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In His Own Words

Paris, 2000

As an introduction to this article I just want to say that I am honored by the request of *Persian Heritage* for the opportunity of expressing myself in its pages, not as a former politician but as the writer and translator Shojaeddin Shafa, who introduced some of the Literature Western World Masters to my fellow countrymen. I often hear that my translations of these masters' works into Persian bring the same excitement to the readers as felt when they read Hafez and Sa'adi. I am not sure that you will find my life all that interesting, and I am not sure that after living so many miserable years away from my country that I can recall all of my past memories. My feelings about the past are well described in a poem by the great Hafez of Shiraz :
“With the poisons that are coming towards the garden, how can one expect the perfume and the color of the flower to

remain ?” In spite of this, and because of the kindness shown by so many people, I’ll try to pick from them those that have retained their sweetness.

And so I begin.....

My journey through life, like for so many of us, has not been devoid of turmoil and is often without a define direction. Yet, whatever direction I take my culture is always part of that journey. For me, culture is my foundation. There are three chapters in my life: 1) literature, 2) politics, 3) my struggle for “Enlightenment”. I present it in this way to give sense to my existence. I often compare my life to Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, a book I have translated. It unfolds like Dante’s, but unlike it, the book of my life is in the opposite direction. Mine begins in

“paradise”, proceeds to “purgatory”, and is now ending in “ inferno”.

As for the first chapter, literature. My generation lived in one of the most exceptional periods in Iran’s History and of the World too. To be straightfull, a curve? beginning at zero (medieval times) would peak in the height in the 20th century and then go back to zero (medieval state) with the last twenty years of the 20th century. It would be hard to find another Iranian generation that has experienced such peaks and valleys (?) in such a short time. For this reason, I can understand when the youngest are unaffected by our past turmoil and its impact on my generation. I trust this is a

universal feeling experienced by all of us at the dawn of their existence.

My life began in a city which is the capital of the Shi'ism. My father was a physician. He grew up in Kashan where his family had rooted since many generations. When moving to Tehran because of a medical emergency he was forced to stay in Qum for a few days. This brief stop turned into years, one in which I was born. Most of the memories of my childhood in Qum are blurred, but one scene still haunts me. It is of a long line of mourners carrying a dead person to a large cemetery in Qum, scenery which was repeated dozens of times per day.

My interest for literature comes from both my parents. My father, in addition to being a medical

doctor, was a respected poet. He in fact had a book of poems, which unfortunately got lost during the revolution. My mother, however, had the greater influence of the two in my literary awakening. She was one of the few educated women of that time and was familiar with the French language. Mother was not happy living in Qum. She felt that the religious fanaticism of Qum stifled her life. Often she would hope that an earthquake would destroy the city of “death and mourning” and force her to leave it. My father had to attend to Khomeini, then young clergyman when he came down with a serious case of typhoid.

I began my education in Tehran and continued there through high school. It was an exciting period watching the “New” Iran rising up. From the end of

the Qajar period, with great difficulty, Iran was in constant motion, moving towards the advanced cultures of the western world. The constitutional revolution (date ?) was the unsuccessful? beginning of that movement towards western civilization which was not only visual but also affected everyone's life socially, economically, intellectually.

After four centuries, the established traditional society of the Safavid period, made in a way that it would benefit to the religious shi'ism sect, was being reshaped by a new "intellectual" way of thinking coming from the developing West. This new wave was in conflict with the traditional school of thought of the mullahs.

At the same time, a greater external conflict at an international level was occurring. In one hand, there was the fever of national extremism, in the form of fascism and national-socialism and their subgroups of falangism and militarism. On the other hand was communism that, **with its different forms, was aligning itself with the great democracies, mostly colonialists.** These opposite directions were quickly pulling the world towards a fatal clash that resulted in the death of more than forty ? million people. This period ended colonialism, inaugurated the atomic age and brought the demise of idealism.

With the aftermath of this “world nationalistic fever” there was an increased interest of the young generations for the Ancient History of Iran, the pre-

Islamic past which had been neglected in their education until then. In fact before the publication of *Ancient Iran* by Hassan Pirnia (date ?), taken from Greek and Latin sources, there was not a real knowledge of our pre-Islamic history.

The discovery of this ancient history was emphasized by the mythical stories of the *Shahnameh* (Book of Kings, by Ferdowsi) and historical documents and translations of **inscriptions ?** found on stones dating back to the pre-islamic period. With the rebirth of their pride, lost since the Safavid dynasty, the youth secured about its roots was **no longer afraid to go out and obtain further information from and about the western cultures and civilizations.** Until then all geographical and cultural ties had been

disconnected with the West because of the animosity that existed between the Shiite and Sunnite worlds. This disconnection was keeping Iran in the same medieval like conditions that existed during the Safavid period.

Events such as the International 1935 Millennium Congress of Ferdowsi personally headed by Reza Shah ; the choice of changing the name of Persia into Iran ; the increase of studies and publications on Ancient Iran ; the removal of many Arabic words from the Persian language ; the new interest for the Parsee Community of India ; the growing influence of Ancient Persian architecture ; the change of Arabic and European organizations and government positions to Persian words, the foundation of the Iranian National Academy, etc...

were further results of this intellectual movement.

