forces numbered 20, 000 men but it reportedly grew larger.

By 1914, Ottoman authorities began a propaganda drive to portray Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire as a threat to the empire's security. All Armenians in the active Ottoman forces were demobilized and assigned to the unarmed labor battalion. This transfer made the later extermination of Armenian recruits in those battalions much easier.

In late April, after the Ottoman official, Jevdet Bey, demanded that 4,000 Armenians in the city of Van should be conscripted into the army. The townspeople refused and a small band of Armenian volunteers were able to protect Van's 45,000 residents and refugees, until the Russian General Yudenich rescued them.

Enver defended the deportations and persecution of all ethnic Armenians as necessary to the war effort due to the complicity of Armenians of Van with Russian forces. On the night of April 24, 1915, Ottoman authorities arrested an estimated 250 Armenian community leaders and intellectuals and moved them to two holding centers near Ankara. They were all later executed.

This date is known as Genocide Remembrance Day and was a precursor of ensuing events. It also coincided with the allied troop landings at Gallipoli.

Reports of other brutal tortures surfaced during the war and at post-war trials. Eitan Belkind, a Nili member, who infiltrated the Ottoman Army, reported that he had witnessed the burning of 5,000 Armenians. Burning was seen as "the shortest method of disposing of the women and children concentrated in the various camps" according to Lt. Hasan Maruf, an officer in the Ottoman army.

The Italian consul of Trabzon, Giacomo Gorrini, wrote in 1915: "I saw thousands of innocent woman and children placed in boats which were capsized in the Black Sea." Other gruesome means

of extermination, primarily of children, were by morphine injections, toxic gas and typhoid inoculation.

On May 29, 1915, the central committee of The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) passed the Temporary Law of Deportation, also known as “Tehjir Law”. This gave the government and the military the right to deport anyone it “sensed” was a threat to the nation.

CUP was a secret, Special Forces outfit founded in 1913, which some scholars have compared to the Nazi Einsatzgruppen. It is believed that 25 major concentration camps existed, the majority situated near Turkey’s modern borders of Iraq and Syria to handle deported Armenians.

With the implementation of Tehrir Law, the Ottoman government took possession of all “abandoned goods and properties” of deported Armenians. When they were deported, Armenian men, women and children were often forced to march across the desert with no facilities or supplies. Hundreds of thousands reportedly perished during these “death marches”.

In August, *The New York Times* ran an un-attributed report stating that “the roads and the Euphrates are strewn with corpses of exiles and those who survive are doomed to certain death. It is a plan to exterminate the whole Armenian people.”

At the war’s end, three pashas—Enver Pasha, Mehmed Talaat Pasha and Ismail Enver—fled the Empire (Two of the three were later assassinated by Armenian vigilantes). Members of CUP were tried by courts-martial in 1919 and CUP was officially disbanded, its assets confiscated as well as the assets of those found guilty.

There is no consensus as to the number of Armenians who lost their lives during the Armenian Genocide. Estimates vary between six hundred thousand and one- and-a half-million perished.

*Encyclopedia Britannica* cites the research of Arnold Toynbee, then an intelligence officer in the British Foreign Office that six hundred thousand Armenians died or were massacred during deportation in 1915-16 alone.

A recent book of documents that belonged to Mehmed Talat, the primary architect of the Armenian deportations, shows the number of Armenians living in the empire prior to 1915 stood at 1,256,000. That number plunged to only 284,000 in 1917.

Many Americans and world dignitaries spoke out against the genocide including former President, Theodore Roosevelt, William Jennings Bryan, Henry Morgenthau Sr., ambassador to the Ottoman Empire and Winston Churchill. In the United States and the United Kingdom, children were reminded to clean their plates and to “remember the starving Armenians”.

Soon after the deportations began, the American Committee for Relief in the Near East was established in 1915. Henry Morgenthau Sr., ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, played a key role in rallying support. In its first year, ACRNE cared for more than 130,000 Armenian orphans and, over the next fifteen years to 1930, helped close to an estimated two million refugees raised over \$102 million in donations (1930 value of the dollar).

Although modern-day Turkey refuses to admit that the actions of the Ottoman army and the CUP constituted genocide, an Armenian Genocide is widely corroborated by international genocide scholars and world governments.

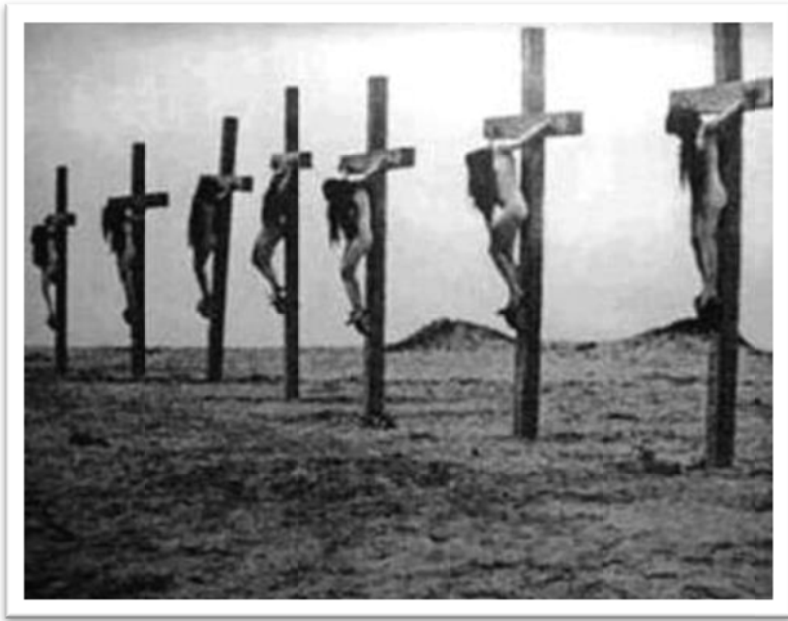
The International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) unanimously passed a resolution affirming that such genocide occurred. Leading texts in international law of genocide cite the Armenian Genocide as a precursor of the Holocaust and as legal precedent for crimes against humanity.

The 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide defines the killings of Armenians as genocide.

For Turkish historians, the deportations were seen as necessary due to their status as enemy combatants who had allied themselves with the Russian army in wartime. They also dispute the number of Armenians killed. They contend only six- hundred-thousand perished due to isolated massacres, disease and malnutrition. Some seek to invalidate the term on anachronistic grounds since the word



“genocide” was not coined until 1943.



In 2005, the IGAS affirmed the scholarly evidence that “a systemic genocide of Armenian citizens—an unarmed Christian minority population” had taken place and that more than a million Armenians were eliminated.” Turkish attempts to deny the factual and moral reality of this event were condemned. In 2007, the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity issued a letter signed by 53 Nobel Laureates reaffirming the IGAS conclusion. Twenty countries, forty-two U.S. states and a Congressional panel in 2010 have adopted resolutions acknowledging the genocide as a *bona fide* historical event. Finally, over 135 memorials across 25 nations commemorate this historical tragedy.

### Iran’s Jewish Injustice

Through history, Iran perhaps had been the safest place for Jews before the creation of Israel. Before the coming of Islam, the dominant thinking of the society was Zoroastrian and the Jews felt they were the elites of Iran as they feel nowadays in the U.S.

However, when the teaching of Islam became the dominant thinking in the society, the situation changed and a tolerant community naturally changed. Although the treatment of Jews in the Moslem country of Iran in its worst periods was far better than any other Moslem country in the world, the injustice toward Jews in Iran are also worth mentioning.

Of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century's three genocides, perhaps the least familiar one is that waged against Iranian. The Great Famine of 1917-19 is the greatest calamity in Iran's history that has, unfortunately, received very little world attention.

The long-standing persecution by successive Muslim regimes started the stigmatization of Jews in Europe prior to the rise of Adolph Hitler and which facilitated wider German acceptance of his racist theories.

However, persecution of Iranian Jews is a phenomenon that spans many centuries. In order to give the events of 1917-19 greater context, a review of Persian history will be helpful.

Iran hosts the largest Jewish population of any Muslim-majority country. However, Iran's Jewish population declined from between 140,000-150,000 in 1948 to roughly 80,000 prior to the 1979 Iranian Revolution, mainly due to emigration to Israel. A 2012 census listed only 8,750 Jews still living in Iran around Tehran, Isfahan and Shiraz.

After Israel, Iran is home to the second-largest Jewish population in the Middle East. Iranian Jews also emigrated to form smaller communities in Western Europe (primarily Paris and London) and in Australia, Canada and South America and last but not least the Iranian Jewish Community in Los Angeles and Beverly Hills, with Jewish Iranian Mayor. There are also a large number of people in Iran who are the direct descendants of Jews who converted to Islam or the Bahai faith.

Jewish history in the region of present-day Iran dates back to late biblical times. The biblical books of Isaiah, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles and Esther contain references to the cordial life experience of Jews in Persia. Scholars believe that, during the

peak of the Persian Empire, Jews may have constituted almost 20 per cent of the population.

The book of Ezra credits the Persian kings with enabling the Jews to return to Jerusalem and build their temple. This great event took place in the late sixth century BCE at which time there was a well-established and influential Jewish community in Persia. Jews lived in their own communities in Iran, present-day Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan from ancient times until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century.

According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, “Jews trace their heritage in Iran to the Babylonian exile of the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BCE and, like the Armenians, have retained their ethnic, linguistic and religious identity.”

A country study of Iran by the Library of Congress states that over the centuries, “the Jews of Iran became physically, culturally and linguistically indistinguishable from the non-Jewish population. The overwhelming majority of Jews speak Persian as their mother tongue and a tiny minority, (speak) Kurdish.”

## **The Great Famine**

As many as ten million Iranian perished because of starvation and disease during this calamity. However, these horrific facts were never really known outside of Iran. How could such a catastrophe, which shared a similar character as the Armenian and Jewish genocide, take place without the press or other governments learning of and intervening to halt this extermination?

The Persians happened to be on the losing side of the war during the First World War. Though Prime Minister, Mustaufi al-Mamalik, proclaimed Persia’s neutrality in the war, British, Turkish and Russian forces early in the conflict invaded the country.

The Allied forces of Britain, France and Russia engaged in battle against the Central Powers of Turkey and Germany. Persia was initially subjected to Turkish and Russian forces fighting in the North and British occupation in the South.

This division was a result of the 1907 Anglo-Russian Entente that split Persia into a northern zone controlled by Russia and a southern zone under British control. Britain, eventually, also gained effective control in the Eastern and Western territories as well.

In January 1915, the Ottoman forces invaded Azerbaijan in order to fight the Russians who were stationed there. The Ottomans suffered a major defeat and upwards of 90,000 Turks were killed.

Germany's foothold in Persia was not as strong as it was for Russian and Britain. Germany wanted the Persians to abandon their neutrality and join the Central Powers.

The Persians sympathized with Germany and the Ottoman Empire due to the long history of oppression by Britain and Russia. However, Germany failed to rally support of many nationalists and tribal members due to their weak foothold in the country and not keeping their promises.

No power was less prepared to meet the obligations and sacrifices of the war than Persia. It also demonstrated great impotence in protecting its boundaries, its subjects and its proclaimed neutrality.

Britain's main causes for invading Persia were its anxiety for the safety of the oil refineries of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company as well as a perceived threat to India, then a major part of the British Empire.

The spring of 1915 is marked by the occupation of East Persia by Russian and Britain. This cordon, combined with expansion into Persian Baluchistan and Mashdad, enabled Britain to maintain its hold in Persia even after the loss of Russia due to the Russian Revolution.

During the period from December through March 1917, Persia fell increasingly under the grip of Great Britain. The events leading to this outcome included the near removal of Ottoman and German influences in the country as well as the strengthening by Russia and Britain on their spheres of influence, which included the neutral zone dividing north and south Persia, established by the 1907 Russo-Anglo Entente.

In Spring, 1917, the Ottomans suffered defeats by the Russians at Hamadan, Kermanshah and Khanaqin. With these losses, the threat of German-Turkish intervention in Iran practically vanished.

Many Shi'a officials issued inflammatory denunciations against the Entente and the Central Powers, claiming they were both infidels (since Turkish Muslims are Sunni) and forbidding the Russians, as Christians, from interfering with the practice of Islam in Persia.

A final wound that would end the history of Persia, as an independent nation, was Britain's dispatch to South Iran of the South Persian Rifles Corps (SPR) comprised of Indian, British and recruited Persian soldiers under direction of the British.

The outcome was the drafting of the Triple Entente of 1916, which was more or less an update of the 1907 agreement splitting Persia into separate spheres of influence for both nations.

The period from April 1917 to January 1918 is when Russia influence in Persia faded due to insurrection at home. The Brest-Litovsk Treaty of January 1918 marked Russia's exit from the war theater.

Russia affirmed the annulment of its treaties concerning Persia, which had carved the country up. In its place, Britain strengthened its influence. As Russians left the north, British forces soon replaced them. Commander Sykes and the SPR undertook a series of missions within the province of Fars (Pars) and other regions of Persia ostensibly to restore order but essentially to attack individuals and tribes who were opposing the intervention of foreign powers.

This period and these attacks are the beginning of a famine in Persia in which approximately 10 million Persians lost their lives, were removed or disappeared.

According to Caldwell, war had a lot to do with the conditions and the outcome of the famine. Dunsterville accused the Russians and Ottomans seized vast amounts of grain and foodstuffs during their respective occupations.

There appeared to be a desire by the British to shift blame on to

the Russians. Sykes said that, before leaving their trenches, the Russians sold ammunition and equipment to the Turks and then marched north, plundering as they went to secure food and fuel.

But the British claim on the exchange of arms and money could not have taken place. Ottoman forces in Persia ended their presence around March 1917 and the Russians left a year later.

Their contribution to the famine centers around the purchase and consumption of local goods by the British while the Persian people had no food to consume. Also, the British Army prevented importing food items.

These events and other occurring between January 1918 to May 1921 are significant in leading to a coup d'état in February 1921 that established Reza Khan, who, in 1925, would become Reza Shah Pahlavi, leader of a dynasty that ruled Iran until the Revolution of 1979.

## **Book on Iranian Genocide**

In his book, Mohammed Gholi Majd argues that Persia was the greatest victim of World War I and possibly the worst genocide of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Drawing on U.S. State Department records, as well as Persian and British sources, Majd documents a veritable holocaust about which practically nothing has been written.

Kiwi, in a review of Majd's book, wrote, "I read a mention of between 9 to 11 million Persians (approximately half the then population of Persia) was the widespread famine that hit Persia (Iran) at the end of World War I. Apart from the odd mention in other books and articles, the only significant study of this event is this book by Mohammad Gholi Majd."

Majd argues that Persia was the greatest victim of the war. Soon after hostilities ended in early 1917, widespread famine began to devastate the local populations. Local crops withered and the import

of foodstuffs from India, Mesopotamia and the United States was prevented, due to use of the local transport by both sides to move war supplies.

Majd blames the British who were the controlling power in Persia following the Bolshevik Revolution for this dire state of affairs. The British also reportedly confiscated significant amounts of food supplies for their troops in the region.

Majd's conclusion is that, unknown to most persons; Persia suffered one of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century's major genocides. However, "genocide" assumes the deliberate and willful killing of large numbers of non-combatants.

His contention that the British would deliberately undertake such an action is not believable and, in this, Majd's argument is not credible. It's more of an emotional response, which is understandable.

Imagine if a third of America's population had died in World War I from famine, an event made worse by a foreign occupation under the same circumstances as happened in Persia. What would your reaction be?

Majd's work is a good study of this little known part of history but his conclusion-- that this was a genocidal campaign by the British--is sadly erroneous. Yet, it is still a callous state of affairs when millions of deaths are no longer remembered outside the country where these deaths occurred.

The sad part of this story is that the country was ruled by the Ghajar Dynasty, whom they proudly claim their ancestors are the Central Asian Turks. During this sad period of the Iranian history, a naive and corrupt king, Ahmad Shah, ruled the country from his vacations in Europe. England's Prime Minister asks Ahmad Shah to sell the wheat he has kept in his storage for higher profit and not sell to the government at a price they can afford.

## **What If?**

What if Persia's neutrality from World War I had been

respected by the allied forces, the country could have survived intact and the course of current geopolitical tensions might have been prevented.

What if the Russians had not been in northern Persia, the Ottomans would unlikely have felt the need to aid their Muslim brothers in defeating an infidel power. The Germans could not have propagated the idea that Russia and Britain wanted to divide and conquer Persia.

What if the Ottomans and Germans had not been a threat in Persia, it is unlikely that Britain could legitimately claim its involvement was necessary to eliminate the threat.

What if, as the Ottomans, Germans and Russians leave Persia, Britain gained the opportunity for total occupation of the country to secure its oil and other economic interests.

All this meddling by foreign powers enhanced the damage caused by the famine for Persians. Furthermore, Britain's pulling all the political strings with the post-war appointment of pro-British individuals to positions of power led the way to abolishing the Qajar Dynasty and ushering in the Pahlavi Dynasty.

## **The Nazi Genocide or The Jewish Holocaust**

When historians speak of a holocaust, they invariably refer to the Jewish experience. For most people, that is the only one they know or were taught. The Armenian Genocide, from the First World War, is unknown, untaught and is still rejected by the Turkish government.

However, the third great genocide of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century is the one that has captured the imagination of the world due to its sheer scale but also by reason of the ferocious scope of the state-sponsored barbarity and extermination plans.

The term, *holocaust*, comes from the Greek word, *holokauston*, referring to an animal sacrifice offered to a god in which the whole



animal is completely burnt. For centuries, the word was used in English to denote great massacres. But, since the 1960s, scholars and popular writers use it to refer to the Nazi genocide of the Jewish people.

Jews prefer the biblical word “*Shoah*” viewing holocaust as theologically offensive due to the word’s reference to the Greek pagan custom. The Nazis used a third, more euphemistic phrase, the “Final Solution”.

Ghettos were established in Europe in which Jews were confined before being shipped to extermination camps. And, as Michael Berenbaum writes, the Nazis were aided by every sector of German society in implementing their plans.

“Parish churches and the Interior Ministry supplied birth records showing who was Jewish; the Post Office delivered the deportation and denaturalization orders; the Finance Ministry confiscated Jewish property; German firms fired Jewish workers and disenfranchised Jewish stockholders.”

Universities refused entry to Jews and denied degrees to those already studying and fired Jewish academics. German pharmaceutical companies tested drugs on camp prisoners. Through a concealed account, the German national bank laundered valuables stolen from the victims.

Saul Friedlander writes that no social group, religious community or academic institution declared solidarity with the Jews. He argued that this lack of action made the Holocaust distinctive because anti-Semitic policies were able to proceed without the interference of oppositional forces normally found in advanced societies, such as industry, churches, small business and lobby groups.

### Ideology and Scale

In other genocides, pragmatic considerations, such as control of territory and resources, were central to the genocide policy. But the basic motivation underlying the Holocaust was purely ideological. The illusory world of Nazi imagination held that an international Jewish conspiracy to control the world was opposed by a parallel

Aryan quest.

A distinctive feature of the Holocaust was that never before had a state, through its leader, declared a specific human group would be killed and then carried out this resolution using every means of state power.

The killings were conducted in virtually all areas of Nazi-occupied territory in what are now 35 separate European countries. It was most severe in Central and Eastern Europe, which had more than seven million Jews in 1939. About five million Jews were killed there, including three million in occupied Poland and over one million in the Soviet Union.

The use of camps equipped with gas chambers for the purpose of systematic mass extermination of peoples was a unique feature of the Holocaust and unprecedented in history. There had never been such places for the express purpose of mass-killings.

How did such a barbaric policy come to be? The roots of the anti-Semitism that fueled the later Holocaust can be traced to the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century with the emergence in Germany and Austria-Hungary of the *Völkisch* movement which held pseudoscientific, biologically-based racist idea that Jews were locked with the Aryan race for world domination.

In a speech before the Reichstag in 1895, *volkisch* leader, Hermann Ahlwardt, called Jews “predators” who should be “exterminated” for the good of the German people. Others made further contributions to this ideology, urging Jewish exclusion from all aspects of German life, forbidden to own land and hold public office or participate in journalism, banking and liberal professions.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a racist, heavily social Darwinist philosophy arose that held some people to be more biologically valuable than others. Following the war, German bureaucrats began placing increased emphasis on saving the “fit” while the biologically “unfit” were to be written off. The Great Depression led many in the German medical establishment to advocate the euthanasic killing of the incurably mentally and physically disabled to free up money to care for the curable.

It was only a short step from such policies to Hitler's policy for the extermination of the Jews. Hitler had a fierce hatred of Jews. In *Mein Kampf*, he gave warning of his intention to drive them from German political, intellectual and cultural life.

Throughout the 1930s, the legal, economic and social rights of Jews were steadily restricted. On April 1, 1933, a boycott of Jewish businesses took place, which was the first anti-Semitic campaign but called off after one day due to lack of popular support.

In July, 1933, the Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring called for the compulsory sterilization of the "inferior" was passed. This resulted in over 400,000 persons being sterilized against their will during the Nazi period.

In 1935, Hitler introduced the Nuremberg Laws, which prohibited Jews from marrying or having sex with "Aryans", stripped German Jews of their citizenship and deprived them of all civil rights.

These actions led to an exodus of Jewish intellectuals and cultural figures. The philosopher Walter Benjamin left for Paris. Conductor Bruno Walter fled after being told that the hall of the Berlin Philharmonic would be burned down if he conducted there. When Germany annexed Austria in 1938, Sigmund Freud and his family fled from Vienna to England.

## **Kristallnacht (1938)**

On November 7, 1938, a Jewish minor assassinated Nazi German diplomat, Ernst von Rath in Paris. The Nazis used this incident to go beyond legal repression to large-scale, physical violence against Jewish Germans.

What the Nazis claimed were spontaneous shows of public outrage were, in fact, a wave of pogroms instigated by the Nazi party. These pogroms were known as "The Night of Broken Glass", or "Crystal Night".

Jews were attacked and over 7,000 Jewish shops and 1,668 synagogues were damaged or destroyed plus 30,000 were sent to

concentration camps. Coinciding with Kristallnacht was the passage of laws, which made it illegal for Jews to possess firearms or other weapons.

They also were required to pay an “atonement tax” of more than a billion Reichsmarks for the material damage caused by the pogroms. After the pogroms, the rate of Jewish emigration from Germany accelerated while public Jewish life in Germany ceased to exist.

Germany’s invasion of Poland in September 1939 increased the urgency of the “Jewish Question”. Poland was home to two million Jews. Heinrich Himmler’s right-hand man, Reinhard Heydrich, recommended concentrating the Polish Jews in ghettos in major cities where they would be put to work to work for the German war industry.

The Warsaw Ghetto was the largest, with 380,000 people and the Lodz ghetto numbered 160,000 persons. The Warsaw ghetto contained 30 percent of its population with an average of nine persons per room. Over 43,000 Warsaw ghetto residents died in 1941.

The ghettos, Heydrich argued, would offer “a better possibility of control and later deportation.” In 1961, Adolf Eichmann recalled that “later deportation” actually meant “physical extermination”.

When Germany occupied Norway, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Belgium and France in 1940 and Yugoslavia and Greece in 1941, anti-Semitic measures were also introduced into these countries, although the pace and severity varied from country to country, according to local political circumstances.

## **Concentration and Labor Camps (1933-1945)**

From the beginning of the Third Reich, concentration camps were founded, initially as places of incarceration. Though the death rate in the camps was high (50 percent), they were not designed to be killing centers. After 1939, the camps increasingly became places where Jews and POWs were either killed or made to work as slave

laborers, undernourished and tortured. The Germans established an estimated 15,000 camps and sub-camps in occupied countries.

#### Ghettos (1940-45)

Himmler ordered the start of deportations in July, 1942 and, over the next 52 days, 300,000 people were transported in freight trains to the Treblinka extermination camp. Many other ghettos were completely depopulated.

The first ghetto uprising occurred in September, 1942 in the small town of Lachwa in southeast Poland, followed by armed resistance attempts in 1943 in Warsaw and the Bialystok Ghettos. They failed in every case and the remaining Jews were either killed or deported to the death camps.

#### Death Squads (1941-1943)

The German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 opened a new phase. The Holocaust intensified after the Nazis occupied Lithuania where close to 80 percent of the country's 220,000 Jews were exterminated.

Members of the local populations in some occupied Soviet territories participated actively in the killings of Jews and others. In Lithuania, Latvia and western Ukraine, locals were deeply involved in the murder of Jews from the start of the German occupation. Many of the mass killings were carried out in public.

The German Army's involvement in the Holocaust in Russia can be correctly termed "crimes against humanity". German historian, Andreas Hillgruber, maintained that the slaughter of 2.2 million defenseless men, women and children cannot be justified for any reason.

The large-scale killings of Jews in the occupied Soviet territories were assigned to SS formations called *Einsatzgruppen* (task groups) under the overall command of Heydrich. These had been used on a limited scale in Poland in 1939 but were now organized on a much larger scale.

According to Otto Ohlendorf at his trial, "the *Einsatzgruppen* had the mission to protect the rear of the troops by killing Jews, Gypsies,

Communist functionaries, active Communists, and all persons who would endanger the security.” In practice, their victims were nearly all-Jewish civilians (not a single *Einsatzgruppen* member was killed in action during these operations). By December, 1941, they had killed 300,000 people.

The most notorious massacre of Jews in the Soviet Union was at Babi Yar, outside Kiev, where all 33,771 Jews of Kiev were killed in a single operation. On September 29, 1941, the Jews of Kiev gathered by the cemetery, expecting to be loaded onto trains bound for concentration camps.

Instead, they were ordered to undress and all were driven down a corridor of soldiers in groups of ten and shot. The next group was also ordered to disrobe, led into the ravine which was 150 meters long, 30 meters wide and a good 15 meters deep and made to lie down on top of Jews who had already been shot. The corpses were literally in layers. A police marksman came along and shot each Jew in the neck with a submachine gun. This continued through the next day as well.

#### Gas chambers

Starting in December 1939, the Nazis introduced new methods of mass murder by using gas. In the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in 1941, large vans, holding up to 100 people, were used, using the engine’s exhaust rather than earlier gas cylinders. These vans were used to kill about 500,000 primarily Jews but also Romani (gypsies) and others.

Hans Frank, governor of the Central Government who felt a new means of elimination, beyond the use of vans or submachine guns had to be found, expressed a need for new mass murder techniques. This led the SS to experiment with large-scale killing using poison gas.

### **Wannsee Conference and the Final Solution**

Reinhard Heydrich convened the Wannsee Conference on January 20, 1942 in the Berlin suburb of Wannsee. It brought

together 15 Nazi leaders considered the best and the brightest in the Reich. The initial purpose of the meeting was to discuss plans for a comprehensive solution to the “Jewish question in Europe.”

Heydrich made it clear what was understood by the phrase 'Final Solution': "Jews were to be annihilated by a combination of forced labor and mass murder." The officials were told there were a total of about 6,500,000 Jews involved with 2.3 million in Germany, 1.1 million in other occupied countries and up to 3 million not under Russian control in Soviet Russia.

The reaction to these plans and operations among the German public, according to a 1983 study by Ian Kershaw, found most Bavarians indifferent to what was happening to the Jews. Kershaw says most Bavarians were vastly more concerned about the war than the *Shoah*. An Israeli historian, Otto Dov Kulka, suggests that “passive complicity” would be a better term than “indifference”.

A study conducted in 2012 established that, in Berlin alone, there were 3000 camps of various function and that it is unlikely that the German population could avoid knowing about the persecution considering its prevalence.

According to Robert Gellately, the German civilian populations were aware of what was happening. The government openly announced the conspiracy through the media and civilians were aware of every aspect.

In contrast, some historical evidence indicates that the vast majority of Holocaust victims, prior to their deportation, were either unaware of the fate that awaited them or were in denial; they honestly believed that they were to be resettled.

## **Extermination Camps**

During 1942, in addition to Auschwitz, five other camps were designated as extermination camps for carrying out the Reinhard plan. Two of these were already functioning as labor camps and had extermination facilities added to them. Three other camps, Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka, were built for the sole purpose of killing

large numbers of Jews as quickly as possible.

Extermination camps are frequently confused with concentration camps such as Dachau and Belsen, which were mostly located in Germany and intended as places of incarceration and forced labor.

They should also be distinguished from slave labor camps, which were set up in all German-occupied countries to exploit labor of prisoners of war. In all Nazi camps there were very high death rates as a result of starvation, disease and exhaustion, but only the extermination camps were designed specifically for mass killing.

## **New Gas Chambers**

At the extermination camps with gas chambers, all the prisoners arrived by train. Sometimes entire trainloads were sent straight to the gas chambers but usually the camp doctor subjected individuals to selections, where a small percentage were deemed fit to work in the slave labor camps.

The majority were taken to a reception area where their clothes and other possessions were seized by the Nazis to help fund the war. They were then herded into the gas chambers. Usually they were told these were showers and there were signs outside saying “baths” and “sauna”.

At Auschwitz, bunker 1 held 800 people and bunker 2 held 1,200. Once the chamber was full, the doors were screwed shut and gas pellets were dropped into the chambers through vents in the side walls. Those inside died within 20 minutes.

In the spring of 1943, new gas chambers were built to accommodate the numbers. Rudolf Hess, the commandant of Auschwitz, testified at the Nuremberg trials that, “another improvement we made over Treblinka was that we built our gas chambers to accommodate 2,000 people at one time, whereas at Treblinka, their 10 gas chambers only accommodated 200 people each.”



## Jewish Resistance

In a seminal study of the Holocaust, "The Destruction of the European Jews", the scholar, Raul Hilberg, wrote: "The reaction pattern of the Jews is characterized by almost complete lack of resistance...On a European-wide scale, the Jews had no resistance organization, no blueprint for armed action, no plan even for psychological warfare. They were completely unprepared."

Hilberg accounts for this compliant attitude by evoking the history of Jewish persecution. Like so many times before over centuries, the Jews simply appealed to their oppressors and complied with orders. This tended to avoid inflaming the situation and so mitigated the damage done to them until the threat abated.

They were, he wrote, "caught in the straitjacket of their history" and the realization that this time was different came too late.

In the case of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in the spring of 1943, Yehuda Bauer and other historians argue that resistance consisted not only of physical opposition but also of any activity that gave the Jews dignity and humanity in humiliating and inhumane conditions.

Warsaw was the most famous example of Jewish armed resistance. Thousands of poorly armed Jewish fighters held the SS at bay for four weeks before being crushed by overwhelmingly superior forces. According to Jewish accounts, several hundred Germans were killed while 13,000 Jews died and almost 58,000 were deported and gassed by the Germans.

The Warsaw uprising was followed by the uprising at the Treblinka extermination camp in May, 1943, when about 200 inmates escaped after overpowering the guards. They set fire to the camp buildings. Out of the 600 who successfully escaped, only 40 survived the war.

These actions were repeated in the Bialystok Ghetto and the Vilna Ghetto. On October 7, 1944, 250 Jewish laborers at Auschwitz attacked their guards and blew up crematorium IV with explosives that female prisoners had smuggled in from a nearby factory. However, they were all killed soon after this action.

Pieter Meerburg testifies to the courage that many Jews exhibited. “Many people think the Jews went to their deaths like sheep to the slaughter and that’s not true—it’s absolutely not true. I worked closely with many Jewish people in the Resistance, and I can tell you, they took much greater risks than I did.”

For the great majority of Jews, however, resistance could only take the passive forms of delay, evasion, negotiation, bargaining and, where possible, bribery of German officials.

Historian Martin Gilbert in his book, *The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy*, wrote that the will to resist was strong and took many forms. “The courage of obtaining food and water under the threat of death, the superiority of refusing the Germans their final wish to gloat over panic and despair, even passivity, was a form of resistance. To die with dignity was a form of resistance. To refuse to be reduced to the level of animals, to live through the torment, to outlive the tormentors, these too were acts of resistance....simply to survive was a victory of the human spirit.”

The historical conditioning of the Jewish communities in Europe to accept persecution and avert disaster through compromise and negotiation was the most important factor in the failure to resist until the very end.

## **Climax**

Heydrich was assassinated in Prague in June 1942. Ernst Kaltenbrunner succeeded him. Kaltenbrunner and Eichmann oversaw the climax of the Final Solution.

During 1943 and 1944, the extermination camps worked at a furious pace to kill the hundreds of thousands of people shipped to them by rail from almost every country within the German sphere of influence. By the spring of 1944, up to 8,000 people were being gassed every day at Auschwitz.

The largest of these operations, the deportation of 100,000 people from the Warsaw Ghetto in early 1943 provoked the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Approximately 42,000 Jews were shot during the

Operation Harvest Festival on November 3 & 4, 1943.

Shipments of Jews to the camps had priority on the German railways and continued even in the face of the dire military situation after the Battle of Stalingrad at the end of 1942 and the escalating Allied air attacks on German industry and transport.

By 1944, it was clear to most Germans that they were losing the war. Many senior officials began to fear the retribution that would await Germany and them personally for crimes being committed in their name.

The scale of extermination slackened somewhat at the start of 1944 once the ghettos in occupied Poland were emptied. But, on March 19, 1944, Hitler ordered the military occupation of Hungary and Eichmann was sent to Budapest to supervise the deportation of Hungary's 800,000 Jews.

## **Escapes & Reports of Killings**

By early February, 1942, the U.S. Office of War Information had decided not to release details about the extermination of Jews because it was felt that it would mislead the public into thinking the war was simply a Jewish problem.

That same year, Jan Karski reported to the Polish, British and U.S. governments on the situation in Poland, especially the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto and the Holocaust of the Jews. In December, 1942, the western Allies released the Joint Declaration By Members of the United Nations titled *The Mass Extermination of Jews in German Occupied Poland* and stated that they "condemn in the strongest possible terms this bestial policy of cold-blooded extermination."

Karski spoke to Anthony Eden, the British foreign secretary and then traveled to the United States and reported to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. His report was a major factor in informing the West.

Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzler, inmates at Auschwitz,

escaped in April, 1944. The 32-page document they dictated to Jewish officials about the mass murder at Auschwitz became known as the Vrba-Wetzler report.

The BBC and *The New York Times* published material from the report on June 15, June 20, July 3 and July 6, 1944. The subsequent pressure from world leaders persuaded Hungarian official Miklos Horthy to halt the mass deportation of Jews to Auschwitz on July 9, 1944, saving up to 200,000 Jews from the extermination camps.

## **Death Marches (1944-1945)**

By mid-1944, the Final Solution had largely run its course. Those Jewish communities within easy reach of the Nazi regime had been largely exterminated, in proportions ranging from 25 percent in France to more than 90 percent in Poland.

During 1944, the task became steadily more difficult. German armies were evicted from the Soviet Union, the Balkans, Italy and German forces, as well as those aligned with them, were either defeated or switching sides to the Allies. Auschwitz itself was closed as the Soviets advanced through Poland.

Despite the desperate military situation, great efforts were made to conceal evidence of what had happened in the camps. The gas chambers were dismantled, the crematoria dynamited, mass graves dug up and the corpses cremated and Polish farmers were forced to plant crops on the sites to give the impression that they had never existed.

Local commanders continued to kill Jews and to shuttle them from camp to camp by forced “death marches” until the last weeks of the war. Prisoners were forced to march for tens of miles in the snow to train stations, then transported for days at a time without food or shelter in freight trains with open carriages and forced to march again to the new camp. Around 250,000 Jews died during these marches.



Wikipedia



## Liberation and Final Death Toll

The first major camp, Majdanek, was discovered by the advancing Soviets on July 23, 1944. Chelmno was liberated on January 20, 1945 and Auschwitz was liberated, also by the Soviets, on January 27. American forces liberated Buchenwald on April 11 and Dachau on April 29.

Since 1945, the most commonly cited figure for the total number of Jews killed has been six million victims attributed to Adolf Eichmann. Other estimates range from 4.2 million to one as high as 6.2 million.

A study by Lucy Dawidowicz, *The Holocaust and the historians*, charts the annihilation of the pre-war Jewish population of Europe:

Poland—3 million of 3.3 million pre-war population or 90 percent; Germany and Austria—210,000 of 240,000, also 90 percent; The Netherlands—105,000 of 140,000 or 70 percent; same

percentage for Hungary; Romania—300,000 of 600,000 or 50 percent. The lowest percentage of Jews killed was in Denmark where only 52 out of 8,000 perished.

The goal of annihilating all the Jews of Europe, as proclaimed at the Wannsee conference of 1942, was not reached. Yet the six million murder victims make the Holocaust a unique crime in the history of mankind.

## **Postscript**

Oskar Schindler and Raoul Wallenberg are well-known figures for their heroic efforts to save many Jews from becoming victims of the Nazi's Final Solution. However, another figure who deserves to be in their company is Abdol Hossein Sardari (1914-1981).

Sardari was an Iranian statesman and diplomat who saved the lives of many Jews during the Holocaust. He is known as the "Schindler of Iran" and was the uncle of Fereydoun Hoveyda, Iran's Prime Minister for thirteen years.

He was in charge of the Iranian consular office in Paris in 1941. There was a sizable community of Iranian Jews in Paris when Hitler invaded and occupied the city.

Sardari was able to protect these Iranian Jews, whose families had been living in Iran since the time of the Persian Empire. He argued forcefully with the German officials and ascertained that this population were protected under these statutes. The Nazis grudgingly agreed and thus many Persian Jews were saved from deportation.

But Sardari went further. Once he realized the full nature of Nazi ambitions, he began issuing hundreds of Iranian passports for non-Iranian Jews to save them as well. His actions were later confirmed and applauded by the government of Iran.

Sardari has been honored by Jewish organizations such as the Simon Wiesenthal Center on multiple occasions. In April, 1978, three years before his death, Abdol Hossein Sardari responded to

the Israeli National Holocaust Memorial about his actions in this way: “As you may know, I had the pleasure of being the Iranian Consul in Paris during the German occupation of France and, as such, it was my duty to save all Iranians, including Iranian Jews.”





## **Chapter Three**

### **Creation of Israel and Pakistan**

The Second World War ended and the Marshal Plan in Europe was a success story to rebuild Europe. Germany is divided into two blocs: an Eastern Communist bloc and a Western Capitalist bloc. Hostilities are put aside but could the Jews, who had lost six million of their tribe, go back to Germany and forget what happened just a few months earlier?

By invitation of the Arab leaders, the Jews were asked to purchase land and invest in Palestine. They were thinking another Cyrus might be born among Arabs and once again, after twenty-five hundred years, they would go back home.

The Jews from 1840 under Ottoman rule lived, invested, working for many years in the deserts of Palestine having Talmud and Biblical stories in mind. Life continued in harmony with the Moslem Arabs and the pace of immigration was normal until 1945. After the war, the influx of migrants speeded up and, by the beginning of 1948, eye-opening news arrived from India.

Rumors said that the Moslems were going to break up India, the second largest nation on earth and grab the most fertile part of the country to form an "Islamic State" for themselves.

For months, the leaders of India, Gandhi and Nehru, begged

the Moslem leaders and Muhammad Ali Jinnah to become Prime Minister and have autonomy in their newly-independent India. Moslems could have anything they wanted!

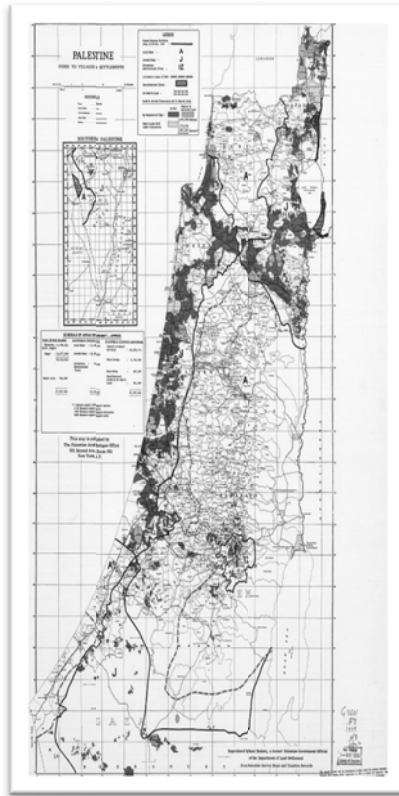
The answer was NO! We want an Islamic state! What should the Islamic state be called? Pak-Estan (**Pak** means clean in Persian and **Estan** means province in Persian), as if Hindu-Estan (India), province of Hindus, a nation with a four thousand year-old history were dirty. The Islam conquest of India was done only one thousand years earlier by a Turkic Moslem, Sultan Mahmood Ghaznavi.

A new nation, comprised of land taken from India, finally was created on August 15, 1948, called Pakistan, at the present borders of Pakistan and Bangladesh (East Pakistan). A new language, Urdu, (a mixture of Persian, English, Hindi and Arabic) became the official language of the new nation.

A peaceful deportation of millions of Hindus from the Province of Clean started eastward. Nobody knows how many thousands, or even millions, died as a result of this forced migration.

Now that the Islamic nation of Pakistan was established, the nation has lived relatively happily ever after and the two countries, of the same people under two different laws, have survived until now. A comparison of the two countries is a good measure of the laws which govern them.

There has been no protest by any Moslem country since 1948 for such a unilateral declaration of independence. Jewish land purchases in Palestine refer to the acquisition of land in Palestine by Jews from the 1840s until the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948.



Wikipedi

Map showing Jewish-owned land as of March 31, 1945, including land owned in full, shared in undivided land and state lands under concession.

Finally, the Biblical prediction about the Jews having a homeland took place. After a series of conflicts with the Palestinians, Israel gained independence on May 14, 1948.

During the years from the 1950s through the 1970s, during the Cold War, Great Britain granted independence to the many Arab countries in the Middle East, before Soviet manipulation.

During these three decades, wars broke out between Israel and the neighboring Arab countries. Each time, Israel has gained some territories, further established its legitimacy as an independent nation and gained the Arab nations' recognition.

Every event over these years has a long story but 1979 should be

seen as the year when the geopolitics of the Middle East changed. The Communist Soviet Union, in the prior year, overthrew the Kingdom of Afghanistan and replaced it with their own socialist regime.

This advancement of the Soviet Union towards Persian Gulf led the West to ponder: where was our “Dear Gendarme”?

In 1953, America and Britain overthrew the popular democratic government of Dr. Mohamed Mosadeg in Iran and replaced it with their own man, Mohamed Reza Shah.

Shah, later known as the “Gendarme of the Persian Gulf”, with his security agency (SAVAK) for fighting communism, wiped out any sign of constitutional reform, such as free elections, free press and speech, while the country was making social progress. He was criticized occasionally by the America for his dictatorship but, for the West, fighting communism was more important.

## **Pahlavi Dynasty (1925-1979)**

The Pahlavi dynasty implemented modernizing reforms, which greatly improved the lives of Jews. The Shi’a clergy’s influence was weakened and restrictions on Jews and other religious minorities were abolished. Reza Shah prohibited mass conversion of Jews and eliminated the concept of non-Muslim impurity.

However, during the 1930s, Reza Shah’s pro-Nazi sympathies threatened Iranian Jewish community. There were no persecutions but anti-Jewish articles appeared in the media.