The country was opening itself to the World, parting from a society turned on itself and its religion. Therefore there was a thirst to learn more about that unknown world.

Before going on with my view on this “new intellectual age”, I would like to interject an event that beautifully reflects what was occurring. It is an event that seriously impacted the social revolution of Iranian society in the years prior to World War II. January 6, 1936 marked graduation day for the Tehran high school top students. At a ceremony held in their honor, medals and awards would be given to the students. On this particular day, Reza Shah, along with his wife and daughters, was to present the awards. His wife and daughters didn't

wear a veil (chador) and it was on that day that he announced that hejab (head covering) would be forbidden.

I was the valedictorian and the youngest student to receive **my medals for achievement**. This was the first time I met the founder of the “New” Iran, face to face. **His stature was tall and erect** and his eyes penetrated your soul. The Minister of Culture and Education, Mr. Ali Asghar Hekmat, introduced me to him and I was awed. He placed his hands on my shoulders in a fatherly way and said to me, “do not forget you must always be a good servant to your country”. To this day I ask myself if I **lived up?** to this expectation.

Of course, results **?** of this new movement began to evolve **with the Constitutional Revolution**. One of

the most important was in literature with a new flood of Persian translations of the great western literary masters. Prior to these events Iran was void of such works. This is ironic considering the fact that Iran is the birthplace to some of the greatest poets and writers in the literary history of the world. The translations that existed were the commercial and more saleable ones such as *The Comte de Monte-Cristo*, *Les Mystères de Paris*, and a number of works by Michel Zevaco. In fact I learned much about French history by reading Zevaco ! I was, however, urged by one of my Parisian hosts, while studying in Paris, to pick up a more credible source of French history than Zevaco!

This influx of knowledge despite the many changes in the political climate in Iran never stopped **and continues to endure**. If one had taken the time to count the translations of the important Western writers, they would not have amounted to more than one hundred. It was not until the first two decades of the century that their number increased, and over the last half of the 20th century, reached more than ten thousands.

With certainty I can say, with this movement our getting re-acquainted with the world was reshaping the prophecy ? of Persian and literary culture. It is one of the fundamental causes of the failure of the past twenty year revolution and the reason why all the efforts to bring us back to the Safavid period have been unsuccessful.

Among my memories is the small role I played at that time. I mention it not to pat myself on the back, but rather to show the attachment that remains with me and my countrymen living in and out of Iran, some I have never met. Over the years I continue to receive letters from my countrymen all over the world. Most of them tell me that their initial acquaintance with me was their reading of my first translations of Pierre Louÿs' *Songs of Bilitis*, Lamartine's *Poetical Meditations*, and *A Selection of the Masterpieces of the World's Poems*. Although, Dante's *Divine Comedy* is considered as my most important translation. Recently I received a letter from someone unknown to me. He praised my translation of *Bilitis*, stating that it had been a continuous source

of inspiration for him since his teenage. Enclosed with his letter was his latest book. He asked if I would review it. Of course I was honored. I, however, could not write a review because in doing so I was not sure what consequences it would have for him. So I do hope he reads this article and understands my reasons for declining his request. I extend to him through this article, my best wishes.

The first book I published was *Méditations Poétiques*, a selection of two important works by Alphonse de Lamartine, the great 19th century French romantic poet, which contains *Harmonies Poétiques, Méditations Poétiques et Le Lac*, considered to be one of the most beautiful pieces in French poetry. It was published when I was seventeen. Like most others at that age I was full of

love and romance. As far as I know this was the first recognized poetic translation into Persian of European masterpiece poems. May be this was why the book was successful. In less than one month the publisher had to reprint it. At seventeen this was an unexpected success and it did not come again for me until *Tavalodidigar* (A Rebirth), one of my recent pieces. My *Poétiques Méditations* had become an important school book in Persian composition, before the 1979 religious taking over. Over the years, it has been reprinted thirty times. Some students would use it for their love letters too. I bring this up because of a situation that occurred one year during exams. It is **alleged** that nineteen out of twenty-one students wrote the same composition. The examiner thought that they had

cheated and disqualified all but two, whose compositions were not very good, but original.

My translation of *Méditations Poétiques* was developed in curious circumstances. I am not aware of any other book created in such an unusual manner. It occurred during my university education. As I stated earlier, scholastically I was at the top of my class throughout high-school. This dramatically changed when I entered the university. I failed my first year. It was because I had chosen medicine, a subject in which I had no interest. In respect to my family tradition, being the oldest male of the Shafa family, I was designated to go to medical school. By the way, “Shafa” in Persian means healing ! So important was this tradition that my father would sign my correspondence when I

was a child as Dr. Shojaeddin Shafa. From the first day of medical school I knew I was not cut out to continue the tradition and had an internal struggle with myself. Knowing that my father would be crushed if I left medical school, I decided to stick it out. The following year brought additional troubles. I had to take anatomy course and despised the very thought of it. During this class I would quietly sneak out to the campus gardens to read a new book from the French bookstore. This book was to be my first translation, *Méditations Poétiques*, most of which was done in the campus garden while skipping my anatomy class. When this book was published friends and relatives were constantly calling my father and praising my talent. So my father gave me permission to leave medical school.

He accepted his son's decision to break a long family tradition. Soon I left for Europe to continue the studies I loved: literature. To this day I am often ashamed that I let him down, but in weighing in the balance my father's happiness and the terrible care my patients would have received in my hands, I believe I made the right choice.

The years prior to and following World War II were defining years for Iran, but in a negative way. Iran was just coming out of a medieval like period, one that was full of political, social and economic turbulences. The fact that we escaped from it and that we resist nowadays is a miracle. One of my recent pieces, *Crimes and Punishments*, discusses the revolution of 1979 and evaluates the turbulence of 1941-1947. I wrote it for our younger generation

who is not aware of those times. Now let us return to my life and my memories.

At that time there was an American, Russian and British presence in Iran. It was only because of the wisdom of the Prime Minister of Iran, Mr. Foroughi, that **Iran was not considered to be one of their allies**. There were some citizens who felt there was a need to remain independent from these “allies”. I, with a few others, formed the political organization known as “The Patriots”, which also published newsletters. The purpose was to protect Iranian nation, culture and historical values. This had to be accomplished by circumventing the **derogatory** statements coming from these powers and the resurgence of the mullahs in our already weakened social structure. The organization had no

political experience, no connections to foreign powers or internal agents. Maybe this independency (non political connexions) is what gave it credibility. We will never be able to state with certainty the efficiency of this organization. I do know, however, that during that time when many foreign languages were being spoken in Iran, that *The Patriot* helped make the Iranian voice audible and helped prevent those “strange voices” from swallowing Iran. At this point I think proper to give credit to Mr. Jalali. At the time we decided to print the newsletter of *The Patriot*, the law stated that you must be thirty to obtain a publication permit. Neither of us was of age and so Mr. Jalali, a non member, obtained it for us. I founded this organization by selling the only

inheritance in my life. Later, our organization merged with a new Party called *The Iran Party* which was the original Party of *The National Front* of Dr. Mossadegh. When the war ended so did this part of my life and I returned once more to my life in literature.

Though my first book was published before the war, most of my literary activity was in the ten years that followed, 1945-1955. It was during that period I translated, wrote and published more than fifty books. In the years prior to the Revolution these writings and also my pre-war books were reprinted in a twenty-four volume collection of more than 12,000 pages. I do not know if those purchased still exist inside the country –I hope so. Why, because this twelve thousand page collection

is the largest collection of world literature published in Persian language. A selection of masterpieces of more than two hundred of the great western masters, from the Ancient Greeks and Romans. A collection which introduced those works to the Persian speaking world, for the first time.

One of the volumes of the collection *A Selection of Poetic Masterpieces of the World* contains the biographies and translations of more than one hundred poets from thirty-five countries. There are also independent volumes for specific countries: *Greek Songs*, *China Songs*, *American Poems*. Additionally, some volumes are dedicated collections of poems from such wonderful authors as Byron, Hugo, Heine, Nietzsche, Musset.....

There are also two other groups of these translations that must be specifically mentioned. The first one, *Iran in World Literature* contains selected prose and poems chosen from hundreds of poets, both in their original and translated form. The first volume of this collection is called *Iran in French Literature* with twenty-eight poets and twelve writers. It was rewarded by the *Académie Française* and so forth I received the “*Palmes Académiques*” and “*Arts et Lettres*”. Because publication of consecutive volumes required an enormous amount of time, in the interim I completed an independent project, *Persian Songs*, with some of the most interesting poems about Iran by the world poetry masters from more than twenty countries. Unfortunately because of my new

administrative duties, I was not able to complete as much of this literary work as I would have liked. I hope to do it someday, since I have spent so much time in collecting the pieces for it and have closely scrutinized these poems and prose.

The second group worth mentioning is the translation of: Dante's *Divine Comedy*, *The Paradise Lost* of Milton and *West-Eastern Diwan* of Goethe. These pieces were chosen because they are pieces that should not be missed. The translation of the *Divine Comedy*, the most important of Italian works and possibly of all Europe is one of my most memorable translations. I spent two years on this project and put all of my efforts into it. For the translation I gathered eight different Italian editions of the book.

Additionally, I gathered five translations from the French and English, including the famous translation by Longfellow. During the work I constantly compared the translations I had gathered. I did not want to leave any question marks in my translation of this very difficult piece that is filled with so much philosophy. My obsession over this translation came from my desire to create a classic translation. I cannot even tell the amount of sleepless nights I spent in an effort to complete this work. I still remember the concerns my mother had for my health over the long hours I kept awakened. In an effort to appease her, I would shut off the light in my room and continue writing without its assistance.

The most important parts of the *Divine Comedy* were the introductions to the three different volumes of the book, *Paradise*, *Purgatory* and *Inferno*. All together these introductions to the three different volumes amount two hundred pages. One of the introductions included the comparison between the mystic vision of Dante and Hafez's, two shining stars of eastern and western literature. They lived in the same period but never met. I also evaluated the similarities between Dante's journey to the other world with what was written –in Pahlavi language- in *Arda-Viraf Nameh*. Arda-Viraf was a Zoroastrian priest who also visited the other world. The similarities are so close in totality and detail that it is hard to believe it was a coincidence. There is no evidence that Dante knew

about the religious Zoroastrian book in Iran. My introduction has been praised by the Dante Society in Italy. The Institute of Eastern Studies at the University of Napoli, one of the oldest schools for Middle Eastern studies, held a number of seminars and conferences on the subject of my introduction. I was also invited to the University of Rome, where I received an award and an honorary doctorate and the International Annual Florence Award in 1971, which is given to non-Italian writers. The most valuable of gifts and awards given to me, however, remains a copy of the first Italian edition of this book printed in Venice in 1515. It was offered to me by Giovanni Gronchi, the Italian President, on his trip to Iran. Fortunately, this precious book remains in my library. I lovingly caress it.