The violence and disruption in Arab life that following in the wake of the founding of Israel and its victory in the 1948 Arab-Israeli war drove increased anti-Jewish feelings in Iran. Over the next five years, an estimated one-third of Iranian Jews emigrated. By 1978, an estimated 70,000 Jews had fled to Israel.

After the overthrow of Mohammed Mossadegh in 1953, the reign of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi was the most prosperous era for the Jews of Iran. Prior to the Islamic Revolution of 1979, the Jewish population of Iran was 80,000. They were classified as only 1

per cent of Iranian Jews being lower class; 90 per cent were middle class and 10 per cent were wealthy.

## **Islamic Republic (1979-Present)**

The years following the Islamic Revolution have seen a dramatic increase in Jewish emigration. About 20,000 left within months of the Shah's overthrow. The vast majority has since left the country with 30,000 going to Israel and most choosing the United States. Large Iranian communities exist Beverly Hills, California with the largest number (10,000) of Iranian Jews living in and around Great Neck, New York.

Those Jews who remained have become more religious. Families who were secular in the 1970s started adhering to kosher dietary laws and strictly observing rules against driving on the *Shabbat*. They stopped going to restaurants, cafes and cinemas and the synagogue became the focus of their social lives.

Iran's Jewish community today is officially recognized as a religious minority group and, like the Zoroastrians and Christians, are allocated one seat in the Iranian Parliament. There are currently 25 synagogues in Iran. The U.S. State Department estimates the current number of Jews in Iran as between 20,000-25,000 in 2009.

In recent years, the Iranian government has allowed Jewish Iranians to visit family members in Israel and also allowed Iranians living in Israel to return for a visit. In July 2007, Iran's Jewish community rejected financial incentives to leave Iran. The offers ranged from 5,000 to 30,000 British pounds, financed by a wealthy expatriate Jew with the support of the Israeli government.

## **From the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Historically, the bloodiest battles in Europe have happened during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Finally, following World War II, world leaders agreed it would be best to stop killing each other.

They reasoned that World War III would be an economic

battle and, to be the winner of that war, nations needed to strive for peace among themselves, invest in education and promoting freedom, separate religion from government and let everybody pray to any God, in the privacy of their own mind.

However, such a utopia was not to be. Bloody wars are good for the economy! It injects vital economic juices into the economy, circulates money and brings prosperity to manufacturers and society, provided it happens somewhere else.

Don't bother to argue about the financial reasons for World War II. Or the war machine's forgotten Korean War. Just remember the happy days and celebration when the GI's return home.

Europe, America and the Soviet Union entered into the Cold War, where Vietnam War was the first course of entrée coming after the cold appetizer of Korea. While cooks in the kitchen were preparing the main course, Several courses were served along the borders of India and Pakistan and the Arab borders with Israel.

The Soviets invasion of Afghanistan and the 1979 Iranian revolution prepared for a change in the geopolitics not just of the region but the whole world!

This picture from Facebook makes one ponder how nations fall as a result of a quarrel between two donkeys (in the Middle East mentality, donkey is a synonym for stupidity)



The ingredients of the donkey quarrel of 1979 involved the

Shah of Iran, Saddam Hussein of Iraq and Ayatollah Khomeini.

**Shah of Iran:** A naive dictator installed after the coup of 1953 in Iran engineered by the U.S. and Great Britain. Shah was under a false illusion that, because he was installed as an anti-communist monarch, he was the sweetheart ruler of the West, as a “Gendarme of the Middle East”, for suppressing any communist movements.

He was Swiss-educated, a womanizer, who presented a good appearance to western media; a religious man with a very superstitious mind; a dictator who, as soon as there was an internal opposition, left the country, hoping to be reinstalled by his Western power friends.

Once, when he decided to amend the Constitution, giving himself unlimited power, he was criticized and opposed even by the U.S. and Britain. However, he threatened his friends with expulsion from the country if they did not agree with him. During his governing of Iran, the people enjoyed all social freedoms but absolutely no political freedom with a self-made Parliament and press.

He was very confident that his Western power supporters and his secret intelligence service, “SAVAK”, would protect his crown and throne and that his son would succeed him. He had no vision that when Western powers find a better substitute, who can serve their economic and political ego, they would let him go.

SAVAK was a corrupt organization whose leaders were more concerned with making money. Their primary job was to infiltrate among writers, press and people to see who is saying or writing anything against the monarchy.

SAVAK arrested, imprisoned, tortured and even killed any sympathizer of Mosaddegh, the Prime Minister who was removed by the 1953 coup and the Tudeh Party, a group of communist sympathizers who were outlawed after 1953.

The name of the most powerful figure in the country, General Fardoust, was secret and unknown to the public. Fardoust was a

friend and classmate of the Shah and they grew up together. It was public knowledge that Fardoost had a beautiful, blond girlfriend, Tala, who the Shah fell in love with and took her from Fardoost and then gave her an apartment in the Royal Palace of Niavaran.

One day, Shahbanoo Farah (the Queen) slapped Tala's face when they crossed each other in the Palace. Fardoost's hatred toward the shah made him one of the conspirators, when the time was right, who helped Khomeini, to set up the Islamic Regime Intelligent Organization, later known as SAVAMA.

Shah was so naive and ignorant about the situation that, in his last audience with Prime Minister Bakhtyar and his cabinet, after they left the room, turned to the military officers and told them: "I will leave the country tomorrow, but will be back soon. In the meantime, ignore Bakhtyar and listen to Fardoost. Whatever he says are my words! A week later, the military declares neutrality and Khomeini become the Supreme Leader.

**Ayatollah Khomeini:** a clergyman who criticized Shah for giving women having right to vote and land reforms, which happened in the 1960s in Iran under pressure from President Kennedy. Much softer criticism by others resulted in the death penalty. However, this low-ranking clergyman, after his arrest, was elevated to the rank of Ayatollah by the Council of Ayatollahs in order to prevent the Shah from hanging him.

Therefore, Shah deported him to Najaf, a holy city in Iraq, a dream city of every fanatic Shia individual. This was like deporting a gambler from the Vatican to Las Vegas.

**Saddam Hussein:** an assassin, who ran away to Syria after an assassination attempt on the President of Iraq at age 19.

A Syrian general wrote in his book: "When Gamal Abdul Nasser, President of Egypt, inspected a military march in Syria, President Hafez Al Assad turned to Nasser and said: "Look at that strong looking soldier, Saddam, who the British and CIA have



embedded in our army. He will be an important person in Iraq one day"!

Shah, Saddam and Khomeini, three individuals, while patriotic and very religious, believed what they were doing was right. They had three absolutely different mindsets and fought with each other during the 1970s and 1980s.

Iran and Iraq, the two most prosperous and educated nations in the Middle East, fun places to live in during the 1970s, after two decades, became the most horrible countries to live in with the highest rates of brain drain in the world.

This is the meaning of two fighting donkeys and the fall of a nation. But what is the role of people here? Nations deserve those who rule them!

Remember Europe's Dark Ages? Are we not in a similar darkness in the Middle East? It took the Thirty Years War--between 1618 and 1648 in the Holy Roman Empire of Rome--for European nations to free themselves from the rule of the Catholic Church.

This is the same age as when Iran's Safavid Empire defeated the Ottoman Empire on many fronts but fell internally into the hands of the Shia clergy rulers. While Europe entered the Age of Enlightenment and later the Industrial Revolution, Iran totally collapsed in 1722 when Shah Sultan Hussein hands over his crown to the leader of 100 renegades coming from Afghanistan. For the next three centuries, Shia clergies are the dominant power in Iranian politics with an absolute Power (Velayat Motlagheh Faghih) since 1979.

Iran, through history, has offered a model of governing for imitation by other Middle Eastern countries. Whether it is the Parliamentary Constitution of 1907 or the Oil Nationalization of 1953 and militarism of the 1970 decade, it affected other Arab nations to follow suit.

The "sleepy terror animal" of radical Islamists suddenly awakened after a radical Shia government took power in Iran after 1979. The West encouraged these Islamists to counter and defeat

the Russian invasion in Afghanistan.

Since then, billions of Petro-Dollars have been invested in the region starting with the development of “Madrassa” (Islamic School) in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India to train the youngsters. Thousands of graduates from these “Islamic Schools” have entered into different societies all over the world. The culmination of this first wave of graduates was the eye-opening destruction of 9/11.

There has not been a single day since, in which the news is not filled with the death of the innocent by terrorists. (Although the Iranian regime is not involved in these events, their root can be traced to ideologies taught in the “Madrassa”, and are a natural reaction by Saudi Arabian Wahabi (Salafism) against the Iranian Shia population).

Once, Prime Minister Tony Blair said, "There is no solution in the conflicts of Iraq and Afghanistan while the regime in Iran is in power". President George W. Bush called that regime one of three constituents of the "Axis of Evil".

For thirty-six years, the clerical rulers have controlled Iran with an iron fist.

Under their rule, Iran has enjoyed many unenviable distinctions. Its society leads the world in corruption, prostitution, public hangings, the jailing of journalists, pollution, wasteful spending, the exportation of terror, a severe brain drain and, most importantly, the Big Lie!

The lie is that the Shia religious term, “Khod e”, is part of Shia belief and is even encouraged for the advancement of Islam.

Among one billion Moslems all over the world, Shia number ten percent (100 million) and are historically hated by other Moslems. Therefore, at the beginning, pretending to not being Shia “Taghi ah” became a rule. However, for many centuries after, lying and pretending “Khod e” became part of the Shia religion.

The most significant “Khod e” known to any Iranian over 50 years of age is remembering Ayatollah Khomeini, when he was in Paris, everyday sitting under a tree and preaching, once the Shah



was gone, how the new Iranian government might look like:

What Ayatollah Khomeini was saying in Paris before the Shah's departure was broadcast in the press and clips of those days' newspapers in Persian and distributed everywhere.



The English translation of these headline clips quoting Ayatollah Khomeini are as follows:

“There is no dictatorship in an Islamic government.

Water and electricity will be free.

The Republic in Islam is different from religious rule.

Confiscation of people's properties is illegal.

I will never be head of state.

Marxists are free to express their opinion.

Don't buy a home! We will make everybody a homeowner.

Bank interest will be eliminated (free interest loans).

Clergy will never become President.

Islamic government is the government of ideas.

The principles of Islamic government are democratic”.



Ayatollah Khomeini announces Mehdi Bazargan as Prime Minister of Iran's interim government in 1979.

In the spring of 1979, a few months after establishment of power and the killing of all military and political leaders of the previous regime, the signs of “Khod e” began to show itself. And, in order to keep the revolutionary mood alive in the society, the “American Hostage-Taking” was staged that Fall.

Popular protests and unrests were held daily and everywhere. During November, 1979, a group of young students who called

themselves “Students, Followers of the Imam” occupied the American Embassy and took all Americans hostage.

After a year, when that crisis was dying down, Saddam Hussein handed a gift to Ayatollah Khomeini by invading Iran in 1980. During the first month of the war, Saddam's planes destroyed the world's biggest oil refinery at Abadan, almost half of the wealthy province of Khoosestan was occupied by the Iraqi Army.

Khomeini, in a famous speech, said, while smiling, “War is God’s gift”. People didn’t understand the meaning of such a stupid statement at that time. But a decade later, they realized what Khomeini meant was that the prolonged war's outcome was solidification of the regime.

Nearly one million Iranians, and perhaps half that number from Iraq perished in this useless war. Whenever the casualties of war were reported to Khomeini, he always smiled that he had been rightly quoted and “not to worry, Islam needs blood”!

A few years after eliminating all internal opposition and political parties, when Khomeini was asked about the contradiction between what he was saying in Paris and what Iran had become, replied, “I did “Khod e”.

The Islamic regime's survival is the result of three elements: Crises, Poverty and Misery. For the next thirty-five years, several Islamic Parliamentary elections and Islamic Presidential elections were held. Each time, every president offered lots of promises and, in subsequent years, the situation turned from bad to worse. Let us recap that history.

After eight years of war and devastation of the country, which saw establishment of an Islamic government, just a few days before peace was achieved, all political prisoners were killed. The number of this secret mass killing is estimated between five to ten thousand people. Only after twenty years, in a ceremonial court in London, was the truth about this genocide and “Crime Against Humanity” publicly announced to the world.

After the war, there was an eight year presidency of Ayatollah Rafsanjani. Rafsanjani, known as “Ayatollah Businessman”, handed

over Iran's economy to the Revolutionary Guard “Sepah”. By the end of his presidency, practically all the businesses of the country were run by Sepah and the security forces, while the Ayatollah and his family, particularly his son, became among the world's richest people.

After Rafsanjani, the presidency went to a smiling Ayatollah Khatami, who came to power on the platform of freedom of speech and election reform! But, after eight years, not only did he do nothing but his presidency ended with mass killings and the disappearance of journalists and writers. He ended his term by admitting that the President has no power. It was all in the hands of the Supreme Leader.

After all the talk about freedom, comes Ahmadinejad with an ugly face and an inferiority complex. A populist who promised a lot to the poor but, during his administration, half a trillion dollars from oil revenue disappeared. At the end of his presidency, the embezzlements of one or two Billion Dollars appear to be "small potatoes" and not worth following up, according to a famous quote: "Do not prolong!" (“keshesh nadin”) by the leader, Ayatollah Khamenei!

Finally, after eight years of international embarrassment by every Iranian from AhmadiNejad's behavior and speeches in the United Nation and interviews, a lifetime National Security Clergy is appointed as President, who is going to resolve the nuclear issue and revive the economy of the country.

Ayatollah Dr. Hassan Rouhani, who received his PhD from a university in England while he served the Islamic government as National Security Advisor, spent a few weeks in England to study and write his paper.

A few years earlier, in a speech before Friday prayer, he suggested that guilty victims of the Revolutionary Court and Military must be hanged in public on Fridays in the University of Tehran.

President Rouhani, a soft-spoken and polite person, a 180 degree opposite of his predecessor, AhmadiNejad, has promised to

change many things in Iran. Only looking at his background and his ministers, especially the Minister of Justice (a convicted terrorist in the International Court of Justice and one of three members of "Hanging Committee" behind the mass killings of 1988) makes us skeptical that he might be able to evaporate a \$100 Billion Dollar nuclear investment by Iran and avoid any military conflict with the West.

Meanwhile, the life of the ordinary people in Iran will never change and a miserable life will continue as if AhmadiNejad were still in power. By the way, AhmadiNejad has been appointed by the Supreme Leader to serve next to President Ayatollah Rafsanjani as a member of the Expectancy Council.

Reviewing the history of Iran after 1979 makes one believe that nothing will change in the life of ordinary people. Changing presidents in Islamic regime serves two purposes: one, to keep hopes alive and let people wait for better times. Second, a changing of the guard brings a new generation of thieves!

People have gradually entered into the era of enlightenment and have realized there is no holiness in the character of anybody who wears rope and puts a turban on his head.

Richard Nelson Frye, a historian born in Alabama, who has written many books and knows Iran with love once said, "The life of governments is very short compared with the history of a nation". He said this after he was criticized for going to Iran and meeting AhmadiNejad.

Yes! The life of Iran is much bigger than a few periods of shameful governmental rule.





## **Chapter Four**

### **Thirty-six years after the Islamic Revolution**

There was a joke among Iranians the first year after the mullahs took power: "A European reporter coming back from Iran in 1979 reported that Iranians behaved odd! Whoever I met was smiling and showing a two-finger gesture, pointing their heads sideward. When I asked the Ambassador what that meant, he replied, "it is a general belief among majority of Iranians that this regime and the Mullahs will go in less than two months!"

That did not happen. There is a proverb in Persian literature which says, "Mullah teaches the Devil". Mullahs are cleverer than that and that is why they successfully have been in power with such a low popularity.

Their governing tools, as mentioned earlier, are poverty, misery and crisis with fear.

The poorer the people, the better for them. Iran before 1979 was among the list of prosperous nations. It now ranks among the poorer nations.

The day there is no crisis issue such as nuclear enrichment, or a dispute with other countries, accusations of others meddling in the affairs of the nation, support of terrorism. Finally, if their relation with the US is normalized, the countdown of their collapse will

start.

Of eighty million Iranians, five million of them live outside the country, either as immigrants or citizens of other countries. In the United States alone, perhaps two million first and second generation Iranians live.

There are hundreds of popular and unknown organizations and political activists who, for the last three decades, have had changing the regime in Iran as their principal goal.

Among these activists there are two, with deep financial resources and fame, the Pahlavi Monarchist and Rajavi's Mujahedin.

These two had no popularity among the people in Iran. Rajavi's are the most hated individuals in the country. Rajavi, who sided with Saddam during the eight-year war, are responsible for many terrorist acts in Iran, starting with killing American during the Shah's Regime.

Rajavi, with a several billion dollar inheritance from Saddam, lives in Paris and Swaziland and his wife leads the campaign from both places. They are fanatic Shia responsible for the Kurds and Shia massacre in Iraq. Yet they now claim to have changed.

Reza Pahlavi, the shah's son who came to America to become a pilot at age 16, spent many years in seclusion but became famous in the U.S., as the boyfriend of popular singer, Cher, during the 1990s. After 9/11, when Rajavi came off the terrorist list in the US, suddenly Prince Reza became a political activist.

He spoke fluent English and French and has the charisma of being from a royal family. Nobody know that, in a future free Iran, he wants to become Prime Minister with executive power or a constitutional monarch.

Hundreds of other groups with no money even to support their ordinary living expenses doing their best to send their messages across into what is known as "the Big Prison of Iran" and every now and then they get together in the big Cities in Europe and express

themselves and suggesting ways to overthrow the Evil Regime who has occupied Iran and taken people prisoner.

It is now a known fact that neither of these opposition groups outside Iran has either the popularity or the capacity to overthrow the regime.

However, during periodic internal uprisings in Iran since 1979, the movement goes into hiding and, whenever there is an opportunity, it comes out led by the young and women. Since a few months after Khomeini's power grab in the Spring of 1979 in Iran, there have been numerous and many violent protests up to now.

## **Iran's Women's Movement**

The history of the women's movement in Iran is not limited to this dark period. W. Morgan Shuster, an American who lived in Iran, in his 1912 book has written:

"Persian women since 1907 had become almost at a bound the most progressive, not to say radical, in the world. That this statement upsets the ideas of centuries makes no difference... Having themselves suffered from a double form of oppression, political and social...they broke through some of the most sacred customs, which for centuries past have bound their sex in the land of Iran."

The quote continues:

"The emergence of women's movements in Europe and America in the latter years of the nineteenth and beginning of the 20th Century, revived the spirit of social activism in Iranian women, whose potential for defiance was far greater than that of their male counterparts. The first rebellion occurred exactly one hundred years ago, and is known as the "Tobacco Movement." When in 1895, the Qajar monarch, Nasser od-Din shah, gave the exclusive rights for tobacco production and sale to the British firm, Rejie, the populace vehemently objected and boycotted the use of tobacco, forcing the king to annul the agreement. Iranian women were at the forefront of

this resistance. At the peak of the protests, Amin ol-Soltan, the Court-appointed chancellor, tried to convince and coerce the citizenry to end their rebellion. Hundreds of women charged forward, calling on their husbands to reject his pleas. Even within the royal court, the women rose up against the agreement, broke the hookah and joined the boycott.”

In his book, “The Tobacco Boycott”, Ibrahim Taymouri writes: “Women's perseverance in this movement was such that when the ban on tobacco was announced, women led the protesters who marched toward Nasser od-Din shah's palace. As they passed through the bazaar, these women closed down the shops, igniting a city-wide strike.

“Historians write that when the throng of people reached the palace, the Qajar monarch sent one of his confidants to calm the women. His attempts at talking to the protesters failed, because the women continued shouting slogans against Nasser o-Din shah. When, in a nearby mosque, the Friday prayer leader called on the marchers to disperse, angry women charged in and forced him to flee.

One woman, the tales of whose audacity have been passed down through generations of Iranians, is Zeinab Pasha. Also known as Bibi shah Zeinab, she led the popular opposition to the Rejie agreement in Tabriz, capital of East Azerbaijan Province. Zeinab Pasha organized seven groups of armed women to parry government efforts to put down the rebellion. The seven groups under her command themselves led other groups of women. When government forces intimidated the bazaar merchants into opening their shops, Zeinab Pasha and a group of armed women, wearing the chador, re- closed the shops. Eventually, bowing to pressures from across the country, Nasser o-Din shah canceled the Rejie agreement.

The beginning of the Constitutional Movement marked the unprecedented participation of women as a major social force. As the movement grew, women's democratic institutions grew with it. Although the Movement did not achieve its goals, it was nevertheless very important in propelling the women's movement in

Iran forward. Many pro-Constitutionalist intellectuals addressed the situation of women and their historical oppression. Simultaneous with attacks on the reactionary, feudalistic culture and social relationships, recognition of women's rights became a subject of hot debate in the progressive media."

In its August 1890 issue, *Qanoon* (The Law), a monthly published in London, wrote: "Women make up half of any nation. No plan of national significance will move forward unless women are consulted. The potential of a woman aware of her human essence, to serve in the progress of her country is equivalent to that of 100 men."

Elsewhere, it wrote: "There are many cases of distinguished women surpassing men solely because of their abilities to reason and their wisdom. Their understanding of society's meaning and privileges is far greater than men's."

Such commentaries, at a time when women were generally considered as the property of men, sparked many egalitarian ideas.



The board of directors of "Jam'iat e nesvan e vatan-khah", a women's rights association in Tehran (1923-1933)

Perhaps the children of the Iranian women shown above are here shown below.

An Iranian newspaper clip from 1968 reads: "A quarter of Iran's nuclear energy scientists are women." The photograph shows some



female Iranian PhDs posing in front of Tehran's research reactor.

**Iranian Women Parliamentarians in mid-1970s.**



Despite this long history of progress by women, in 1979, Iran

turned back to the Dark Ages!