By the time I left Iran, in December 1978, *Divine Comedy* had been reprinted twice. After the Revolution, without my permission, the book had multiple reprints. I saw a copy of the seventh reprint at a friend's house in Madrid, Spain, that he had purchased in Germany.

Another important piece of western literature that I translated was *The West-Eastern Diwan* by Goethe, the best world tribute paid to a great Persian poet by a Western poet. Goethe, in this book, clearly exhibits his deep admiration for Hafez. It is a must read for every Iranian, regardless of educational and cultural background. It will teach them the high level of sophistication found in their culture. This is especially important when outsiders seek to destroy our national pride.

After reading this book, you will become
?exhilarated about the Persian culture.

I would like to end this section of my memories by writing about *Bilitis Songs*. This book is a collection of very beautiful and tender uncensored poems by the French writer Pierre Louÿs who presented them as translated from the great poetess, Bilitis. It is considered one of the 19th century most famous French literary pieces and the first of its kind that had been translated into Persian. I believe this translation settled into the hearts of Iranians and stimulated the great Iranian poets such as Moshiri and Forough Farrokhzad to take these songs and convert them into Persian poems. This could become as beautiful a collection as the original.

In concluding this section, I feel compelled[?] to talk about that poetess, frequently called the Iranian Bilitis and her relationship to *Bilitis Songs*. When my “Bilitis” was published, a young woman approached me explaining that she had a book of poetry she wished to be published. She further explained that because she was unknown and her poems were **uncensored(?)** , the publishers, though interested in publishing them, had put a condition on its publication : that the book be introduced by a well-known writer who would defend the originality of the work. She then stated that because her poems were in line with Bilitis’ she would like me to write the introduction.

After reading her poetry I was convinced that another Iranian poetic genius was born. She was

much greater than she perceived herself. I expressed my feeling in the introduction I wrote for Forough Farrokhzad's first book, *The Captive*, and I also mentioned that I believed in a short period of time she would be much more famous than the author of the introduction. A number of books followed. Her entire collection is one of the most famous and adored pieces by Iranians. It is also admired by many throughout the world who have recognized her as one of the prominent Iranian poets. So, my predictions were far less than what actually became a reality for Forough Farrokhzad.

The years following the end of World War II were years of crisis for Iran. There was internal anarchism and many attempts were made to separate important parts of the country and create autonomous governments :

Azarbaijan, Kurdestan, Gilan and Mazanderan. It was a time of uncertainty and terror. In this wave of terror, many political, cultural and journalistic persons were assassinated, among them : Hajir, the Court Minister ; Razmara, the Prime Minister ; Zanganeh, the Dean of Law School ; Ahmad Kasravi, the well known scholar and historian ; Ahmad Dehghan and Mohammad Massoud, journalists. Many of these assassinations were committed by a new group of terrorists called Fadayan-e-Islam (Islam kamikazes). Later we found out that the Tudeh (Communist) Party and other leftists groups, mainly financed by British Intelligence Service and British Petroleum Company were also involved in these assassinations. They had an essential part in creating these events and turbulence in the political situation of Iran. It was during those times that Dr. Mohammad

Mossadegh founded the National Movement with the slogan of “Fight for Nationalization of Iranian Oil Industry” in order to obtain the unclaimed Iranian rights for the extraction of the oil fields. He started a national movement comparable only with the Constitutional Revolution and the movement for saving Azarbaijan. It was completely in accordance with the constitutional law of the country, and Mossadegh always supported and defended that law. If there was any difference of opinion between him and the Shah of Iran, it was in the style of the fight for obtaining the Iranian rights from the British Petroleum, not in the importance or necessity of the fight. And there were people on both sides that, because of personal interests, were trying to disrupt the process. This, however, had nothing to do with the main leaders.

It was in May 1951 that in the heat of this political crisis the Shah took an unexpected decision and assigned Dr. Mossadegh as Prime Minister. From that time on the Iranian government went in a new direction, the so-called “revolutionary” direction. One of its main goals was to relay news to the radio, internal and international, as well as the world public opinion. One of the governmental organizations that were given special importance was the News and Information Agency. Up until that time, Radio Tehran, the only radio station in Iran, was in charge of news casting. This agency’s role was very sensitive since it was in opposition to the British Petroleum and the British Government’s News Agency. I had been in Germany, where I had participated in the ceremonies of the 200th Goethe’s birthday, and in Paris where our great writer, Sadegh Hedayat, had committed suicide. A few

days after my return to Tehran I was called by the Prime Minister's office. It was to be the first time I met Dr. Mossadegh. At our meeting, he informed me that he had chosen me to run the News and Information Agency. He made it clear that in these sensitive moments I had to be greatly aware of my responsibilities. Later I found out that this choice was because of a recommendation by Dr. Karim Sanjabi, a very close ally of Dr. Mossadegh. He had worked with me in our patriot group. Dr. Hossein Fatemi, one of my classmates in Paris probably also impacted my appointment as well as Dr. Mossadegh's knowledge of the *Mihan Parastan Journal* that our group was publishing. My work with the Pars News Agency could also have played a part in my appointment.