People started to protest. But the well-established clerical regime employed hooligans to suppress the people. A group of ten or twenty, who called themselves Hezbollah (Party of God), dispersed crowds of 10,000 protestors.



International Women's Day, March 8, 1979, Iranian women demonstrated against changes to woman's status and rights, including family law and announcement of mandatory veiling.

One Million Signatures for Repeal of Discriminatory Laws



**These are Women of the Year because:** “One Million Signatures seized every opportunity to show the world that they did not agree with the discriminatory laws in Iran.” —*Shirin Ebadi, Nobel Peace Prize winner and 2008 Glamour Woman of the Year*

The one million signature movement may be old but many other women's movements have evolved every now and then in leading the young, specially students, to protest using every occasion, either a celebration for a sport victory or mourning the death of an Imam or Government-staged elections, to show their discontent with the regime.

At every election in Iran between the candidates of the regime, there is a protest. The candidates are all members of the Islamic State of Iran's establishment (After June, 2014 and the rise of Islamic State of Iraq & Syria (ISIS), due to the fundamental similarity between ISIS and the Iranian regime, using the term ISI for the Iranian regime may be more appropriate).

Perhaps the biggest Iranian protest against the regime post-1979 and the establishment of ISI was the election of Khatami in 1998. Twenty five million people, seventy- five percent of all eligible voters, voted for an unknown clergy against an old establishment candidate, Ayatollah Noori, supported publicly by the Supreme Leader.

A second protest election was over choosing an unknown weapons smuggler for European assassination, who claimed he would share the oil revenue with poor families and was running against Rafsanjani, the second most powerful ISI figure.

After four years, when people found out AhmadiNejad was the president to the Leader ever and he talked his mind, people voted for another soldier of the regime who was in his retirement. Young voters were not even born when Mousavi served as Prime Minister in the 1980s.

Finally, in 2014, the people chose Rouhani, a quiet, security and intelligent Ayatollah of the ISI, against the other candidates who were known to be sweethearts of the leader.

The next uprising could be during another election or a



celebration for sports victory or mourning the death of an Imam.

With all the pressures, imprisonments and tortures of the young and students, the discontentment continues and a record number of the graduates from universities in 2013 were women.

The ISI, therefore, staged a second Cultural Revolution after failing thirty-five years ago to Islamicize universities and the educational system. As they cannot force women to not show their hair, they might succeed this time in using quotas to stop the higher education of women.

Protests by women and the young continue and nobody is certain when this pressure vessel will explode.



## **Chapter Five**

### **Islamic State (IS)**

In June 2014, an event occurred in the Middle East which surprised many people unfamiliar with Islam and the Middle East: the birth of Islamic State of Iraq & Syria (ISIS). A month later, they changed their name to Islamic State (IS). They claim to want to kill all Shia, rape their women and have a pure Islamic race in the future.

The phenomenon of ISIS may have shocked many but its existence is neither new nor surprising. It's a story that goes back fourteen centuries and has been duplicated many times throughout history. The first time it happened and succeeded was in Medinah in the seventh century.

The wind of history disperses the seeds of this rotten tree all over the globe, whenever the environment is right. Then, special interests nourish and support them and, in no time, a new plant, very similar to the one that arose in the seventh century, grows with the same DNA and appearance.

To understand the events of June 2014, one should look at events in the Islamic calendar's first year, which marks the migration (Hejira) of the Prophet Mohammed in 623 AD.

Ten years before the death of Mohammed at 632 AD, he was engaged in 27 wars (Jihads), in which the entire Arabian peninsula

became Moslem.

If the Quran is read chronologically, the second half of the Quran, which are the Verses (written during his ten years in Medinah (Madani Verses) refers to these 27 wars and how Islam was established in the present territory of Saudi Arabia.

Immediately, after the Prophet's death, practically more than half of the Arabia returned to their old beliefs and abandoned Islam. Throughout all four years rule of the first Islam Caliph, Abu-Backer, he was spent in wars to unify Arabia under the flag of Islam.

The Second Caliph, Omar, after unifying Arabia in 636 AD, attacks the Persian Empire, which was weak and tired after a 14-year battle with the Roman Empire. In the face of a major assault, the fall of Mosul, the western Kurdish province of the Persian Empire, was the Moslems' first victory.

The Battle of Iran took almost 50 years until all the Persian Empire was completely conquered by the Arabian Moslems. Iranians were forced to convert to Islam, read the Arabic Quran and also forced not to speak Persian.

What we see today being played out by ISIS is a repeat of events from 1400 years ago!

The capital of the Persian Empire was the city of Tisfun, 20 km south of Baghdad. Baghdad was a suburb of Tisfun by the river. Since rivers and water were new for Arabs, they decided to make that village their capital and used Iranian laborers to build a new city there.

The word "Baghdad" means God-given in Old Persian. It was chosen as the capital of the new Islamic State.

Mesopotamia (land between two rivers), part of the Fertile Crescent, has a ten-thousand-year history, from biblical history to the Babylonians, then to the Persian and the Islamic Era, There is no mention of the word Iraq. It is all Baghdad after the Arab conquest.

Iraq, known as Irank, until a few hundred years ago (K after a

word in Persian meaning little) and Iran are historically the same people. The only difference is that Iraqis speak Arabic and Iranians speak Persian.

For six hundred years, from the seventh until the thirteenth century, Baghdad was the ruling capital for the Caliphs of Islam.

At the thirteenth century, the Mongols overran the Moslem Arab Empire and ruled the Arab world until the sixteenth century when the Central Asian Turks in Anatolia built the Ottoman Empire and colonized all the Arabs.

At the sixteenth century, Iranian Shia was reborn to counter the Sunni-led Turkic Ottoman Empire. This was a nightmare century for Europe as Turks were closing in on Europe's major cities.

European historians agree that, if not for the Iranian Shia, Turks could have advanced all the way to Paris.

The decline of Iran started at the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and, by the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the Shia Ayatollahs were so powerful in Iran that they practically were running the country. These developments coincide with discovery of oil in Iran.

At this time, the British devised a method to not only counter the Ottoman Empire but to protect India as well. Around 1860, a young British spy went to Arabia and after twenty years of effort, he united a Moslem clergyman, named Abdul Wahab, with a fighting tribe called Saudi and united them to rule the entire Arabian Peninsula.

The rulers of Arabia, the Hashemi Family (descendants of the Hashemi Tribe of Prophet Mohammad) were sent to Jordan and that country was given to them.

Saudi tribe was given the country, which is known as Saudi Arabia today. This is the time when the Wahabi sect was created as the official religion of Saudi Arabia.

In 1881, as the first exercise of Saudi power and their Wahabi belief, they traveled to Karbala, Iraq, then under Ottoman rule, where they beheaded 18,000 Shia.

The Sunni Ottoman forces just watched this massacre. Iran's weak Shia government sent some forces to help. By the time they reached Karbala, the Saudis had fled!

Doesn't this episode remind you of the emergence and advancement of ISIS in June, 2014?

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, there was another mission in Saudi Arabia by Colonel T.E. Lawrence, better known as Lawrence of Arabia, to kick out the Turks.

Soon after, the First World War started which resulted in the end of the Ottoman Empire and the creation of Turkey.

Describing the centuries-old conflicts of the Middle East as stemming from the animosity between Shia and Sunni is wrong! Even more misleading is when there is no mention of Saudi Arabia's Wahabism!

Let us consider the three major sects or branches of Islam: 1- Wahabi, 2- Sunni and 3- Shia

1- The original Islam, **Wahabi**, is also called **Salafi**. That means predecessor or proceeding in Arabic. They practice Islam according to the Sharia Laws set forth in the Madani verses of the Quran with zero tolerance for variation. The actions of the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, ISIS, IS, Boku-Haram are exact manifestations of Salafi belief.

2- **Sunni**, meaning the traditional Islam, is a modified version of original Islam, practiced by ninety percent of the Moslems all over the world. Sharia Law, in Sunni belief, not only uses Quran but also stories (Hadis) from the four Caliphs and also behavior of the Prophet Mohammad. There are some tolerances in the Sunni Sharia Laws.

3- **Shia**, meaning follower, is a highly modified Islam (so modified that majority of Moslems believe it is not Islam at all) within an Iranian tradition of monarchy and Holy Sperm!

The first belief of Shia, as the followers of Ali, is that Ali was the first Caliph after Mohammad.

Shia rejects Sunni belief that the sequence of four Caliphs after Mohammad was: 1-Abu-Backer, 2- Omar, 3- Osman, 4- Ali.

Furthermore, Shia believe after Ali, the Caliphate (Imam) was inherited by Ali's children until the 12<sup>th</sup> son, who disappeared 1,000 years ago and will appear again, together with Jesus Christ, to save the world and bring Justice on earth by killing all the non-believers.

During this thousand year reign, until the coming of the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam, the Ayatollahs will act as the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam's deputies or lieutenants

Sharia Law in Shia is the interpretations of the Ayatollahs! The Shia have changed the laws so much that the Wahabi believe Shia have converted Islam into idol-worship and an insult to Islam.

From Wahabi perspective, Shia are worse than Jews and infidels and killing 5 Shia guarantees Heaven and all benefits for them!

Understanding these facts, explains the behaviors of IS and ISIS. The conflict in the Middle East is a proxy war between Iranian Shia and Saudi Wahabi.

The conflict also has its advantages as it may be good for business. Therefore, looking into this conflict from a business perspective, it is good to keep the balance.

The Saudi family, a modern and educated people, friend of the West, actually cannot have any control over the ideology and behavior of the clergy in Saudi Arabia. Even if they have issued a decree, that any Saudi Arabian citizen engaging in a Jihadist campaign would be prosecuted. Some observers fear the next battleground for IS might be Saudi Arabia, although they are in harmony ideologically.

However, it is not wrong to say the events of 1979 in Iran and the release of "the Devil" from the bottle gave birth to many other devils who spent their infant years in the attack of September 11, 2001 and matured in 2014.

Again, it is not wrong to say: every event in the Middle East is related to Iran directly or indirectly.

Tony Blair, after retiring from his post as Prime Minister of Great Britain in 2007, represents the "quartet" of Middle East negotiators made up of the United States, the European Union, the United Nations and Russia.

Tony Blair, as the Quartet representative, intensified his partnership with Senator George Mitchell in support of political negotiations. In December 2012, Palestinian officials declared Tony Blair's efforts, and the Quartet he represented, to be "useless, useless, useless".

Since 2001, it was everybody's guess that Iran would be next in line for a U.S. invasion after the defeat of the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Well, an Iraq invasion came and went and nothing happened, except President Bush calling Iran one of the "Axis of Evil" and threatening that all options, including military strikes were on the table.

Among many warmongering remarks, finally a frustrated Tony Blair made a sensible comment about Iran, wherein he saw no end in the conflicts of Iraq and Afghanistan and the war against terrorism, while the present regime in Iran is in power.

President Obama's carrot diplomacy of tough sanctions worked much better than the stick diplomacy of President Bush. Finally, the Islamic regime realized, in 2014, they would have to give up their nuclear ambitions of making a bomb and put their hundred billion dollar investment down the drain if they wanted to survive.

The silly rhetoric of AhmadiNejad might sell internally and satisfy the hardcore fanatics of the regime in Iran, including the Supreme Leader, but it brought the whole country to the verge of collapse at the beginning of 2014.

Therefore the leader, for the survival of the regime, gave the mission to a career security person of the regime to resolve the nuclear issue under his close supervision. The 180 degree change of direction was called "Heroic Softening" (Narmesh e Ghahramananeh) by the Leader.



Although it was agreed that negotiations cannot go on forever and needed to be resolved in six months, in June 2014, it was extended for another six months.

Vice-President Joe Biden, whose prediction at 2010 about Iraq becoming three Federal countries with Kurdistan in the North, Shia in the South and Sunni in the West was ridiculed, now appears to be what was happening in 2014.

As Kurds start selling oil independent from the Iraqi government and Sunni-Al Qaeda takes over in Faluja with only a show of some government forces outside the City but no intervention.

Finally, at June 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) comes out of nowhere and, faster than a superpower, extends its territory from North at Mosul to the outskirts of Baghdad in a few weeks (A reminder of the fall of the Persian Empire by the army of Omar, the second Caliph of Islam).

After this victory, Omar Al-Baghdadi, the Leader of ISIS, calls himself Abu-Backer (the first Caliph of Islam) Al-Baghdadi and also calls his government Islamic State (IS) rather than ISIS.

## **Time Travel into the Future**

The late great science fiction author, Sir Arthur C. Clarke, inventor and futurist, seems to have been speaking the following words for a clip produced for the purpose of being played much later, like a video time capsule:

"If what I say now seems to be very reasonable, then I will have failed completely. Only if what I tell appears absolutely unreasonable have we any chance of visualizing the future as it really will happen."

It is not prudent to say; what will happen next month, let alone next year and five years hence.

But, by reviewing history and learning from it while considering the present situation, one can engage in some wishful thinking and

say this is what we wish to happen.

No matter how many troops the United States has in Afghanistan, it makes no difference, as the Taliban can and will generate a proportional amount of suicide bombers and fighters to make the people's life miserable.

We defeated the Taliban at 2001 yet, after 14 years of trying everything, they have emerged stronger.

The only solution is education, education and more education.

This is a long-term plan and will not happen in few years or even one or two presidential terms. It is also a costly task, requiring billions of dollars in non-military investments.

The oil rich Arab States should pay for this program and the program must be bipartisan. Something like a new Peace Corp-like group must be formed, which we could call it the Teaching Corp (TC).

A Republican businessman should be appointed by the President to start and run TC. Phase One of a TC plan should be to build and operate two thousand schools in Afghanistan.

The United States should not pay for this except to provide supervision and protection.

The Taliban we are fighting today are the graduates of Madrasa's (religious schools), built in Pakistan and Afghanistan more than thirty years ago, with Saudi Arabia and UAE investments. They educated and trained children from age of five how to hate America and our values.

A U.S. President who initiates this task may not be alive to see and enjoy the fruits of his accomplishment.

Presidential elections come and go in Afghanistan and the new President might want to make a deal with Taliban. Why shouldn't we? We need a long-term plan, not a short one.

It is best to release some Taliban prisoners from Guantanamo in exchange for even one soldier they have in their prison.

After the exchange of June, 2014, for the next two-and-a-half years, American soldiers will not be sent anywhere to change any regime or make peace. Afghans and Iraqis are free to choose their destiny. No American soldier will be sacrificed for their freedom.

This policy was tested in Iraq and it worked as oil production is at its peak in 2014 but there is no single week without a suicide bomber killing innocent people. This sectarian war is something that U.S. cannot resolve or do anything about. It comes with education of the people and takes time to be resolved.

In Nigeria, the Nigerian Taliban or Buko Haram, and their abduction of two hundred girls, is another example that these internal issues cannot be resolved by American intervention.

Another mega-scale injustice is something which was going on for many years in Syria.

A simple protest for freedom by the people of Syria against a secular dictator, Bashar Al-Assad, turned into one of the ugliest sectarian wars in Middle East history, with more than one hundred thousand innocent Syrians killed and more than two million people abandoning their homes to live in shelters in neighboring countries.

If it were a fight between the government and some freedom fighters, it would make sense to intervene, even deploying American forces. But, all of sudden, the jihadis or ones who may call themselves Salafists or Taliban, from all over the world, find their way to Syria, not seeking freedom for the Syrian people but to kill and behead the Syrian Alavi Shia people. According to their strong belief, killing five Shia guarantees their entrance to Heaven.

Involvement by this group of Jihadis made even Israel believe that living next to a dictator, such as Bashar Al-Assad, is far safer than the Jihadists in Syria.

What a mess the world should live with for many years.

What if Iran was not involved in Syria? Bashar Al-Assad could not survive for one month after the uprising. Next would have been a massacre of Alavi Shia's by the Salafist Jihadists and a takeover of Syria by Salafists. This would have been a nightmare for Israel. For

Israel, Salafists would make Palestinians, Hamas or Hezbollah look like child's play.

## **A Change of Regime**

After the Second World War until 1979, news about terrorism was limited to a few individuals, such as Carlos, who hijacked the plane of OPEC Ministers in 1974 or the shooting of the Israeli Olympic delegation in Munich in 1972.

Religious terrorism was limited to burning some libraries or Shia bookstores in Pakistan by the Wahabis in the 1960s and 1970s which, after such incidents, the leaders of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Iran called each other, expressing their sorrow at these idiotic acts.

However, after the 1979 revolution in Iran, it is worth repeating, “the Devil came out of the bottle” and the list of terrorists’ acts became countless.

In Islam, killing others for not believing in Allah, what is historically quoted by Moslems in the Quran as proudly as Christians tell the stories of the Crusades or Jews quote the Torah on how the Palestinians were killed by Jewish kings three thousand years ago, was allowed.

But, after the Second World War, many countries became members in the United Nations and some laws and new regulations governing the relation between countries were passed.

The illegal hostage-taking by a sovereign nation was perhaps the first law broken internationally. But, internally, a far worse thing was happening in Iran which the world was unaware or did not want to know.

This Pulitzer Prize-winning photo was taken in 1979, when Shia Ayatollah Khalkhali, rounded up and punished many hundreds of Kurdish protestors to the Islamic Constitution.



And this is one of thousands of photos taken in June 2014 when Salafi (Wahabi) Caliph Abu-Backer Al-Baghdadi rounded up and punished or beheaded many hundreds Shia who had not even protested the invasion and occupation of Northern Iraq by ISIS.



The laws about killing others who do not believe in my beliefs have been in place and practiced for centuries but two kingdoms, the Saudi and Iran, would never allow such atrocities before 1979. These two kingdoms stopped the clerics from practicing their Shari'a laws.

But the clerics took over Iran in 1979 and wrote a constitution according to their Shia Shari'a laws and implemented their practice in Iran and abroad. The clergy of different Islamic sects, especially

Wahabis started asking: “Who is this infidel Ayatollah who wants to practice Shari’a Laws better than us?”.

The little devils all came out and gathered in that theater when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1980. After Russian retreating from Afghanistan, the little devils spread all over the world.

Consequently all the conflicts in the Middle East became proxy wars between the clerics who rule Iran and Wahabi clerics whom the Saudi royal family cannot stop.

This brings us back to British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, who said, “there is no end to the Iraq and Afghanistan conflict and terrorism while the regime in Iran is in power”.

It does not make any difference if the nuclear issues are resolved or the Iranian regime modifies its behavior internationally and gives relative freedom to its people, especially women and minorities. The existence of the constitutional Sharia laws in Iran is a catalyst for creating terrorism elsewhere.

Before the Arab Spring of 2010, Iran again staged another revolution in protest against the reelection of a President who was supported by the Supreme Leader. This protest could have been a sign of encouragement for young Egyptians to start the Arab Spring.

The young who were not born when Mosavi was Prime Minister at 80ies and did not remember him, voted, by a decisive majority, to throw AhmadiNejad, the candidate of the Leader, out of office. But next day, that leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, in an unprecedented speech, declared AhmadiNejad the winner, without the votes having been counted.

The protests, which later became known as the Green Movement, went on for a month and the two candidates, former speaker of the Islamic Parliament and the former Prime Minister of the Islamic Regime who was ahead of AhmadiNejad, both were charged as anti-revolutionaries and kept under house arrest.

The policy of zero tolerance has been applied from the beginning to suppress any protest.

Killing in the name of Allah is a normal practice in Islam but it is the most ridiculous way to indict those who disagree with the regime as “Enemies of God”, with a punishment of death. It looks more ridiculous to indict an Ayatollah or the former confidant of Khomeini as an “Enemy of God”. Therefore, they kept them either in prison or under house arrest.

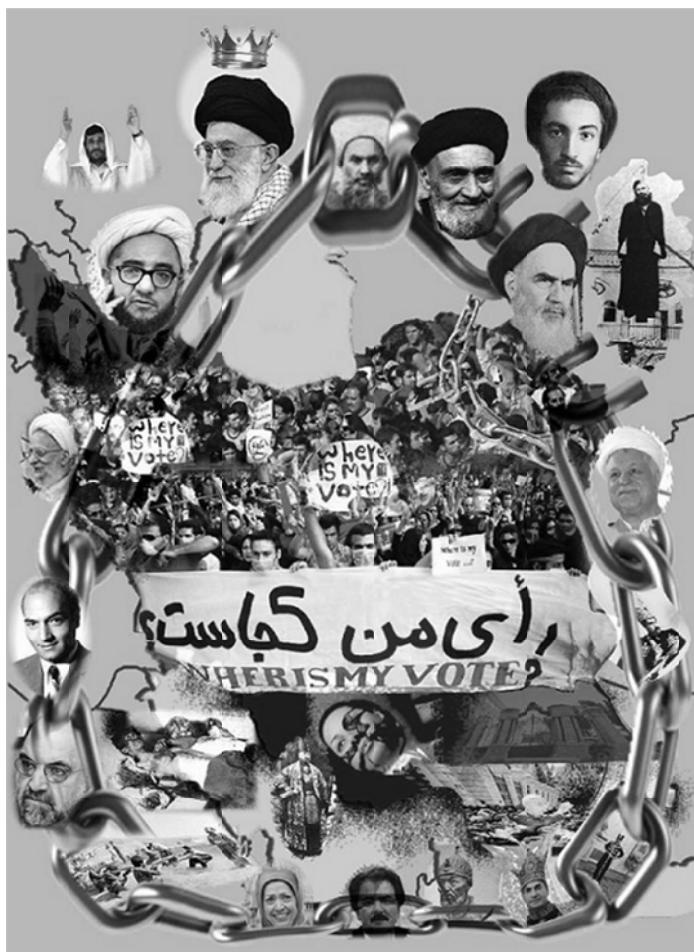
A newly evolved phenomenon, ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq & Syria) and comparing that with the Islamic Regime in Iran (better to say ISI, Islamic State of Iran) has removed any doubt that they are the same and no different from the first Arab Moslem invaders of the Persian and Roman Empires fourteen centuries ago.