The Radio and Broadcasting Agency (Information Agency) was smaller than it would be decades later as

the Ministry of Information. Our working space was limited to one room. The gathering and sending out of information were all done with a Xerox machine. The office was staffed 24 hours a day. I myself put in some very long nights.

One of those nights, at the height of the fighting between Iran and England for oil, which ended with Iran closing and locking the oil refineries of Abadan, we received by midnight information from a foreign news agency : the British government submitted to the UN Security Council a complain form against Iran in connexion with one sided decision to close the refinery. This was the most important news of the day. In spite of the late hour, I immediately gave the news to Dr. Mossadegh. This speedy action, I later found, left a good impression on him. The next morning the foreign

ministry and all the Iranian embassies overseas wired that news to the Prime Minister's office. They were replied that he had already been informed.

During Dr. Mossadegh's long trip to New York to attend the UN Security Council, I was part of his group. My position was Public Relations (?). One of our apprehensions was Dr. Mossadegh's fainting spells. In Tehran, when he was in a very heated argument, he fainted because of anger and anxiety. These fainting events were broadcasted to the West in big headlines. During this meeting, however, he showed that he was strong and decisive. He was not going to give any excuses on such an occasion to be the center of the news because of a fainting spell. He would be remembered for his statements.

The most interesting thing I recall from that trip is the day the special session of the Security Council was called to review the dispute between Iran and England. It was broadcasted in live. Dr. Mossadegh was personally responding

to the complains of the British delegate. The Prime Minister of Iran was speaking in French. Because of Dr. Mossadegh's history of "fainting" this was a very important moment for the American media. Millions of listeners and viewers were hoping to witness the Prime Minister pass out during his arguments. For this reason, the cameras remained on the Prime Minister of Iran the entire time. As I stated, he did not faint. This, I am sure, was disappointing to the media. Not having the fainting spell to focus on, they turned their focus to me. After the session, hundreds of reporters and cameramen attacked me and complained that the Iranian delegates had fooled them. Mossadegh was supposed to faint and he hadn't and now they were discredited in front of millions of TV viewers. The Iranian delegation –except me – quietly left the UN. I was later rescued by the police and security guard.

During that journey and through my conversations with prominent members of the Iranian delegation, I found out the strategy of the Iranians. It was based on the following : Iranian

oil was so crucial and vital to the British and the western industrial world, that if the oil production in Iran had stopped, their countries would have been confronted with a disaster. To avoid this mess, they believed the British would give in. Actually the British once more showed their satiric???? They by-passed Iran and found another source of oil in Kuwait, thereby **choking** Iran. So the prediction of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi in his description of the “Petroleum empire” as criminal, ruthless and cruel was confirmed. What followed was that the Shah, like Mossadegh, became victims of this cruel empire.

The economic difficulties caused by the Iranian oil embargo gradually forced Dr. Mossadegh to confront internal struggles led by Ayatollah Abol-Ghassem Kashani. These struggles had cracked his National Front unity. Like most religious leaders of Iran since the Safavids, he had a very combative and **argumentative** personality. During this time, many opportunist members of the National Front left Mossadegh and joined

Kashani. Very soon, Kashani became the leader of Parliament. Of course, many of Kashani's supporters used the religious position as a tool for power. His eldest son was a member of Parliament, and one night, because of alcohol abuse, he died.

The internal struggle that existed between the two groups (Mossadegh's and Kashani's) eventually caused separation between the Royal Court and the Government, separation instrumented in some way by Dr. Hossein Fatemi, the foreign minister. Later, Sadeq Qotbzadeh, former foreign minister of the Islamic Republic, tried to mimic Dr. Fatemi. I make this point to show and explain the reasons for my leaving the Mossadegh government despite its position on the nationalization of the oil petroleum.

Dr. Fatemi was the publisher of a newspaper called *Bakhtar-e Emrouz*. Some of the editorials he wrote for the paper were broadcasted on the radio at the end of the news. The contents of his editorials were becoming harsher, and not in alignment

with what one would expect from a government official. One of the editorials openly criticized the Shah and the monarchy. At that time, I was in charge of the Broadcasting Agency and could not agree with such editorial. The broadcast reached over a million Iranians. Most of those leaving outside Iran were unaware of the details of the political works going on in Tehran. It would have caused unnecessary anxiety within the country for the listeners were expecting national unity. I further believed that in a monarchy, government should not openly criticize the monarch. So, on that particular night, I refused to broadcast Dr. Fatemi's editorial. He called me and complained. I tried to reason with him by explaining that if he were simply the publisher of a newspaper, without a governmental attachment, then he could be free to write and say what he liked. But it was not the case. Therefore, he could not be afforded the same freedoms. Immediately, I knew that my words would not have any impact on his position.

The very next day I was called to the Prime Minister's office, which was located in his private home. He criticized me for a number of things, one of which was the way the governmental papers had been given to the newspapers. I calmly responded to each of the issues he raised. None of my explanations satisfied his discontentment with me. Finally, I respectfully gave him my opinion as to the real reason for his discontent. I then suggested that I resign from my position rather than have him fire me. His silence was an answer. I left his office and submitted my resignation to his chief of staff. The next day's broadcast had no mention of my resignation. The only thing said on the entire situation was that my former assistant had been given my position. In spite of these events, I remain thankful to Dr. Mossadegh. People may be surprised at this statement. He could have had me arrested, but for whatever reason he chose not to. My closest friends considered my resignation as political suicide. Perhaps they were right. In any case, my forced retirement from politics

provided me with the opportunity to get back to my literary life of writing and publishing. During that period as I mentioned it previously, I translated the entire book of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. This took me almost two years and remains one of my political seclusion's souvenirs.

The length of my services with the Imperial Court –twenty years- was as unexpected as my appointment to the position as head of the Radio Information Agency. One day during my political seclusion, a friend told me that General Hassan Pakravan had asked to see me. General Pakravan was the head of the Second Bureau of the Joint Staff Army. Until that day I had never met him. I did, however, knew his mother, Mrs. Amineh Pakravan, the great and famous writer. She wrote many books in French about the Qajar period and contemporary Iran. She was also the recipient of the French

literary Prize “Femina”. I knew her for many years and have the highest respect for this Lady.

My visit with the General raised numerous questions. I found him extremely brilliant, which was far more important than his professional position. He had many of his mother’s attributes. On a side note, General Pakravan later became Minister of Information, Ambassador to France. He was the head of the security (SAVAK) during the turmoil of June 4, 1963, which ended in the arrest of Ayatollah Khomeini and his condemnation to death by the Military Court. It was General Pakravan who interfered and sent Khomeini into exile to Turkey and Iraq rather than being executed. Interestingly enough, when General Pakravan voluntarily returned to Iran after the 1979 Revolution, it was Khomeini who ordered his execution.

During my meeting with the General, he persistently questioned my reasons for resigning as the head of the

Information and Radio Agency. I could not figure out why he asked this question since I was sure he had all the details surrounding my resignation from his own sources. I responded to his question by asking him to reveal his source for what I believed to be a private meeting between the Prime Minister and me. He simply smiled and said : “Don’t think that Dr. Mossadegh is the only one who has informers and spies”. The questioning ended in confirming whatever he knew. I would like to make one thing clear : I could have used my termination with Dr. Mossadegh. I could have used it to get close to the Imperial Court. I never had the desire to do so.

Another unexpected meeting for me was to meet with the late Hossein Ala. Mr. Ala was Prime Minister for a short time. While holding that position he escaped an assassination attempt by Fadayan-e-Islam only because of his short height. After this, Mr. Ala became Minister of the Imperial Court.

When I met him I was unaware that I would be working with this man for many years ahead. He informed me of the King's interest in reviving the traditional role of the Imperial Court in the promotion of Arts and Culture. Mr. Ala had talked to the Shah about my long involvement with cultural activities and suggested that I be put in charge of this project. The Shah agreed. I am convinced that I had received this position because of my earlier conversation with General Pakravan.

Of course, I was happy to accept this offer. Out of all the possible governmental positions I could have been offered this one was by far the best. Never once did I complain about this position during the following twenty-years. In fact I desperately avoided being promoted to other ministerial positions I was offered. One of the greatest personal fortunes that came out of this position was that I worked with Mr. Ala. From the minute I met him he was a perfect gentleman, honest and a true patriot. A former foreign diplomat gave Mr. Ala the

title of “the last gentleman of the traditional political system of Iran”. I could not agree more.

Mr. Ala, probably more than any other politics in Iran, spent most of his life out of Iran, as a student and on high political assignments. His career was quite admirable. During his ambassadorship to France, he established “The Iranian Studies Institute” in Paris. Later with its valuable publication, this Institute became a very important European Center for Iranian Studies. He also surrounded himself with many wonderful and brilliant friends including André Godard, the founder of the Ancient Iran Museum and Professor Arthur Pope. Mr. Ala was a master in English and French languages. A former British Ambassador and writer told me that he used to bring his writings to Mr. Ala for editing.

I was given extensive powers during my position as the Cultural Attaché of the Imperial Court and later as Deputy Minister for Cultural Affairs. It allowed me to work

extensively in the promotion of Iranian Culture domestically and abroad. With regard to Iranian studies, I would like to take this opportunity to mention that the success of my accomplishments was only made possible because I had the one hundred percent backing from the Shah. His confidence in me, on occasion hindered attempts by some persons to disengage me from the position I held. Let me say that attempts to oust someone from a position are quite commonly found in most of the power centers of the world. **The trust and confidence I had achieved? with the Shah** was something that was built through the years. I believe he also respected me for never interfering with the work of other officials in the Imperial Court. It was a characteristic quality(?) that the Shah appreciated. Having said this, his confidence also gave me enough power to sometimes be able to prevent mistakes that could have had unfavorable results, especially concerning our important cultural relations with our neighbor, the Soviet Union.