How they act is the same and anybody who says Taliban, al-Quaideh, ISIS, IS or ISI are not Moslem, their head should be re-examined.

Over thirty-six years, Islamic State in Iran has opened everybody's eyes and every ordinary Iranian has realized that Iran has been enslaved in a triangle chain of misery for more than one thousand years!

The book cover of “Iran in the Triangle Chain of Misery”, written in Persian, highlights the country's recent hundred years history and struggle of the people for freedom and the rule of law.

The Iranian flag's colors, green, white and red, are here shown inside the boundaries of Iran. In the green part, peaceful demonstrations by masses of people for the last hundred years, chanting over and over again their peaceful slogan and demanding, in the white part, “Where is my vote?”. That question has always have been answered in the red part with bloodshed by the government through the history of assassination, murder, imprisonment or closure of the Constitution and Parliament (Majles) in Iran.



Those representing the “Triangle Chain of Misery” around Iran are the Clerics with Turban, Clerics without Turban and crowned kings supported by clerics.

Only once in one thousand years of Iran’s recent history did the people succeed in breaking this chain. That moment, in 1906, is known as the “Constitution Revolution” and it established a parliamentary regime in Iran.

That year, the Holiest Shia cleric, Ayatollah Shick Fazlolah Noori, who was against the Constitution and Parliament, was tried and hanged.

However, later, the Pahlavi Dynasty illegally amended the



constitution and gave dictatorship power to the Shah. Shah was a modern man and friend of the West but he had a superstitious and religious mind. He supported the clerics, with and without turban, to safeguard his crown against communists and the National Front. This gave rise to a 1979 devil coming out of the bottle and the broken chain and path to freedom was closed again.

The key to opening this chain again is in the hands of the people inside Iran, not opposition figures outside the country.

Few faces of the Iranian regime's cronies are very familiar but this time a cleric with turban has crowned himself by amending the illegal and unpopular Shari'a Law and appointing himself as the representative of Allah. When Ayatollah becomes a Dictator Shah, it is called "Velayat Motlagheh Faghih", meaning Absolute Governance of the Ayatollah, the title given to Ayatollah Khamenei.

In a so-called election, almost like those of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union, another leadership selection occurred in 2013.

The Iranian regime introduced eight of their loyal supporters to stage Western-style presidential debates so that the people might choose one to become President.

We know, in an Absolute Governance of the Ayatollah, the President is nothing but a purchase-agent or spokesperson. But changing the face of an AhmadiNehad look-alike was in everybody's favor.

Rouhani, a career security figure and anchor of the regime, but unknown to the public, was selected to become president with a lot of talk and promises for improving the economy. For more than the last three decades, the clerical leaders have destroyed the agriculture, rivers, lakes, forests, abandoned industrial production and turned the country into seventy-five million consumers who are fed from a single revenue source: the sale of oil.

The oil revenues in the corrupt regime makes no difference in the life of ordinary citizens, whether it is 200 billion dollars a year or 20 billion, as eighty percent of the revenue is drained towards useless programs such as nuclear development, support for international

terrorism, deposit in the foreign accounts of the regime's cronies and Ayatollahs, construction projects primarily to benefit the Revolutionary Guard (Sepah) and security forces with no benefits to the public and, finally, building shrines for newly-discovered Shia Saints, spreading more and more superstitions to heat up the clergy's business. The remaining twenty percent is converted to "Toman", country currency to pay salaries and spend on services of little productive value.

Internationally, the rhetoric and big mouth of Khomeini from the beginning and until the Dean of Columbia University called AhmadiNejad "a petty dictator", caused Iran much more than the eight hundred billion dollars in missing funds claimed by Iran's Central Bank.

Among the even greater non-monetary losses suffered by the regime were: A devastating eight year war; not a war between two brother nations but a fight between two persons (remember the fight of two donkeys and the fall of the kid) and the loss of more than one million lives;

A severe brain drain and the loss of the country's national wealth;

The loss of the oil and gas transit revenue;

Loss of all valuable friends internationally except Bashar Assad of Syria, Vladimir Putin of Russia, Hezbollah of Lebanon, Oscar Chavez of Venezuela and possibly Fidel Castro of Cuba;

Countries who were a part of Iran several decades ago have now ridiculously claimed some Iranian territories for themselves.

Every ordinary person on the streets of Iran is well aware of the politics and nature of the regime. But, empty-handed and with a well-equipped enemy who is ruling them with no mercy, killing ISIS style, the people are devising a different way to combat the regime.

It is primarily the young and women who will change this regime. They have realized the change will not come militarily or politically with Western support but will come internally and

culturally by changing the regime's Constitution.

For the last decades, young people chose higher education and girls superseded boys as university graduates.

On the Art front, with all limitations in an Islamic environment imposed by the regime, there is total opposition against any form of Art, except for writing and reciting Quran and mourning singing for the Imam's death. However, Iran's underground music has become internationally famous, and Iranian movies are candidates for Oscar consideration and have won international prizes.

People read Persian poetry which the Islamist clergy hate most, like Shahnameh, written by Ferdowsi one thousand years ago, which praises Iranian glories before the Islamic era, Omar Khayam and Hafez with their anti-Islam interpretations.

People have realized all the players of this regime are in a constant war among themselves to benefit financially from the sale of oil and endless left-clergy/ right-clergy, moderate/ hardline clergy struggles. The changing of the guard among themselves at every election has nothing to do with the welfare of the people but with whose turn it is to steal more assets of the nation.

Great Britain, the major supporter of the regime, where many Ayatollah families live and where their bank accounts are kept, will never let Iran's "milky cow" ever get weak. Also, the oil companies and military industries of West and East, who have benefitted from this unpopular regime, are certainly behind the regime.

That is why people are indifferent to outside political activities. They know that help will never come from outside Iran's borders but that whatever should happen will come from inside.

Every now and then, the regime hangs a few people for their connections to some Iranian foreign opposition to give some value to the outside oppositions and also to show their authority to the internal opposition. Nevertheless, internal opposition is growing more and more.

At 2014, when all the attention and news was about nuclear issues with Iran, increasing and breaking the records for public

hangings and appointing Mostafa Pour Mohammadi as Justice Minister, a major figure in the killing of more than five thousand young prisoners after the eight year war, says everything about the cabinet of Rouhani and his pledge to improve human rights in Iran.

Justice was the primary theme of the 1906 Constitution Revolution.

In 1979 the first slogan of the Revolution was Independence – Freedom - Constitution. But in the heat of revolution and the vacuum Shah created during his monarchy by suppressing any political activists and letting only religious organizations and mosques be active, the well-organized clergies substituted “Islamic Republic” for Constitution.

In a situation where no non-religious politician existed in the political theater of Iran, the Shah, out of desperation took Bakhtyar, a longtime political prisoner and unknown to many Iranians, appointed him Prime Minister hoping to calm the situation. Shah gave instructions to the Army, not to support Bakhtyar and get orders from his love rival and security advisor, General Fardoot and left the country. But well-organized clerics prepared everything for the coming of Ayatollah Khomeini.

The West, at the peak of the Cold War, welcomed such a change. An Islamic State was thus established in Iran.

After almost four decades, the people of Iran realize they are not battling just an individual, like the Shah, whose departure eliminated his dynasty, cronies and the Constitution. Even with the death of the Islamic regime leader, there are more than a dozen Ayatollahs to replace him.

People have realized changing the President or even the Supreme Leader will not change anything in the country that has this Islamic State Constitution, a constitution the people were forced to accept in 1979.

In 1978, a group of Iranian scholars wrote a draft of a “Secular Constitution” and, when Ayatollah Khomeini was in Paris, he accepted the principles of that constitution and also agreed that later this constitution would be approved by a special parliament,

traditionally in Iran called “Majles Moassesan” or “Constitutional Expert Majles”.

This was the biggest lie and Khomeini later admitted to this, as one of his “Religious Khod e”.

This big lie attracted everybody-- communists, socialists, monarchists, women, young and old, atheists and religious of all faiths.

Only a few months after the Islamist victory, they called for an “Islamic Expert Majles”, instead of a “Constitutional Expert Majles” and wrote a constitution different from the draft Ayatollah had agreed to a few months before.

Several years after this, at the peak of the war with Iraq, amendment to this constitution gave absolute power to the Leader as a representative of Allah on Earth, without the people even realizing what was going on.

Apart from those who were massacred by the Islamic State and more than one million who perished from the war between Ayatollah Khomeini and Saddam Hussein, the biggest losers have been and will be the young and women!

It is useless to describe the behavior of the Taliban in Afghanistan or Buku Haram in Nigeria, ISIS in Syria and Iraq or their look-alike in Iran. Even in a modern semi- European society like Turkey, the Deputy Prime Minister said in June 2014, “Women should not smile in public as this is against their dignity and .....”.

What would have happened in Turkey if the Islamists who came to power in a democratic election had a free hand to advance their agenda without a military to safeguard the country’s secular constitution?

The answer is simple: Go back to 1979 in Iran! A country with social freedom, enjoying its best economic boom (even better than 2010 Arab States of the Southern Persian Gulf). But with a 1906 Constitution, which was destroyed by a dictator and the Royal Army, whose commander-in-chief runs away, collapses leaving no military to defend even the destroyed royal Constitution.

Iran's 1979 experience safeguard the nation of Egypt! Islamists in modern societies come to power with lots of pretenses to freedom and gradually change the society according to their Sharia's.

The Muslim Brotherhood took advantage of the vacuum created during the dictatorship of Hosni Mubarak. In a society where there were no political leaders, like Iran of 1979, they came to power with help from well-organized Muslim Brotherhood groups. Just a few months later, they showed their true face and, were it not for its military, the country would have become the Islamic State of Egypt in no time.

## **Chapter Six**

### **A prospective look to the future**

The “Teen Years” (2013-2019) in the Middle East have been and will continue to be a proxy war between Shia Iran and the Salafists countries of the Arabian Peninsula.

Salafi, meaning “original Islam”, is an Islamic sect with no tolerance and deviation from the original Islam Sharia.

Understanding these facts about Salafi, Sunni and Shia brings us to the argument Prime Minister Tony Blair put forward: With a Shia Islamite regime in Iran, one cannot stop Salafis abandoning their core belief to kill Shia infidels (Rafezi, Majoos, Safavi).

Shia can go to Saudi Arabia, the land of the Salafi, perform the ceremony of Hajj, pray and even live in Saudi Arabia, but Salafi cannot tolerate any deviation from original Islam and the propagators of Shia.

Other demonstrations of this proxy war between Iranian Shia and Saudi Salafism is the massacre in Syria over the past years and what happened in northern Iraq in Mosul and Tikrit.

There is no need to listen to Political Science professors to understand what is going on there.

Handing over Iraq to a Shia government, not bombing Iran and not overthrowing Bashar Assad of Syria has made Saudi Arabia very

unhappy!.

Their Taliban cronies are fighting back in Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq. Jihadists from all over the world, financed by Saudis, Qatar and the United Arab Emirate are in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq to counter Shia followers. It's as simple as that!

Can the U.S. or Europe stop that? No!

Can U.S. or Europe stop Jihadists, Al-Qaida, Taliban, Boku Haram and ISIS (ISIL, Daesh) hatreds towards Shia? No!

It does not matter if a moderate president like Khatami or a fanatic president like AhmadiNejad or a pragmatic president like Rafsanjani or a diplomatic president like Rouhani is President in Iran. Since, as per the country's Constitution, all the power is with the Supreme Leader. He cannot deviate one inch from principles of the Shia Constitution, although he can give "Holiday" to the Pillars of Islam to safeguard the regime and its Constitution.

The United States got ready to leave Afghanistan too soon, while Taliban have never been stronger. This leaves no alternative but to make a deal with them.

The graduates of Madrasa, built three and four decades ago by Saudi's, are coming out in great numbers, young and energetic. Some of them might go to Harvard or Princeton to get a degree from a top university in the West. Therefore, releasing some old terrorists from Guantanamo prison will not have any effect on terrorism.

Although the nuclear issue with Iran is almost defused, and will be resolved one way or another, still many Americans criticize the Obama administration for not being tough.

In earlier chapters, I described events for the Iranian people that followed the rise to power of the Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979. His words, promising a government respectful of the people and justice for all, gave way to tyranny. Promises of fairness and honesty gave way to theft. Appointment to a high position was not viewed as an opportunity to serve the people with honor but instead as an opportunity to gain personal wealth. Some examples are staggering.



Ayatollah Khamenai may have gained over 90 billion dollars. His son has gained in excess of ten billion. Other regime leaders have likewise profited.

But the regime leaders' theft of their countrymen's wealth, as hateful as it may be, is nothing compared to the far crueler theft of their freedom, dignity and culture.

Over time, stolen money can be recovered, at least to some extent. But the loss of individual freedom, personal dignity and culture is much more difficult to reverse. Yet, if Iran is to prosper in years to come as a great nation—not only in terms of wealth but also in terms of honor and dignity—that national future can only come about if the freedom and dignity of the people are restored and protected.

There are surely many ways that this happy outcome could come about. In the following paragraphs, I describe one such course of events. It takes into account the Iranian people's traditional values, ones that reach back perhaps three thousand years. It likewise takes into account recent social developments in Iran, such as greatly expanded opportunities for women's education. And my scenario takes into account possible, perhaps even likely, events in other nations that have had traditional ties to Iran, some of them extending back many hundreds of years.

What follows is a story of the remainder of the decade. It is speculative history. It describes political events in the United States, Israel, and Armenia. Each of these nations, in its own way, has had a historical impact on Iran and, more important, on the thinking and traditional values of the Iranian people. Events in these three nations can have a favorable impact on the Iranian people, as they look forward to restoring the nation. In each of the three nations in question, I establish conditions under which a woman is elected to the nation's highest office.

In addition, my story describes the restoration of a constitutionally guaranteed rule of law in Iran, one that respects the honor and dignity of every Iranian—male or female, of whatever ethnicity, of whatever political values, and of whatever religious

belief.

### The United States in November 2016

The United States in late 2016 faced many difficulties. The Obama Administration, which began with so much hope and expectation in January 2009, had lost the confidence of the American people. Unemployment, especially among minorities and women without advanced education, remained high by historical standards. America's revolutionary approach to health insurance established 2010, popularly called 'Obamacare,' won the popular vote, but had failed miserably. Millions more Americans were without health insurance than in earlier years. In the nation's cities, crime rates, which had dropped in the first decade of the century, rose to new heights during the Obama Administration.

Foreign policy decisions had terrible outcomes. Hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants crossed into the United States from Central America. The great majority had no work skills that they could use in the United States. Even worse, many of these newcomers brought tropical diseases with them. The worst of these, a virus called 'D-68,' brought paralysis and death to thousands of American children. At the same time, the Ebola virus, which had been earlier restricted to West Africa, entered the United States. Despite major government efforts to contain the disease, Ebola spread quickly, causing many deaths.

The American people blamed their government for failing to prevent these disasters.

In the Middle East and Southwest Asia, American military efforts to prevent establishment of a new caliphate had little success. The Islamic State (IS) controlled far more territory than it did in 2014. All Muslim nations—Sunni and Shiite—became threatened. And militants belonging to, or encouraged by, IS had already conducted terrorist acts in Europe and the United States.

It is in this political context that the onetime Senator from New York and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton (wife of former President Bill Clinton) announced her candidacy for President of the United States. Mrs. Clinton understands that the policies

adopted by the Obama Administration were not only unpopular but also had unwanted outcomes.

Therefore, after becoming the presidential nominee of the Democratic Party, she campaign as a centrist, a person who favor practical government over ideology. Her Republican opponent, John Edward ('Jeb') Bush, son and brother of former presidents, is more ideological. Mrs. Clinton wins narrowly in the November election.

When she takes office in January 2017, President Clinton announces a new American initiative in the Middle East. Henceforth, American interests would be to respect and support territorial boundaries of the nations of the region, provided they adopt policies and practices that respect the moral values of their people while, at the same time, protect the rights of minorities.

This new American initiative was well received by the Iranian people, not the Government of Iran. In 2009 and 2010, there are major public protests and demonstrations in many cities against regime repression and misgovernment. Sad to say, those Iranians who treasured honor and freedom—popularly called the 'Green Movement'—received no support from the Obama Administration. Now, under the new Clinton Administration, there was at least the possibility that the American response would be different.

The first such American efforts begin in October 2017, when the Clinton Administration established regular contact with the actual veterans of the 2009 Green Movements, not Mosavi, the former prime mister of the regime or Ayatollah Karoobi, the former speaker of "Majless".

One of the first initiatives of the Clinton Administration is passage of the Iranian Humanitarian Sanctions Act of 2017. This law authorized the President to apply such sanctions as visa restrictions and asset seizure to those regime leaders (and members of immediate families) identified as human rights violators. Under the terms of this law, punishment for human rights violations fell on the perpetrators, and not on the Iranian people. In sum, humanitarian sanctions served to weaken the leadership financially, while the Green Movement initiative strengthened regime

opponents, those men and women who would one day become the leaders of a democratic Iran.

The Clinton Administration's purposes included matters of vital interest to the United States. Efforts by earlier administrations to come to an agreement with Iran's clerical regime to end Iran's efforts to develop nuclear weapons had failed miserably. It was increasingly evident that if such a goal were to be achieved, it could only be accomplished by an Iranian government more responsive to the will of the people. The basic purpose of American foreign policy in the region became fostering peaceful regime change in Iran. As it happened, this objective found an ally in an unexpected place—Israel.

Tziporah (Tzipi) Livni, long-time member of Israel's Knesset and advocate of a 'two state' solution to her nation's ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict, succeeded in forming a multi-party coalition in June 2017 with herself as prime minister. Livni had previously served as Foreign Minister from 2006 to 2009 and as Justice Minister in the Netanyahu government starting in 2013. Among her duties was overseeing Israel's peace initiatives and ongoing peace talks with Palestinian representatives. If Benjamin Netanyahu is described as a 'hard-liner,' Tzipi Livni can just as reasonably be described as a vocal peace advocate.

Quite understandably, Israelis, having fought three major wars against Arab nations, are particularly sensitive to any possibility that they might be overwhelmed by a national enemy. It is for this reason that a basic consideration of Israel's foreign and military policy is the prevention of any potential enemy developing an atomic arsenal. The nation most likely to accomplish that feat—the nation with a sufficient level of technology and scientific expertise— is Iran.

To be fair to Israel, Iran's leaders in the past few decades have called for the destruction of Israel, something that never happened when Iran was ruled by the Shah. The Pahlavi regime was hated by many Iranians because of its abuse of power. But that regime's peaceful relationship with Israel did not contribute to the people's anger.

While both Israel and the United States consider the development of an Iranian nuclear force as inherently dangerous, the Sunni Arab nations are terrified at the possibility. There are persistent rumors that, should Iran develop a nuclear weapon, Saudi Arabia might contract with Pakistan to store weapons from its atomic arsenal in Arabia. If that were to occur, the entire Middle East would become far more unstable than is already the case today. And Iranian nuclear weapons, under the control of Sunni Arabs, would pose a fundamental threat, just as that development would likely threaten Israel.

During the election campaign that led to her success, Livni argued that prior efforts to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons had done no more than delay the program. As a practical matter, Israel's national goal could only be achieved if the existing Iranian government were replaced by one that reflected the nation's traditional moral and social values—ones that, in many respects, reach back to the time of Cyrus the Great. With that purpose in mind, Prime Minister Livni, working in conjunction with U.S. President Hillary Clinton, opened regular communications with a number of Iranian dissident groups.

The initial response of Iran's clerical leaders (Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and his senior associates) to the American-Israeli initiative was anger, accusations of treason, and threats of severe punishment. However, like so many tyrannical regimes in the past, Iran's leadership over the decades had lost what was once the fervent support of so many citizens. After years of illegal financial dealings and reports of abuse of women and girls by government officials, men and women who had once put their hopes in the 1979 revolution now felt only bitterness.

Thus, regime efforts to call out crowds of supporters had little effect. The regime leadership was now in the position of trying to retain power, even as popular support eroded.

After more than a decade in Armenia's Parliament, Hranush Hakobyan, the senior female member of that nation's legislature, is elected President of the Armenian Republic in April 2018. Ever since its independence following the breakup of the former Soviet

Union, Armenia tried to remain aloof from the many ethnic and religious disputes in Southwest Asia. This attitude was understandable.

Over a million ethnic Armenian civilians were slaughtered in 1915-1919 by Turkish authorities. They were suspected of favoring the Allies during the First World War (when Turkey was allied with Germany). Years later, when Armenia was part of the Soviet Union, the Moscow government tried to 'Russify' the Armenian people—forbidding cultural and religious practices in favor of communist doctrine. This tragic experience made many Armenians suspicious of the motives of any neighboring nation.

However, during her campaign for president, Hakobyan argued that Armenia could not remain isolated from the rest of the world forever. While Armenia had many friends in the United States and Western Europe, the fact remained that, in order to have any real chance of surviving and prospering, the nation would have to find reliable allies in the region. She argued that there was at least the possibility that Iran's clerical regime could collapse, if only because it no longer had the unquestioned support of the Iranian people.

Given that possible development, President Hakobyan stated in a speech in Parliament that Armenia should cooperate with the United States and Israel in efforts to strengthen moderate opponents of the Iranian regime. She noted that Armenia had once enjoyed happy and fruitful relations with the Persian Empire. She added that the Iranian people in past centuries had a history of fair and honorable relations with peoples different from themselves. And President Hakobyan added a warning: Sunni activists seeking to reestablish the Caliphate had announced their intention of extending their rule into Armenia and Iran. If this were to happen, both Shiite Muslims and Armenian Christians would find themselves in grave danger.

While the United States, Israel, and Armenia had different motives for supporting Iran's regime opponents, they had a common interest in doing so. All three countries established training programs in practical government. In America, the State Department conducted seminars in effective local government at

Harvard University's Kennedy School. Many Iranian participants were particularly impressed (and sometimes amused) by the 'direct democracy' of town meetings practiced in small, New England towns. At the University of Colorado (in the American West), visiting Iranians saw how local authorities provided public services. Of particular interest was fair and impartial distribution of water. (Colorado has a dry climate similar to that of Iran.)

Iran has a number of religious and ethnic minorities. For the past four decades, these minorities have been treated as second-class citizens. A number of visiting Iranians said they were concerned about how everyone in the nation would get along if all citizens were to be treated equally. What they found in the United States, Israel and Armenia was promising but not perfect.

Many visitors expressed the opinion that citizen equality in a democratic Iran would have to be based on self-understanding as Iranians descended from the Achaemenids, one of the most honorable and tolerant empires the world has ever known, instead of Shia, Sunni, Wahabi or Christian affiliation

## **The road to 2020**

In Iran, a nuclear agreement is finally reached. And with a full, verifiable inspection of the nuclear facilities, no issue dividing Iran and the West, except for Human Rights, exists.

Sanctions are going to be lifted gradually and people will begin to see some light at the end of the tunnel. But years have passed and there is no improvement in the country's economy. Large-scale unemployment is the same as before and social freedom is getting even worse.

On March 12, 2019 Ayatollah Ali Khamenei suffers a massive stroke, causing him to be totally paralyzed on the right side of his body and unable to speak. Under Iran's constitution, the Ayatollah, as Supreme Leader, has the right to overturn decisions by elected officials. But no successor to Khamenei was named. There was no

agreement among the clerical leaders to name a temporary replacement.

Making matters worse for the regime, a number of western nations, led by the United States, announced sanctions affecting a large number of the clerical leadership. Billions of dollars in foreign assets, belonging to elite families of the regime, were blocked and their families found themselves unwelcome in Europe or America. There was no alternative for the leadership of the Iranian regime but to find a conciliatory approach to the people before popular unrest destroyed their assets inside Iran.

It was during this period of confusion that Iranian President Hassan Rouhani declared a national emergency. On March 17, President Rouhani announced that the nation would conduct a plebiscite—a vote by all the people—to determine if they wished the government to call a constitutional convention. The plebiscite was conducted on March 28. Despite vocal opposition from the leading clergy and with Ayatollah Khamenei incapacitated, they were unable to change the course of events.

The plebiscite included a number of ‘ground rules’ that would guide delegates in writing the new constitution. These included rules and precepts providing that (1) the new constitution is based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; (2) religion is separated from governance; (3) appointment to public office is restricted to adults who have spent most of their lives in Iran (and not as expatriates); (4) the head of state is a ceremonial office and the officeholder may be called Shah or Leader or President. He or she will be nominated by the Prime Minister and elected by Parliament for a period of ten years; and (5) the first such officeholder will be a woman.

This last provision was politically very shrewd. Those favoring the new constitution pointed out that the United States, Israel and Armenia—three democratic, albeit very different, countries—had recently elected female heads of state and so it would be logical for Iran to do the same. But there was another reason as well. Any woman holding the office of head of state would be unable to use the office to assume dictatorial powers, as had been the case with



Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979.

As matters worked out, Ayatollah Khamenei recovered some of his faculties (including limited speech), but it was too late for him to alter the course of events. Recognizing that there was no realistic chance of his returning to power, Khamenei decided to save what he could for fellow clerics and their families.

In a public statement on national television, the Ayatollah announced that he and President Rouhani had agreed on a transitional government to start negotiations with the people's representatives no later than April 14th. And as a good will gesture, all political prisoners were to be promptly freed.

The popular vote was overwhelmingly favorable, with 71 percent voting for a constitutional convention. A second vote, for delegates to the convention, was held on May 9th. Delegates to this convention, the Majles Moasesan (Special Parliament), met for the first time on May 16th, in Tehran.

History's future road may presently be dark and impenetrable but a vision of how change will come to Iran and its Middle East allies is hereby offered. After the nuclear issue is resolved and many sanctions are lifted in 2016, people see no difference in their lives.

The U.S. Congress, well before the 2016 Presidential election, passes a unanimous resolution urging the President to impose a "Smart Humanitarian Sanction" on Iranian leaders. The sanction covers nearly two thousand Ayatollahs and Iranian regime leaders recognized as human rights violators in Iran, together with their families and associates, denying them visas to enter the United States and, in some cases, finding and blocking their assets.

For the first time, this meaningful sanction has a direct effect on the regime rather than the people.

President Obama, before leaving office, signs the executive order and makes that resolution a law to be renewed every year by the president-elect. American action sets a response cycle in motion. The following actions may not happen immediately but a momentum has been established.

Canada follows suit, but it takes the European Union, except for Great Britain, a little longer to agree with that kind of sanction.

All over Iran, people are reading and joking about the Islamic Republic's Constitution. The presidential election in the U.S. and debate over human rights in Iran give the Iranian people encouragement. So they decide they should do something about it. Small groups all over the country, discussing a new constitution, grow larger and larger and, in some big cities, begin exchanging notes together.

Rather than write the whole constitution, which should be done by a special parliament, "Majles Moasesan", people more or less agree on the framework of some unchangeable items of Iran's future Constitution.

These items include:

1-The new Constitution should be based on the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

2- Separation of Religion from any governance of the State;

3- Any Iranian, who has lived two-thirds of his life outside Iran, will not be eligible for any ministerial or leadership role in the government;

4- The country will have a ceremonial Head of State, who may be called Shah or Leader or President. This individual will be recommended by the elected Prime Minister to the Parliament "Majles" and will be appointed for a ten-year term as the ceremonial Head of State by a two-thirds majority of the Parliament;

5- The first head of state, after the change of regime, will be a woman.

These five simple principles of the future Constitution become a road map and the people's protest agenda.

The 2016 election in the United States elects a woman President, which gives another boost to the Iranian opposition.

More encouragement for Iranian women is the 2017 election in Israel and 2018 election in Armenia, in which both nations elect

women Prime Ministers and Presidents.

The 2018 Presidential Election in Iran comes and goes as few other past elections. People who realize their meaning do not even bother to listen to the debates or even the outcome of the election.

Billions of dollars foreign assets, belonging to elite families of the regime, are blocked and their families are not welcome in Europe and America, leaving no alternative for the leadership of the Iranian regime but to find an alternative before popular unrest destroys their assets inside Iran.

After Great Britain informs President Rouhani that they can no longer go against sanctions imposed by the US, Canada and Europe, Rouhani starts discussions with Ayatollah Khamenei and finally agrees on a transitional government to start negotiations with the people's representatives before 2019.

As the first good will gesture, all political prisoners are freed. All jailed political activists and many others choose five among them to start negotiating with the leaders of the Islamic regime in January 2019.

The Islamic Regime agrees to change the Constitution and an election for "Majles Moasesan" on February 1, 2019, to discuss and approve a secular Constitution and a referendum three months after that date.

Proceedings of the constitutional convention were televised in real time worldwide, with translation subtitles in local languages. Individual delegates received constituent 'feedback' via Facebook and other social media. (Interestingly, there was a large audience following on Al-Jazeera, the Arabic language television network, a development that may have implications for Arab constitutionalism in years to come.)

Despite the sharp disagreements expressed during the months leading up to the convention, there proved to be a general agreement on the format of the new government, the extent of its authority, and guarantees of fundamental rights of citizens. But debate over matters concerning the leadership of the former regime and the wealth they wrongfully accumulated over the decades was the

occasion of much anger. Many delegates were furious at the thought that members of the former regime who had diverted billions of dollars would be permitted to keep what they had stolen from the Iranian people.

But the majority of delegates agreed that if national life under the new constitution were to have any real chance of success, the nation could not afford a policy of national revenge. Instead, it was agreed that those members of the ousted clerical leadership who returned to the Iranian national treasury what they had accumulated would each be permitted to keep one billion dollars. Supporters of this measure made clear that the former leaders did not deserve the money in any moral sense. Rather, those delegates made the point that it was more important to end national division than to seek justice in these cases. In any event, under the new rules almost 900 billion dollars were eventually recovered. The delegates agreed that the first executive leader would be a woman with the title of Shah Banoo. More important, the delegates agreed that national reconciliation required a general amnesty. Despite bitter objections from a minority of delegates, it was agreed that no former member of the 40-year Islamic regime would ever be prosecuted for any crime such as embezzlement, torture, murder, rape or any other offence.

Millions of Iranians watched the proceedings on television. Many of them made their opinions on specific issues known to their delegates. And in the end they overwhelmingly approved the new constitution. Over 50 million Iranians participated in the national referendum on adopting the new constitution (conducted on July 27, 2019). Iran would hold its first national elections under the new constitution on October 9th. A new day had dawned for the Iranian people.

But the distribution of nearly one trillion dollars belonging to Ayatollahs and regime cronies takes almost one week to resolve. Starting with Ayatollah Khamenei's ninety- four billion dollars and his son Mojtaba's thirty billion dollars, they agree the family shall keep only one billion dollars. The same formula applies to Ayatollah Rafsanjani, who also keeps only one billion dollars. The rest are

entitled only to one hundred million dollars.

Finally to keep a financial balance between Ayatollah's cronies and Previous regime, Pahlavi cronies, it was agreed apart from 64 million Dollars cash assets which Prince Reza admitted to have before 1979 Revolution, the Pahlavi family should return 19 Billion Dollars from the Pahlavi Trust and they will be entitled to keep one Billion Dollars from that trust for themselves.

With regards to Mojahedin, their crimes were forgiven and their supporters will never be prosecuted in Iran. But Maryam and Masood Rajavi are banned to travel to Iran as long as they live.

Since all the discussions at "Majles Moasesan" are open discussions and representatives are connected by Twitter and Facebook to their constituencies, it is decided a referendum will take place one month after approval by the Majles. Fifty million, or 95% of the eligible voters, take part in the referendum.

Many parties are formed and in an election for Majles and President are held. The new government takes office on October 25.

The first congratulations come from Lady Prime Minister of Israel and Lady President of Armenia, followed by other world leaders.

The first order of foreign policy is the creation of a Union of the Middle East, where these three historic nations--Iran Armenia and Israel-- sign an economic pact that, after one year, extends to a political pact of cooperation.

Within the next year, Lebanon, Afghanistan and Tajikistan join the union. Iraq and Syria still have their internal problems but the governments express their nations' willingness to join the Union.

The Middle East begins to change forever

On March 1, 2020 Iran, Armenia and Israel announced the formation of a customs union, the Union of the Middle East. In the years that follow, a number of republics in both Central Asia and the Middle East opt into the Union. What was once the dream of the Caliphate is overtaken by the reality of practical politics and good government.

There is a Persian expression, which says, “If you wait, from sour grape you can make sweet Halwa” or “Good things comes to those who wait”.

THE END

## **Appendix**

### **Mostly coppies from Wikipedia**

**[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)**

Once the influence of religion is removed--specially, when the government and religion are one, and when there is no economic pressure--people show their true feelings towards each other. The true feeling of people counts. Otherwise, throughout history, one sees people behaving differently and badly in cruel periods of time.

During three periods of 20th Century history--before and after World War I and throughout World War II--the suffering endured by three nations, Iran, Israel and Armenia, was the common denominator.

The three appendixes that follow show evidence of the presence of Armenian and Jewish populations and religious institutions in times past and the fact that members of all three nations lived in accord.

These unjust 20<sup>th</sup> Century persecutions should make us, and these three nations, ponder their prior centuries-long history of friendship and love stories.

This first appendix is more about Iran and its most recent hundred year (out of 3,000 years) history.

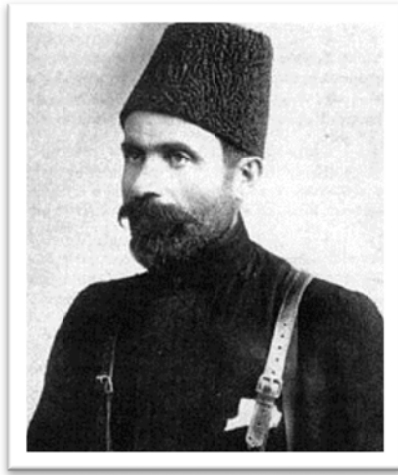
There is no complexity or perplexity here. Jews and Armenians have enjoyed better lives outside their country in Iran, prior to the 1979 Revolution, when the government turned religious.

The regime in Iran will disappear or change soon and people

will once again remember the “Good Old Days”. That remembrance will be the basis of the 2020 Alliance between them. To recollect those good days, it is worthwhile to review the recent history and illustrious Iranian figures that prevailed before 1979.



## APPENDIX A



### **Yeprem Khan**

Yeprem Khan was born to an Armenian family in the village of Barsum, Armenia in 1868. He died 1912 Kermanshah Province, Iran.

As a youth, Yeprem participated in Armenian nationalist groups and partisan activities against the Ottoman Empire. In September, 1890, Yeprem was arrested by the Russian Cossacks and exiled to Siberia in 1892, from where he managed to escape to Tabriz, Iran in 1896.

While in Tabriz, he began working for the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF Dashnaktsutiun), whose activity in Persia was primarily directed against the Ottoman Empire, and established its local branches in the Iranian towns of Tabriz and Rasht.

Yeprem was highly instrumental in the Iranian Constitutional Revolution. In 1907, he convinced the ARF to participate in it. After the Persian national parliament was shelled by the Russian Colonel Vladimir Liakhov, Yeprem Khan joined up with Sattar

Khan and other revolutionary leaders in the Constitutional Revolution of Iran against Mohammad Ali Shah Qajar.



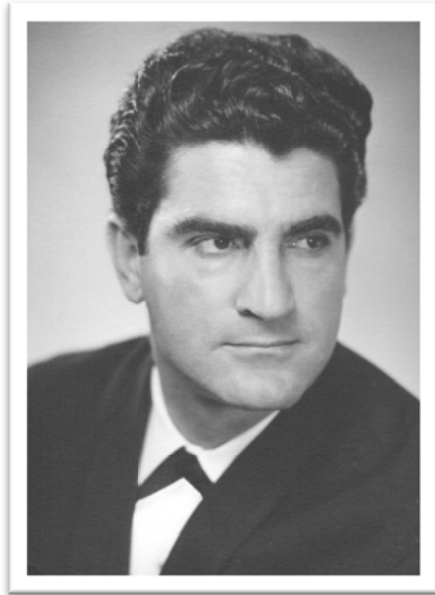
Monument of Yusef Khan in Tehran

On 30 July 1909, the Second National Assembly (Parliament) of Iran, appointed Yusef Khan as the police chief of Tehran. After becoming the police chief, he restored order in the city and made various reforms to the police force. In 1910 he became chief police of all Iran.

He further split from revolutionaries when, in 1910, Sattar Khan, a hero of the civil war, refused to obey the government order to disarm. After a brief but violent confrontation at Atabek Park in Tehran, Yusef Khan, using Shah's army and police, disarmed Sattar Khan.

Yusef Khan was killed on 19 May 1912 while trying to rescue one of his comrades in a battle in the Kermanshah Province. He was killed by some of Mohammad Ali Shah Qajar's loyal troops who remained in Iran.

Yeprem Khan, like Sattar Khan, is considered a national hero of Iran. He is also praised by Iranian historians such as Ahmad Kasravi. There exists a popular Armenian patriotic song dedicated to Khan's memory and deeds.



### **Viguen (singer)**

Viguen was of Armenian ethnicity and, for many years until the 1979 Islamic revolution, many Iranian performers and celebrities—among them Delkash, Pouran, and Elaheh—yearned to be associated with him.

Viguen's innovative and upbeat style of music had a great influence on paving the way for a new genre of Iranian music, influenced by Western European and Latin American styles. His musical and performing talents soon captured the attention of many prominent Iranian lyricists and composers such as Parveez Vakili and Kareem Fakkour. Together, they created some of Iran's most memorable songs.



## **Andranik Teymourian**

He is notably the only Christian footballer in the Iran national football team. Teymourian played his first match for Iran in 2005 and was featured in their squads for the 2006 FIFA World Cup and the 2007 and 2011 Asian Cups. He has played a total of 74 internationals, scoring 8 times.

Samuel Khachikian--Iranian Armenian director (known as "Iran's Hitchcock")

Born 1923 in Tabriz to a family of Armenian immigrants, Samuel Khachikian published his first poem, "The Prison", in the Alik newspaper when he was nine. Five years later, he gave his first stage performance in Tabriz in a play titled "Seville". He completed his education in History and Journalism, and wrote eight plays

which were staged, not only throughout Iran, but also in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Greece.

Khachikian made his first film in 1953, titled "The Return". He was among the first directors to use the decoupage technique on the film set, preparing the complete shooting script in advance. The success of his works attracted a lot of attention to the advantages of this filmmaking approach.

As an innovative filmmaker, he turned the production of murder mysteries into a popular "New Wave" in Iranian filmmaking. He made the first-ever movie trailer in the history of Iranian cinema for the movie "A Girl from Shiraz" in 1954. Some of his films such as "The Strike" and "The Eagles" were box office hits of their times.

Samuel's son, Edwin Khachikian, is currently a director in Tehran, Iran. Samuel's brother, Souren Khachikian, was also heavily involved in the production of his films. Souren's grandson, Ara H. Keshishian, is currently working as a film editor in Hollywood. His 1956 film, "A Party in Hell", was entered into the 8th Berlin International Film Festival

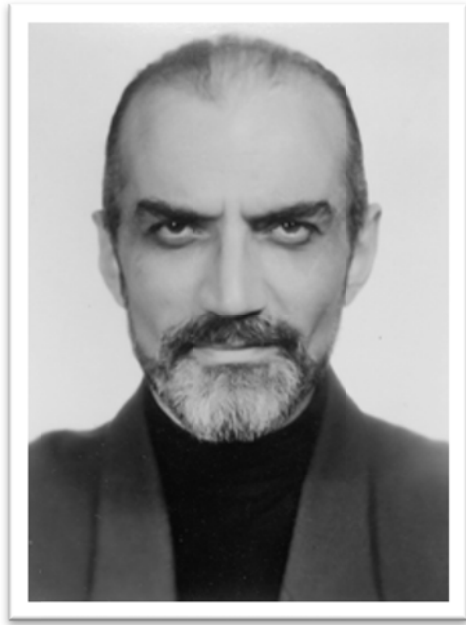


## Irene

Irene was born to an Armenian family who had immigrated to Babolsar, Iran after surviving the Armenian Genocide. Irene's father was Alexander Zazians and her mother's name was Varia.

Her father was from the Western Armenia, while her mother was from the east. Irene was their fourth child, but all of the first three children died. She went to "Shahdokht" school in Babolsar. She started acting in "Ferdowsi Theater" when she was only 19. In 1951, she joined "Noushin group" in Sa'di theater. She played in "Lady Windermere's Fan", a Oscar Wilde play, in those days. She married Mohammad Asemi, an actor in the Noushin theater when she was only 16.

**Emmanuel B. Aghassian** (آغاسی ایمانوئل), Anglicized as **Emmanuel "Mike" Agassi** (born 25 December 1930 in Salmas, Iran), is a former boxer and the father of Andre Agassi.



## **Vartan Vahramian**

Vartan Vahramian is an Iranian-Armenian music artist and painter excelling in both these fields. He has made musical creations, solo performances as a baritone, and conducted choirs.

Vahramian was born in Tabriz, in 1955. He is the son of the painter, Grigor Vahramian Gasparbeg, who graduated from the Moscow Academy of Art and who was also a skilled sculptor, silversmith and engraver. His mother, Marousia Vahramian, is also an artist who, from an early age, was trained in music, and later in painting. It is therefore not surprising that these two arts manifest themselves equally in his work.

## Marcos Grigorian

Grigorian was born in Kropotkin, Russia, to an Armenian family from Kars who had fled that city to escape the massacres when it was captured by Turkey in 1920. In 1930, the family moved from Kropotkin to Iran, living first in Tabriz, and then in Tehran.

After finishing pre-university education in Iran, in 1950 he studied at the Academia di Belle Arte in Rome. Graduating from there in 1954, he returned to Iran, opened the Galerie Esthétique, an important commercial gallery in Tehran. In 1958, under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture, he organized the first Tehran Biennial.

Grigorian was also an influential teacher at the Fine Arts Academy, where he disseminated his enthusiasm for local popular culture, including coffee-house paintings, a type of folk art named after the locations in which they were often displayed.

In 1975, Grigorian helped organize the group of free painters and sculptors in Tehran and was one of its founding members. Artists Gholamhossein Nami, Massoud Arabshahi, Morteza Momayez and Faramarz Pilaram were amongst the other members of the group. As a modernist pop artist, Marcos Grigorian, turned to ordinary objects and popular ethnic forms and approaches. He used ethnic food such as "Nan Sangak" and "Abghousht" to evoke authenticity in his work. Grigorian was a trend setter in experimenting with Earth Art, in Iran.

Grigorian left Iran in 1977 at the age of 52. He lived for a short time in the United States before moving to Yerevan, Armenia, then still a republic of the Soviet Union. In 1989, he traveled to Russia at the invitation of the Union of Russian Artists, visiting Moscow and Leningrad. He exhibited his clay and straw works in Yerevan in 1991. He later donated 5,000 of his artworks to the government of Armenia.

In 1993, he founded the "Museum of the Middle East" in Yerevan: 2,600 exhibits are on display, with most of them coming from his own collection.