During that period Iran, in the domain of its foreign policy, was trying in one way to get close to the western world. In the other direction Iran wanted to maintain a good relationship with the Soviet Union, even though the government of Iran was against the Soviets' **policy**?. All the national security organizations of Iran were looking suspiciously at our northern neighbor. Compounding the delicacy of this matter was the fact that the Soviets had one of the most important world center for Persian manuscripts, a large collection of Iranian artwork and one of the most active centers for Iranian studies, especially in the field of ancient Iranian languages. Extensive research on this subject was done at the USSR Academy of Science and in other related Soviet Republics. The logic behind their interest in Iranian Culture stemmed from the fact that eight of those sixteen republics (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kirghizstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan), had been in the past either part of Iran or under its complete cultural influence. The modern Persian language and

literature during the Samanid Dynasty was **formed?** in the present Central Asia, in cities like Bukhara and Samarkand.

Most Iranians are unaware of the Iranian tribe called Alan. To these days, ancestors of this ancient tribe live in Ossetia in the eastern part of Georgia. They call their homeland Iran and the language Irani, and are proud that their homeland is the birthplace of Mitra. Their history, during the collapse of the Roman Empire, is fascinating. Alan had left their homes and attacked Europe. Their triumphant fight with the Roman legions was the first historical defeat of the latest. It happened by the Rhine river. They continued into France and through Pyrenees mountains where they founded an Alanic government in Spain.

The presence of such extensive Iranian studies in the Soviet Union established a very close cultural relationship between the Cultural Center of the Imperial Court and the USSR Academy of Sciences, and the Iranian Studies Department of

the Soviet Union Universities. This lasted until the end of Shah's regime and was the reason that I and other Iranians, educators and writers, made multiple trips to the Soviet Union. While on these trips I had some encounters with the security agents, and the Shah personally would intervene. The followings are examples of his intervention. The Russia and Azerbaijan academies of Sciences, jointly published a well researched *Shahnameh* by Ferdowsi, in collaboration with Iranian scholars like Noushin (the well known Iranian theater director and a member of the communist group of Dr. Taghi Erani, who escaped to the Soviet Union and lived there the rest of his life). To achieve this masterpiece they made a comparison between many old handwritten manuscripts of the *Shahnameh* that existed in different libraries of the Soviet Union. The Iran-Soviet Union Cultural Society in Tehran (VOKS) decided simultaneously to translate and publish a very important Soviet Union literary work, the famous *Quiet Don* by Mikhail Sokolov ?????? In order to do the translation

they needed to get permission from the Ministry of Culture and Arts. Permission was granted. This decision was then transmitted to the Soviet Union's cultural societies. Despite the permission, when the book was published, pretesting that the book was a communist work, the SAVAK stopped its distribution. All explanations fell on deaf ears. Also unsuccessful in convincing the SAVAK that they were wrong to stop the distribution, were several government officials. The SAVAK said they would only comply with the Shah's direct order.

The Head of the Iran-Soviet Union Cultural Society in Tehran was General Aminollah Jahanbani, a very experienced military and political personality. General Jahanbani had received his military training in Russia, at the Military University of St-Petersbourg. On October 25, 1917, he witnessed the beginnings of the Bolchevik Revolution and Lenin's occupation of the Royal Palaces. During my meeting with him he related his dissatisfaction with the SAVAK in the

distribution of this book. He further added that he was sure this event was going to make the Soviet government very unhappy. I was then informed that he would resign from his position at the VOKS unless I, as a last effort, would inform the Shah about the turn of the events. I was immediately granted a meeting. He remained completely silent as I explained exposed ??????? the situation. When I finished he directed me to tell the head of the Savak that he, the King, had personally read the book and loved it. The Shah then turned to me and said : “let us even suppose this is a communist literary work, is it possible that after having done so much with the *White Revolution* and received so much national support for our agricultural, labor and governmental plans, we should be worried that the publication of such a book could neutralize all those great efforts ? If our peoples, after reading that book, want to become communist, then let them to do so. Otherwise let’s think more reasonably”. That very same day the book was

distributed and the cultural society avoided regrettable repercussions.

Another example of the Shah's intervention happened during the 2,500th year Celebration of the Persian Empire. The Soviets had sent a television crew to cover all the celebrations. They wanted to make a documentary that would show and compare the ancient history of Iran to the present's. It was to be shown on Soviet television. The team finished filming. On the day they were supposed to leave they asked for permission to take an aerial view of Tehran from a helicopter to use as an end to the piece. The Iranian Airforce denied permission. They feared that the Soviets would use this opportunity to take pictures of our military bases. The reason sounded plausible. The KGB, however, was aware that other countries had been given permission to do the same thing. The Soviet Ambassador therefore, called and complained to me. He made me understand that it could negatively affect what he considered to be good relations between Iran and the Soviet

Union. Early the next morning I had a meeting with the Shah. I explained the situation. The Shah directed me to tell his special officers to allow the authorities to take the pictures requested. I was to further inform them that sensitive aerial pictures are taken constantly by Americans and Soviets from their spy satellites and that he was sure those pictures included shots of Iranian military bases as well as the military bases of other countries. He believed that this team of photographers was not going to discover anything new with helicopter pictures.