Some of his works are now on display at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Kerman, and the National Gallery of Armenia.

On 4 August 2007, Grigorian was assaulted and beaten about the head by two masked robbers who had broken into his Yerevan home. It was speculated that the robbers believed, erroneously, that there was a large sum of money in the house, proceeds from the sale of Grigorian's summer residence in Garni. After an anonymous phone call to police, Grigorian was discovered injured and taken to hospital. He died of a suspected heart attack on 27 August 2007, a day after leaving the hospital.

## Appendix B

Prior to the 1979 overthrow of the Shah, Armenians and Jews had lived together in relative harmony in Iran. They established a long history of accepted religious worship dating back, in many instances, to the 17th and 18th centuries. Here is a list of churches throughout Iran at which Armenian worshipped. Appendix C shows photos of Jewish worshippers, a list of a dozen prominent Iranian Jews and a short history of the Iranian Jewish community.

### A Few Armenian Churches:



St. Thaddeus Monastery

#### History and architecture

One of the 12 Apostles, St. Thaddeus, also known as Saint Jude, (not to be confused with Judas Iscariot), was martyred while spreading the Gospel. He is revered as an apostle of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Legend has it that a church dedicated to him was

first built on the present site in AD 68.

Not much appears to remain of the original church, which was extensively rebuilt in 1329 after an earthquake damaged the structure in 1319. Nevertheless, some of the parts surrounding the altar apse date from the 10th century.

Most of the present structure dates from the early 19th century when Qajar prince, Abbas Mirza, helped in renovations and repairs. The 19th century additions are from carved sandstone. The earliest parts are of black and white stone, hence its Turkic name *Kara Kilise*, the *Black Church*. A fortified wall surrounds the church and its now-abandoned monastery buildings.

In July 2008, the St. Thaddeus monastery was added to UNESCO's World Heritage List, along with two other Armenian monuments located in the same province: Saint Stephanos Monastery and the chapel of Dzordzor.



Church of the Holy Mother of God, Darashamb

The **Church of Saint Astvatsatsin** or **Church of the Holy Mother of God**) is a 17th-century Armenian church in the Valley of the Araxes along the Araks river in Iran near Darashamb.



Saint Stepanos Monastery

The **St. Stepanos Monastery** is an Armenian monastery about 15 km northwest of Jolfa city, East Azerbaijan Province northeast Iran. It is situated in a deep canyon along the Arax river on the Iranian side of the border between Azerbaijan and Iran. It was built in the 9th century and rebuilt in the Safavid era after several earthquakes damaged it.



Sarkis Cathedral and Armenian Prelacy in Tehran.  
One of Iran's Armenian Churches, 1970.

Surp Sarkis Mother Cathedral - 1970

- Surp Asdvadzadzin Church - North Qavam St. - 1945
- Surp Gevork Church - Shahpur Ave. - 1795
- Surp Minas Church - Vanak - 1854
- Surp Vartanants Church - Sardarabad (Heshmatieh) - 1986
- Surp Grigor Lusavoritch Church - Zeitoun (Majidieh) - 1982
- Surp Tarkmantchatz Church - Sassoun (Vahidieh) - 1968
- Surp Tadevos - Bartoghimevos - Tehran Grand Bazaar - 1768
- Surp Hovhanness Chapel - Doulab Armenian Cemetery - 1936
- Surp Stepanos Chapel - Nor Burastan Cemetery - 1974
- Surp Khatch Chapel - Ararat Stadium, Vanak - 1987
- Surp Grigor Lusavoritch Armenian Catholic Church - Ghazali St. - 1955
- St. John's Central Evangelical Church - Nader Shah Ave.
- Hokeshuntch Armenian Evangelical Church
- Shnorhali Armenian Evangelical Church



Van Cathedral in New Julfa, Isfahan.

- Surp Amenaprgitch Cathedral (All Savior's Cathedral) and Armenian Prelacy - 1655
- Surp Katarine Nunnery - Charsu - 1623
- Surp Gevork Church - Hakim Nezami Ave. - 1611
- Surp Stepanos Church - Hakopjan - 1614
- Surp Hovannes Mgrditch Church - Charsou - 1621
- Surp Minas Church - 1659
- Surp Nersess Church - 1666
- Surp Grigor Lusavoritch Church - 1633
- Surp Sarkis Church - 1659
- Surp Hakop Church - Big Meidan - 1607
- Surp Asdvadzadzin Church - Big Meidan - 1613
- Surp Betghehem Church - Big Meidan - 1628
- Surp Nikoghayos Hayrapet Church - 1630

# Northern Iran

## West Azerbaijan

### Salmas

- Surp Asdvadzadzin Church - Salmas - Akhtekhaneh - 18th century
- Surp Hakop Church - Salmas - Aslanik - 1886
- Surp Gevorg Church - Salmas - Charik - 1203
- Surp Sarkis Zoravar Church - Salmas - Drishk - 1400
- Surp Sarkis Church - Salmas - Qalasar - 1806
- Surp Poghos-Petros Church - Salmas - Qezeljeh
- Surp Hovhannes Church - Salmas - Qezeljeh - 1189
- Surp Asdvadzadzin Church - Salmas - Haftvan - 18th century
- Surp Gevorg Church - Salmas - Haftvan - 1652
- Surp Tadevos Church - Salmas - Haftvan - 13th century
- Surp Poghos-Petros Church - Salmas - Haftvan
- Surp Sarkis Church - Salmas - Khosrowabad - 1717
- Surp Sarkis Church - Salmas - Goluzan - 18th century
- Surp Asdvadzadzin Church - Salmas - Sheitanabad - 1708
- Surp Gevorg Church - Salmas - Payajuk - 1751
- Surp Gevorg Church - Salmas - Karabulagh
- Surp Gevorg Church - Salmas - Hodar - 1813
- Surp Hakop Church - Salmas - Kohneshahr - 1671
- Surp Sarkis Church - Salmas - Kohneshahr - 1671
- Surp Hovhannes Church - Salmas - Kohneshahr - 1825
- Surp Sarkis Zoravar Church - Salmas - Malham - 1711
- Surp Vardan Church - Salmas - Malham - 1724
- Surp Chknavorats Church - Salmas - Malham - 1796
- Surp Sarkis Church - Salmas - Saramolk - 1758
- Surp Asdvadzadzin Church - Salmas - Sarna - 1625
- Surp Gevorg Church - Salmas - Savera - 18th century
- Surp Amenaprgitch Church - Salmas - Zivajik - 1892

- Surp Sarkis Church - Salmas - Kojamish - 1348
- Surp Sarkis Church - Salmas – Ula

## Urmia

- Surp Hovhannes Church - Urmia - Balanej - 17th century
- Surp Hovhannes Church - Urmia - Badelbo - 18th century
- Surp Sarkis Church - Urmia - Surmanabad - 18th century
- Surp Nshan Church - Urmia - Jamalabad - 18th century
- Surp Hovhannes Church - Urmia - Jamalabad - 18th century
- Surp Gevorg Church - Urmia - Gardabad - early medieval
- Surp Sarkis Church - Urmia - Ikiaghaj - 17th century
- Surp Asdvadzadzin Church - Urmia - Isalu - 17th century
- Surp Asdvadzadzin Church - Urmia - Karaguz - 18th century
- Surp Hovhannes Church - Urmia - Karagiz - 18th century
- Surp Asdvadzadzin Church - Urmia - Nakhichevan Tepe - 17th century
- Surp Asdvadzadzin Church - Urmia - Reihanabad - 17th century
- Surp Asdvadzadzin Church - Urmia - Sepurghan - 17th century
- Surp Sarkis Church - Urmia - Sepurghan - 17th century
- Surp Petros Church - Urmia - Karabagh - 1655
- Surp Hovhannes Church - Urmia - Adeh - 17th century
- Surp Asdvadzadzin Church - Urmia - Dizej Ala - 1820
- Surp Hovhannes Church - Urmia - Khan Babakhan - 17th century
- Surp Sarkis Church - Urmia - Kachilan - 17th century
- Surp Gevorg Church - Urmia - Shirabad - 18th century
- Surp Asdvadzadzin Church - Urmia - Charbakhsh - 1882
- Surp Poghos-Petros Church - Urmia - ChaharGushan - 18th century
- Surp Asdvadzadzin Church - Urmia - Rahava - 17th century
- Surp Asdvadzadzin Church - Urmia - Ballu - 17th century
- Surp Sarkis Church - Urmia - Darbarud - 18th century
- Surp Sarkis Church - Urmia - Kukia - 18th century
- Surp Asdvadzadzin Church - Urmia - Babarud - 18th century



- Surp Stepanos Church - Urmia - 18th century

## **Khoy**

- Surp Khatch Kristosi Church - Khoy - Mahlazan - 1656
- Surp Asdvadzadzin Church - Khoy - Ghريس - 16th century
- Surp Sarkis Church - Khoy - Fanai - 16th century
- Surp Asdvadzadzin Church - Khoy - Dizel - 18th century
- Surp Sarkis Zoravar Church - Khoy - Var - 18th century
- Surp Hakop Church - Khoy - Saeedabad - 18th century
- Surp Sarkis Church - Khoy - 1120

## **Maku**

- Surp Sandukht Church - Maku - Karakelisa - 14th century
- Surp Vardan Church - Maku - Shaveran - 18th century
- Surp Tade Vank (Monastery of St. Thaddeus) - Maku - Karakelisa - Early Christianity (Renovated in 1329 and 1820)
- Surp Asdvadzadzin Vank (Monastery of Holy Mary) - Maku - Baron (Dzor Dzor) - 1324

## **Other**

- Surp Sarkis Church - Miandoab - Taqiabad

# **East Azerbaijan**

## **Tabriz**

- Surp Hripsime Church - Tabriz - Mujumbar - 17th century
- Surp Varvare Church - Tabriz - Mujumbar - 18th century
- Surp Anrevuyt Church - Tabriz - Mujumbar - 1810
- Surp Hovhannes Church - Tabriz - Sohrol - 19th century
- Surp Grigor Lusavoritch Church - Tabriz - Aljamolk - 18th

century

- Surp Petros Church - Tabriz - Minavar
- Surp Asdvadzadzin Church - Ghala, Tabriz - 1782
- Surp Asdvadzadzin Church - Maralan, Tabriz - 18th century
- Surp Sarkis Church - Lilava, Tabriz - 1821

## **Julfa (Jolfa)**

- Surp Asdvadzadzin Church - Julfa - Upper Darashamb - 1518
- Surp Hovhanness Church - Julfa - Upper Darashamb - 18th century
- Surp Hovhanness Church - Julfa - Upper Darashamb - 18th century
- Surp Sarkis Church - Julfa - Middle Darashamb - 1828
- Surp Andreas Church - Julfa - Middle Darashamb - 1836
- Surp Gevorg Church - Julfa - Lower Darashamb - 1872
- Surp Stepanos Nakhavga Vank or Maghartavank (Monastery of St. Stephen the Protomartyr) - Julfa - Upper Darashamb - 10th century

## **Other**

- Surp Hovhanness Church - Maragheh - 18th century
- Surp Shoghkat Chapel - Armenian Cemetery - 1940

## **Ardabil**

- Surp Asdvadzadzin Church - Ardabil - 1876

## **Other Cities and Villages**

- Surp Asdvadzadzin Church - Shiraz - 1662
- Surp Gevorg Church - Bushire - 1819
- Surp Asdvadzadzin Church - Bandar Anzali - 1855
- Surp Stepanos Church - Rasht - 1954
- Surp Hripsime Church - Qazvin - 1936

- Surp Stepanos Church - Hamadan - 1932
- Surp Mesrob Church - Arak - 1914
- Surp Mesrob Church - Mashhad - 1941
- Surp Gevork Church - Masjed-i-Suleiman - 1942
- Surp Karapet Church - Abadan - 1954
- Surp Mesrob Church - Ahwaz – 1968

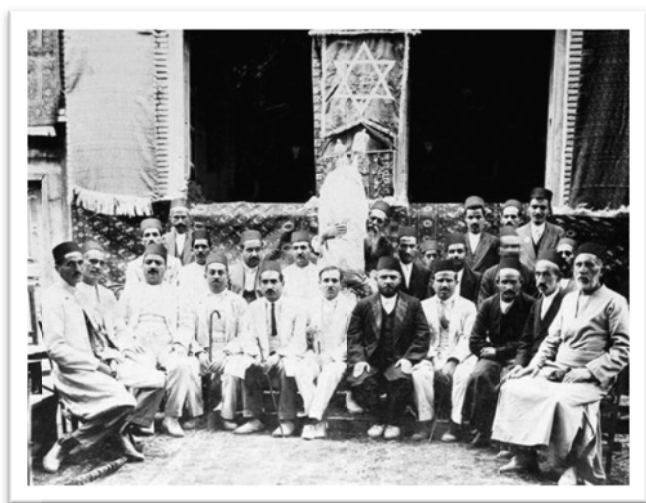


## Appendix C

### Jewish Life in Tehran



Synagogue in Tehran. Postcard from Qajar period (1794–1925)



Hamedan Jews in 1918



A Jewish gathering celebrates the second anniversary of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution in Tehran 1908.

**A montage of 12 notable Persian Jews.**



Daniel -central protagonist of the Book of Daniel.

Esther -eponymous heroine of the  
Biblical Book of Esther.



Habakkuk - the prophet  
in the Hebrew Bible.



Rashid-al-Din Hamadani- a  
Persian physician of Jewish origin,  
polymathic writer and historian,  
who wrote an enormous Islamic  
history, the “Jami al-Tawarikh”, in  
the Persian language.

Soleiman Haïm - a well-known Iranian lexicographer, translator, playwright and essayist.



Morteza Neydavood – Composer who preserved classical Iranian music by recording hundreds of its various dastgahs and gooshehs.



Moshe Katsav - eighth President of Israel.





Shaul Mofaz - Israeli M.P. and former Israeli Minister of Defense.



Yousef Hamadani Cohen - Spiritual leader of the Iranian Jews.



David B. Samadi - Renowned expert in robotic oncology. The first surgeon in the United States to have successfully performed a repeat robotic surgery procedure on the prostate. He has performed over 1,800 robotic laproscopic surgeries using the Da Vinci surgical system for patients with prostate, bladder and kidney cancers.



Roya Hakakian - a Jewish Iranian-American writer.



Rita Yahan-Farouz - an Israeli pop-star, of Persian descent.



# **Foundation for the Advancement of Sephardic Studies and Culture**

<http://www.sephardicstudies.org/historyiran.html>

## **A Brief History of Iranian Jews**

by Massoume Price

Iranian Jews are amongst the oldest inhabitants of the country. The origin of Jewish Diaspora in Persia is closely connected with various events in Israel's ancient history. At the time of the Assyrian king, Tiglath-Pileser III (727 B.C.), thousands of Jews were deported from Israel and forced to settle in Media. According to the annals of another Assyrian king, Sargon II, in 721 B.C., Jewish inhabitants of Ashdod and Samara in present day Israel were resettled in Media after their failed attempt against Assyrian dominance. The records indicate that 27,290 Jews were forced to settle in Ecbatana (Hamadan) and Susa in South West Persia. These settlers are referred to as one of the "Ten Lost Tribes of Israel" in biblical records.

The next wave of the Jewish settlers arrived to escape persecution from the Assyrian king Nabuchadnezzar II. Many settled in Isfahan around 680 B.C. The conquest of Babylon by Cyrus the Great the founder of Achaemenian Empire also brought many Jews into the country. In 539 BC, Cyrus entered Babylon with little resistance. The temple of Marduk their major deity was restored and Cyrus crowned himself in the name of Marduk.

The Jewish exiles in Babylon were permitted to go home and reconstruct the temple of Jerusalem though some chose to emigrate

to Persia. The restoration was confirmed by Darius the Great and commenced at the time of Artaxerxes I. Under Darius, around 30,000 Jews left Babylon to start work on the temple.



Hacham Yedidya Shofet, former Chief Rabbi of Iran and current spiritual leader of the worldwide Persian Jewish community.

The mild treatment Achemenian accorded the conquered subjects was part of the Imperial doctrine. The policies of the central administration encouraged autonomy in internal affairs with little intervention from the Persians. For instance, the Satrap (Governor General) of Judah, which constituted the fifth Satrapy, had his own local governor in Samara with the right of supervision over the deputy in Judah.

From 516 BC, there was no Persian deputy in Judah. At first

Shabazzar, from the ancient House of David, was the regional leader in Jerusalem. He was followed by Zerubbabel, another Jewish aristocrat. In the fifth to fourth century B.C., the rulers of Judah were also appointed among the local residents. Seals used by the ruler of Judah in the fifth century BC identify him as Yehoazar. In 458 B.C., the Jew Ezra is appointed the deputy of Judah. The same Ezra had served up to this time as a scribe in the central administration in Susa, the Capital of the Persian Empire.

Correspondence left by Ezra and his successor Nehemiah, who likewise had been in Susa prior to this, indicates a strong Jewish community, united around the local temple and headed by the high priest. This community had its own organs of self-administration, in whose affairs the Persians did not intervene. Gradually, the high priest became the governor of Judah.

Semi-autonomous temple communities were not exclusive to the Jews. They existed throughout the Persian Empire. Cyprus, Cilicia, Lycia and other Phoenician cities and principalities in Asia Minor had their own local rulers. Even such remote tribes as the Arabs, Colchians, Ethiopians, Sakai, were governed by their own local chiefs. All kept their religion and gods with little interference from the Achemenian administration.

Persians occupied the highest positions in the state apparatus. At the same time, they extensively utilized cultural, legal and administrative traditions of the conquered nations. In the Murashu family documents (present-day Iraq, ancient Babylonia) of the 23 high royal officers, only eight have Iranian names. Various ethnic and religious minorities followed their own legal code in personal matters such as marriage and family law. For example, Jewish settlers of Elephantine (Egypt) under Persian administration remained monogamous and the husbands did not have the right to take a second wife. Monetary and property disputes were settled and decided by the special "Court of the Jews".

The conquered people were also given land allotments in exchange for taxes and military service. Among these settlers were all groups such as Babylonians, Aramaeans, Jews, Indians and Sakai. In Susa itself, besides the local population and the Persians, there were

large number of Babylonians, Egyptians, Jews and Greeks.

There were no restrictions with respect to religious freedom and practices. Hundreds of objects regarded sacred by various ethnic and religious groups are discovered both in Susa and Persepolis. In the Fortification texts discovered at Persepolis, many foreign deities are mentioned. These cults and their priests received rations and wages for maintenance.

A priest serving the Elamite god Humban receives 4 marris of beer, of which two were for the Akkadian god Adad. In 500 BC, the priest Ururu, having received 80 bar of grain from the storehouse, exchanged it for eight yearling sheep, of which two were used for sacrifices to the god Adad. The Persian religion was against offering of livestock for sacrifices and Zoroaster banned the practice. However, others were not prevented from practicing such rituals.

The Elamite god, Humban, is mentioned more frequently in the texts than other foreign gods. As evident from the Fortification texts, both Elamite and Persian priests served this deity. Cambyses (Cyrus' son and successor) frequently expresses his respect for all things sacred. He worshiped Egyptian gods and goddess and patronized the Elephantine temple of the Jews. In a mosaic in British Museum, Darius is crowning himself in Egypt, in the name of Egyptian gods, dressed as an Egyptian Pharaoh.

Marriage contracts testify to mixed marriages amongst all groups including Jews. The practice was so common that the Jewish governors Ezra and Nehemiah objected to it. They clamped down on these marriages and punished Jews who would marry outside the religion. Many documents, texts and contracts mention Jewish names engaged in trade, disputes or as property owners.

In the fifth century BC, in Nippur documents, 100 such Jewish families are identified. They are land owners, tradesmen or were in the royal service. For instance a certain Hannani, the son of Minnahhin, occupied the post of supervisor over the king's poultry". The Jew Nehemiah was a confidant of Artaxerxes I, occupying the important post of royal cupbearer in the civil service hierarchy.

Jews often appear also as contracting parties and witnesses. One Elephantine papyri mention an Iranian, Choresmian Dargamana, the son of Harshina, who served in the Elephantine garrison in the detachment of the Persian Artabana. He owned his own house and made claims to some plot of land. Daragamana complained to the judges that a certain Jew from the detachment of the Iranian Varyazata had occupied the field unlawfully. In the court the defendant sworn by the god Yahu (Yahweh) that Dargamana himself has transferred to him the lot in question. The plaintiff gave up his claim.

In another document, the Carpian Bugazusht, the son of the Persian Bazu, sold a house to a Jew. This house was located beside the house of another Persian, Shatibar. Various documents show Egyptian, Aramaeans, Jews and Phoenicians entered into joint business deals, contracted mixed marriages, adopted each other's customs and worshiped not only their own god, but also the gods of the aliens who lived in one city or another.

In short, freedom of religion, movement, occupation and marriage were guaranteed under the Achaemenian. Such tolerance is not strange or unusual since the ancient religions, including Judaism, prior to Ezra and Nehemiah were not dogmatic and intolerant to other beliefs. In the ancient Near Eastern religions there is a complete absence of the concept of false faith or any form of heresy. Nor does there seem to be any notion of racial hatred or any feeling of the superiority of one people over another.

Nations conquered would be treated as such, not because of their ethnic makeup or religion. Even captive Jews brought into Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar II, retained their faith in Yahweh and practiced their rituals and prospered economically.

Zoroastrianism was also geared to tolerance, for it made a place for foreign gods as helpers of Ahura Mazda. One Aramaic inscription of the time speaks of a marriage between the Babylonian god Bel and the Iranian goddess, Dayna-Mazdayasnish. In this document, Bel appeals to his spouse with the words: " You are my sister; you are very wise and more beautiful than the other goddesses". At times Jews and other groups under Persians were mistreated and rebellions were put down. There is no evidence that such actions were based on race or religion. Persian kings were ruthless and firm with all rebellions including the ones by the Persian Satraps and members of the Royal household.

The biblical texts have valuable information with respect to the Jews in Achaemenian times. Persian conquest is greeted with enthusiasm and Persians are praised and mentioned in the books of Daniel, Ezra and Ezekiel. The Book of Esther tells of the fate of the Jewish Diaspora under Xerxes. Esther, the niece of Mordecai, an assistant to the Persian king, takes the place of Queen Ahashwerosh, who is banned from the palace by the King's order. The Jewish population of Susa is not liked by some, the King is persuaded to order their total eradication. Esther intervenes with several Persian noblemen who pretend to be Jews. The decree is reversed and all are saved. Though the account is not supported by historical evidence, the writer is very accurate in his description of the Persian court life and costumes. This occasion is still celebrated by all Jews in the Purim Festival.

After the collapse of the Achaemenian Empire, the later dynasties, i.e. Selucids and Parthians followed the same policies. Persian, Aramaeans, Babylonian, Greek, Christian and Jewish



temples were present in all the major cities. The Jewish chronicles mention the Parthian period as one of the best in their history. Centers of Jewish life in the Parthian Empire were situated in Mesopotamia, in Nisibis and Nehardea. Jewish chronicles state that they enjoyed a long period of peace and maintained close and positive contacts with the reigning dynasty. This is proved among other things, by the participation of the Jews in the rebellions against Trajan (the Roman Emperor) in Mesopotamia (116 AD). In addition, the Jews took an active part in organizing the silk trade, an advantage they owed to the evident support of the kings.

No later than in the second century AD, a representative of Davidic origin called 'Exilarch' represented the Jewish minority at court and also carried out functions of a political-administrative nature. Religious persecution of Jewish rebels in Palestine by the Romans in 135 AD, also brought many Jewish refugees into the Parthian empire. Philo and Flavius Josephus, the famed Roman historians, have documented the relations between Jews and Parthians. On the whole, religious conformity was not demanded as a means to safeguard the reign. The ruling principle was always the advancement of reliable groups and communities and the punishment of disloyal ones. The Jewish communities proved to be loyal and reliable and as a result experienced a time of unprecedented prosperity and cultural-religious creativity.

The reign of the Sassanid dynasty from 205 AD to the conquest of Muslims in 651 AD, is full of contradictory and extreme policies with respect to the treatment of religious minorities. For the first time there is systematic oppression of different religious groups. In his inscriptions, the 'priest' Kidir (the chief Mobad) states that, thanks to his efforts under King Bahram II (276-293), Zoroastrianism was promoted in the empire and other religious communities were persecuted. In one part of the inscription he declares:

"The false doctrines of Ahriman and of the idols suffered great blows and lost credibility. The Jews (Yahud), Buddhists (Shaman), Hindus (Brahman), Nazarenes (Nasara), Christians (Kristiyan), Baptists (Makdag) and Manichaeans (Zandik) were smashed in the empire, their idols destroyed, and the habitations of the idols annihilated and turned into abodes and seats of the gods".

Historical records are not very clear with respect to the Jewish persecution at this time. Though we know a lot about the Christian, Manichean and Mazdaean persecutions, we hear nothing about the persecution in the Jewish records until the fifth century. The Jewish centers in Mesopotamia at this time were not as significant to the political processes as the Christians, Manichaeans or Mazdakites.

There is a phase of uncertainty and repression under Ardashir (the first Sassanid king). Jews having had excellent relations with the Parthians were suspected to be collaborators with the deposed dynasty and their movement was restricted. Under Shapur I, the rabbis and the Jewish representative at the court (Exilarch) came to an understanding, by which the Jews were granted more freedom of movement and the Sassanid could count on their compliance with taxing and general legal prescriptions. Shapur's antagonism against the ruler of Palmyra (in Syria), who had destroyed the Jewish center of Nehardea when he invaded Babylonia, helped the situation and eased the tension between Shapur and his Jewish subjects.

In the wars between Rome and Shapur II, the Jews, unlike Christians, were decidedly loyal to the Persian king, with the exception of a few messianic groups. The later massive repression of the Jews under Yazdgird II, Peroz and Kavad was a result of political actions by such messianic groups, who anticipated the imminent arrival of a new Messiah on the 400th anniversary of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem.

Iranian sources mention attacks by the Jews of Isfahan on the city's Magi. Later persecutions were also politically motivated. Khosrow's general Mahbad killed the Jewish followers of the pretender to the throne, Bahram Chobin. A further messianic revolt in Babylonia was ruthlessly put down in 640. At the beginning of the seventh century, the Jews watched the Sassanian offensive against Byzantium with great expectancy and joyfully welcomed the conquest of Jerusalem. At the same time, Christians were massacred in great numbers.

Little is known about the number of the Jewish inhabitants in the Sassanian Empire, but it must have been quite considerable, especially in Babylonia. By far the majority of Jews made their living by farming, although handicraft and trade also played a part. They lived predominantly in villages, but also with many ethnic, linguistic and religious groups in larger towns and cities. There is no indication they were forced to live in closed Jewish quarters (Ghettos), as was the case in Islamic times.

They are mentioned as physicians, scholars and philosophers. They taught at famous Iranian universities amongst other Christian, Indian, Roman, Greek and Persian scholars. Jewish physicians, along with Christians, ran the famous medical school, Jundishapur, for decades. Several members of the famous Christian families of Bukhtyishu and Masuya were involved in this school and had many Jewish assistants. Hunain b. Ishaq is the most famous Jewish physician of the early Islamic period. His family served at Jundishapur and he is credited with the best translations of Hippocratic and Galenic corpus into Arabic at the time of caliph al-Mutazid.

The conquest of Islam in seventh century put an end to freedom of religion through out the area. All polytheistic and pagan religions were banned all together with all the other Near and Far Eastern religions. Islam does not recognize these as true religions. All major

and minor deities were eliminated as false gods. The house of Kaba contained 110 such deities alone. All were banished. The followers of these religions became 'kofar ' and were given the choice to either convert or die.

"Allah", a term used by local Christian tribes, meaning god, became the only sovereign god, the almighty. Islam was the last and the most superior of all religions and Muslim males were made superior to all others including Muslim females. Christianity and Judaism were accepted as the only other true religions and their holy scripts were accepted as such. However, despite a large number of Christian and Jewish tribes in Arabia, their freedom was substantially restricted and their legal status lowered.



Hacham Yedidya Shofet, shlita with his son, the next future  
Spiritual Leader of the Persian Jewish community

They were given the right to practice their religion if they paid a discriminatory religious poll tax called 'jizya'. In Quran, these people are called dhimmis (ahle zimmeh). Later, Zoroastrians of Iran were included as well. Quran prohibits Muslims from becoming friends

with Christians and Jews and calls the latter liars, dishonest and violent. With Christians they are forbidden from any participation in building Mosques. Mixed marriages were banned for Muslim women. While Muslims could not become slaves, all others were subjected to slavery as purchased slaves or war booty. Later on, Christians and Jew were banned from riding horses while carrying arms and could not increase their numbers through conversion of others.

They were segregated and their houses could not exceed those of the Muslims in height. Courts of 'Sharia' became the only legal vessel and Quran gave Muslim males superior legal status. For instance, if a Jew or a Christian kills a Muslim, there is both 'Ghesas' (physical punishment) and 'Dyeh' (monetary compensation). If a Muslim kills a Jew or a Christian, there is no ghesas and they only pay dyeh, which is half of what the Jew or the Christian has to pay. There is no punishment for killing kofar (non-believers) or mortad (converters from Islam into other faiths).

In short, all except Muslim males became second class citizens (dhimmis). 'Covenant of Ummar', when Jerusalem was conquered, made religious discrimination institutionalized. Ummar believed Arabia should be purely Muslim and Arab. The large Christian and Jewish communities of Arabia mainly in Najran, Khaybar, Hijaz and Medina were expelled to the conquered territories and their properties confiscated. His bias, brutality and discriminatory actions contributed to his assassination by a Persian slave.

The situation is worsening by the time of Harun Al Rashid in eight-century AD. The overwhelming population of the area at the time was Christian, Zoroastrian and Jewish. Their houses of worship were destroyed, they could not build any new ones and jizya was increased substantially. Payment of the jizya was furthermore to be accompanied by signs of humility and recognition of personal inferiority.

On payment of the tax a seal, generally of lead, was affixed to the payee's person as a receipt and as a sign of the status of dhimma. By the time of Caliph Al Motevakel in ninth century, non-Muslims were all excluded from employment in government sectors, banned from Muslim schools, had to live in closed quarters and were forced to wear colored ribbons to indicate they were non Muslims.

**Jews had to wear yellow ribbons (Vasleh Johudaneh); a practice that persisted till the end of the 19th century in Iran.** Iran, being part of the Greater Muslim Empire, was subjected to the same rules. Since non-Muslims were forced out of the government institutions, they went into trade and banking. A wealthy class of Jewish merchants emerged with cash but little political influence. Later on the money was used by some wealthy Jews throughout the Empire to finance the Caliphs' courts and wars, especially against the Crusaders. Exilarch still remained the vehicle through which Jewish affairs were regulated.

Muslim treatment of the religious minorities varied in accordance with the policies of the caliphs and attitudes of different governors. While the Umayyad governor of Iran, Hajjaj, was ruthless and extremely biased, others were more lenient and did not follow all the discriminatory rules. There were many Christian, Zoroastrian and Jewish Philosophers, physicians, scientists, engineers, musicians and court administrators in the first century of the Muslim Empire. Later on, they all gradually converted or were forced out of government services. The coming of Abbasid improved the position of dhimmi for a while, especially during the reign of Al Mansur. He was a devoted follower of the sciences and supported the great translation movement of the 8th century AD.

Initiated by the Syriac, Greek, Jews and Persians to preserve the ancient knowledge, the movement started in Syria and flourished in Baghdad. Scientists and intellectuals from all over got together and thousands of books were translated into Arabic from Greek,

Hebrew, Persian and other languages. Iranian Jews were writing dari (new Persian) in Hebrew characters, the same way Christians used Syriac script to write Persian.

Jewish court bankers (Jahabidha) are found at the courts of the Buyids, the Ghaznavids, and the Seljuk Sultans. Malik-Shah Seljuk contracted the farming of his Basra properties to a wealthy Jew named Ibn Allan for 150,000 dinars. The influential politician and educator, Nizam al-Mulk in his famous book *Siasat Nameh* rejects the employment of dhimmi in governmental services and at the same time provided refuge for his Jewish friend, Ibn Allan, who was eventually drowned as ordered by the Sultan.

Under the Seljuk, dhimmis were still segregated in their quarters, paid jizya and wore marked garments. They appointed their own religious officials subject to approval by the Muslim authorities. The Jews were largely occupied in trade and commerce. The Jewish traveler Benjamin of Tuleda reports large Jewish and Christian communities in many of the larger cities. He visited the area after the death of Sultan Sanjar (1157) and mentions Jewish communities in Hamadan, Isfahan, Nihavand, Shiraz, Nishapur and Baghdad.

On the whole there appears to have been little discrimination against the dhimmis other than the usual restrictions. In one incident, a prominent Jew, Abu Sad Samha, successfully made a claim against Abu Shuja, the Minister responsible for dhimmis. He claimed Abu Shuja had failed to protect the Jews and managed to get the Minister sacked. Samha worked for Malik Shah and was a friend of Nizam al-Mulk. At the same time, Malik Shah in a new decree made it obligatory for the dhimmis to wear distinguishing marks on their cloths. Such orders were issued from time to time which indicates that these restrictions were not permanently enforced. However, the Jewish clans who supported the Ismaili movement were gravely punished and massacres took place in the

Zagros and Luristan regions.

The Mongol dynasties were a lot more tolerant to the religious minorities. Under the Mongol leader, Hulagu (1258 AD), the concept of the dhimmi and the division between "believers" and "non believers" were abolished. Once again non-Muslims were employed in the government institutions. For the first time, a substantial Judeo-Persian literature emerges and jizya ceased to exist for a while. It was restored and quickly abolished by Ghazan and reintroduced by Oljeitu and this time for good.

The Mongol Emperor Arghun appointed Jewish physician Sa'd al-Daula of Abhar as his Prime Minister. The act alienated the Muslim population and created resentment. The Minister was executed in 1291 and the Jewish quarters were savagely ransacked in Tabriz and Baghdad. Rahid al-Din Fazhl Allah Hamadani was another famous physician and historian from Jewish background who served the Il-Khan Oljeitu. He is known as the greatest Minister of this dynasty and wrote the famous history of the Mongols from the beginning to the time of Ghazan Khan. He was also put to death in 1318.

His famous library of 60,000 books was ransacked and the suburban area in Tabriz, Rub-i Rashidi, built by him was looted. His severed head was taken to Tabriz and carried out about the town with cries of; "this is the head of the Jew who abused the name of God; may God's curse be upon him". In 1399, his remains were exhumed and reburied in a Jewish cemetery. Rashid al-Din is credited with a major administrative and tax reform while serving as a Minister and is known as the most important historian of his time.

The next major change comes with the Safavids in 16th century. Shiism is introduced as the state religion. A religious hierarchy is established with unlimited power and influence in every



sphere of life. The concept of "ritual pollution" (najes) of the non-Muslims is introduced. Suffering and persecution of all religious groups, particularly the Sunnis, becomes a norm (this period is one of the worst with respect to human rights in Iran).

Jewish chronicles are full of accounts of massacre, forced conversion into Islam and mistreatment. New institutions are created; Nasi became the head of the Jewish community assisted by the rabbi, Mullah (Jewish one), or dayyan. The nasi was responsible for the prompt payment of jizya to local authorities. All relations between Iranian Jews and others outside the country were completely severed. Christians and Zoroastrians were subjected to the same harsh treatments and Sunnis suffered most.

Segregation became a reality again for all minorities and Jewish ghettos were reinforced. The reports by European travelers and missionaries describe the tragic situation of the Jews and other religious minorities. Jews were forced to wear both a yellow badge and a headgear, and their oath were not accepted in courts of justice. A Jew who converted to Islam could claim to be the sole inheritor of the family property, to the exclusion of all Jewish relatives. If one Jew committed a crime or an illegal act, the whole community would be punished (other religious minorities were subjected to the same harsh treatments).

The Jewish community of Iran saw little change till 19th century. In one incident, the Jewish quarters were looted in Mashad. The anti-Jewish sentiment reached its peak when the whole Jewish community in the city was forced to convert into Islam in 1839 under Muhammad Shah Qajar. Europeans intervened for the first time and the decree was reversed. The first modern Jewish School, Alliance, was opened after a long and frustrating debate with heavy pressure from Europeans and the International Jewish Alliance in 1891 by an order from Nasser E' din Shah. Once opened, the students and the teachers would have to be escorted by the police to

stop the mob from attacking them (All modern schools specially girls' schools were subjected to the same attacks by religious Fatwas).

Jewish chronicles report Quajar period as one of the worst in their history.

The end of the 19th century is the beginning of fundamental changes in Iran and the start of the Constitutional Revolution. Jewish partisans along with other minorities participated in the movement. They were instrumental in forming the first multiethnic Secret Society of 1905, which began the debate on political change. Jews, Christians, Bahai and Zoroastrians fought hard with the constitutionalists to form a National Consultative Majlis instead of an Islamic Majlis as demanded by the religious hierarchy. Along with other religious minorities, they succeeded in their efforts to ratify laws that gave equality to Muslim and non-Muslim (male) citizens in 1907 and defined a new concept of nationality not based on religious origins (with the exception of Bahai who were not recognized).

According to the new constitution, Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians had the right to elect one delegate each to the Majlis, but they could not participate in elections of other delegates. The constitution also prohibited non-Shiite Muslims from becoming a member of the government. This was ignored by the Phahlavi regime and there were non-Muslim high government officials, even Bahai, by the 1970's.

Such gains did not put an end to discriminatory practices and attitudes. Jewish quarters were still attacked and looted in Mashad, Tabriz and Tehran at the beginning of this century by religious Fatwas. Though the constitution of 1907 put an end to the segregation of religious minorities and Jewish ghettos, it was at the time of Reza Shah that they were able to integrate in the larger Iranian society without fear from Fatwas.



Hacham Yedidya Shofet, shlita holding an award with Former Chief  
Sephardic Rabbi of Israel Ovadia Yosef, shlita

Reza Shah was the first Iranian Monarch after 1400 years that paid respect to the Jews by praying to the Torah and bowing in front of it, when visiting the Jewish community of Isfahan. An act that boasted the self-esteem of the Iranian Jews and made Reza Shah the second most respected Iranian leader after Cyrus the Great. Still when in the 1970's, they showed up to support the Iranian football team against Israel in the Asian games in Tehran, they were beaten up by the mob and the Iranian flags they were carrying were taken away.

In 1948, there was a high concentration of Jewish communities in Kurdistan. There were around 12,000 Jews scattered in approximately 15 Jewish settlements in Iranian Kurdistan. After the formation of the State of Israel, many Jews in the area left for Tehran, in transit to Israel. The move angered the Muslim authorities. In March 1950, 12 Jews were murdered in Kurdistan. As a result, more Jews moved to Tehran and demanded protection. The Iranian government guaranteed their safe passage. By March 1951, 8000 Iranian Jews had moved to Israel, the first major emigration in the 20th century. After the formation of Israel in 1949, all the Muslim countries in the region expelled their local Jewish population except Iran. By 1966, the number of Jews emigrating to Israel had reached 22,000.

Kanoun e Javanan Yahudi, formed in 1938, was the first Jewish Youth Organization in Iran. The first Iranian Jewish women's organization (Sazman Banovan Yahud i Iran) was established in 1947. Headed by Mrs. Shamsi Hekmat, the organization provided help to the needy and established branches in several towns. The first Jewish hospital opened in Tehran in 1958.

Since the conquest of Islam, Iranian Jews (and other religious minorities) have been instrumental in preserving Iranian music, especially in Safavid times when music was restricted. Also many ancient rituals and traditions long forgotten by the Iranian Muslims are still practiced by the Jews as part of their festivals and celebrations. Ilanout (tree festival) celebrated in February by Iranian Jews is identical to Shab e Cheleh and is a lot more elaborate, reminiscence of the pre-Islamic celebrations.

In Iranian folklore, Jews are portrayed as mean, misery and polluted (Najes). Children were warned not to go to Jewish quarters because they would be kidnapped and Jews would drink their blood. They are used as stereotypes to portray evil characters by the likes of Mulana Jalaledin, Rumi, Nezami, Sadi and many other literary

figures. They could not touch water sources and when rained stayed in doors, since rain touching them would pollute the soil. At the times of persecution their water sources would be cut off.

The Jewish quarter of Kirman had preserved many characteristics of these segregated ghettos till recently. The lanes were extremely narrow, rarely more than five feet wide. The compound walls on either side were 10 to 12 feet high, with jagged glass and stone set in the top to discourage entry. Massive oaken doors strengthened by metal studs guarded the entrances to the houses. One had to stoop to enter the low portals since the height should be lower than the Muslim homes. These details were also designed to prevent mounted horsemen from effectively attacking its residents. All facilities necessary were inside the quarter. The synagogues bore no external symbols, so they were difficult to locate. All transaction with Jews would be through special intermediaries not to pollute Muslim tradesmen.

The Islamic Revolution of 1979, made Sharia the legal code and therefore gender and religious discriminations are an integral part of the system. Bahai once again are not recognized at all. Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians each have one representative in the Parliament and are not legally forbidden from employment in the government sector. But since the authorities only employ Muslims and a 'Sharia test' is required, in reality these people are once again barred from working for the government.

Like Bahais, it was very difficult for them to leave Iran for a decade after the revolution and restrictions still apply. They are accepted into universities, but are not given access to post graduate studies, though no law prohibits them. Their monetary transactions are monitored closely to make sure no money is sent out. There were 85,000 Iranian Jews before 1979, almost half have emigrated mainly to the United States, the largest exodus since Darius' time when 30,000 left joyfully to rebuild their temple. Their departure this time

has not been a happy one!

## Synagogues

There are about 100 synagogues in Iran of which about 26 are in Tehran. Iranian synagogues have a variety of architectural styles related to the history and time of construction. There are several synagogues in Tehran, Yazd and Isfahan cities which, because of their antiquity and beauty of architecture, have been earmarked as national historic sites by the Cultural Heritage Organization of the country and have come under its protection. Apart from some of the synagogues in the south of Tehran and some other cities in which their Jewish residents have migrated, most of the synagogues in different parts of the country are up and active. On every Friday evening (Sabbath) in two of the great synagogues of Tehran and one great synagogue in Shiraz, about 500 people are gathering and holding congregations.

## Jewish sites of Iran

Almost every city of Iran has a Jewish shrine, or historical site. Prominent among these are Tomb of Esther and Mordechai in Hamadan, tomb of Daniel in Susa, tomb of Hanakkuk in Tuyserkan and the *Peighambariyeh* mausoleum in Qazvin.

There is a pilgrimage site near Isfahan (Pir Bakran) dedicated to Serah.

There are also tombs of several outstanding Jewish scholars in Iran such as Harav Ohr Shraga in Yazd and Hakham Mullah Moshe Halevi (Moshe-Ha-Lavi) in Kashan, which are also visited by Muslim pilgrims.

The shrine of Habakkuk in Toyserkan.



The Tomb of Esther and Mordechai in Hamadan.



The Shrine of Daniel in Susa.



*Peighambariyeh* ("the place of the prophets"), Qazvin: Here, four Jewish prophets are said to be buried. Their Arabic names are: *Salam*, *Solum*, *al-Qiya*, and *Sohuli*.