Another situation concerns a personal friend of mine. He is a scholar and was an important member of the communist party, Tudeh. Like others in that party he escaped to Soviet Union. After a number of years there he became disappointed by the politics. While attending a Middle East Study Congress in Western Europe, he requested a visa from the Iranian Embassy to return to Iran. He was fully aware of the fact that his return to Iran could mean his life. When he did return we met a few

times. This man was dedicated to the study of Iran and its Culture. He had no desire to have any part in a political life. Shortly he came to me again. He had been summoned by the SAVAK and wanted to say good-bye since he was sure that he would be arrested and put on trial. On that same day I went to the Shah and discussed my friend's story. I told the Shah that if he granted him a pardon, I was sure that he would be asset to the development of the Iranian Cultural and Study program. The Shah turned and asked me: "You have that much confidence in this gentleman that you are willing to give your personal guarantee on the sincerity of his work ?" I said "Yes". On that day orders were given to the special officers to cease the pursuits. And so my friend escaped an uncertain fate. During all the following years he wrote very valuable books about the History of Iran and its Culture. I am proud to say he has never done one thing to make me regret my commitment to him.

◦◦ During my twenty years with the Imperial Court, I was able to implement programs I am proud of. The first one is our fight against illiteracy at the world level. Iran, under the Shah's patronage, was the location of the First Congress on the subject in 1966. It became a joint congress between Iran and UNESCO and all countries in Unesco were participating. Opening day was September 8. The United Nations announced this day as the annual day of the fight against world illiteracy.

There was also the organization of the Imperial Cultural Council. This Council was made up of Iran best cultural personalities and was headed by the Imperial Court Minister. Lifetime members included such personalities as Ebrahim Pourdavoud, Said Naficy, Lotfollah Souratgar.

Earlier I mentioned the 2,500th year Celebration of the Persian Empire. It was my suggestion to have this celebration and I think it was a most interesting contribution to the Pahlavi period. This event ended up bringing Iran negative and

positive attention and shows the true importance of these festivities. At the time, the world saw Iran as a simple third world country. The intent behind this celebration was to show Iran as it was at the height of its glorious History. We wanted the world to see Iran as one of the great world empires such as the Greek, Roman..... and to know the founder of the Persian Empire, Cyrus the Great, named the Messiah and the liberator of the oppressed people. That the Persians had art, literature and culture of their own. Through these festivities, Iran gave to the world the message that the country which was put in a depressed **????** state was again connecting with its past and accepting future responsibility. The events included over one hundred exhibitions of art and archeology, seminars, conferences and congresses that related to Persia. Hundreds of books and catalogues in various languages printed throughout the world were also made available. On that occasion, not only the founder of the Persian Empire, Cyrus the Great, was celebrated, but a most important publication was inaugurated,

following the international congress of Iranology : *Acta Iranica, a permanent encyclopaedia on Persian studies*, founded by the Pahlavi Library, with 54 issues up to now, the 1st one being dedicated to Cyrus-the Great. This celebration was covered by both radio and TV networks with millions listeners and viewers all over the world. Until that time, nothing of this magnitude had been done by a “third world” country, or by any country of the West or East for that matter. A massive development program was implemented which resulted in the building of schools, hospitals, stadium and roads.

Some around the world seemed uncomfortable with our ambitions. One of the negative reactions that still perplexes me came from George Ball, well-known American diplomat. In his memoirs he questions the event : “How does this son of a Cossack from a third world country have the nerve *?????* to compare today Iran to the Empire of Cyrus and Darius ?” He continues by ridiculizing the Queen wearing a diamond on

her gown. He claimed that, although the Queen claimed having borrowed this piece from the Imperial Jewels, it was in fact stolen by an Iranian fighter ^{??}king from the treasury of the great Mogul dynasty of India. In response I wrote to him and asked him to explain to numerous people curious to know why Iran, a country with 2,500 years of Culture and History was not worthy of these festivities ? How could he say such things, coming from a country whose settlers were individuals that England or Queen Elizabeth 1^{st??} saw as British misfits ? I then inquired what was the logic behind his statements about the Shahbanou's jewels. How was it that the Shahbanou of Iran could not wear "Darya-e-Noor" (Sea of Light) diamond because it was taken from the treasury of another country, while it was proper for the Queen or King of England to possess the "Kouh-e-Noor" (Mountain of Light) – now a permanent part of the British Crown Jewels – which the British stole from Iran ?

The most valuable of all my works while in the Imperial Court was the development of a badly needed library. While working with other countries on research projects, I felt the void ?? in Iran of a specialized center for Iranian research. I proposed a plan for funding a library of the future. Its collections would contain all books and manuscripts in Persian as well as books and writings about Iran regardless of their language. This would enable Iran to have the greatest collection of world sources and documents related to its History, Civilization and Culture. I wanted it to be built in Tehran and have it made available to Iranians and non-Iranians. Another advantage of the library would be that our searchers could remain within the country. Their work could be published by the library rather than by foreign publications. Iran, at that time, had the ability to implement this plan. To me, it was the best guarantee for Iran to reach an international level and gradually become one of the important centers of Persian Studies. I would like to mention that, from the start, UNESCO was interested in

collaborating to the project. It was to be the model library of the third millennium. The collaboration with UNESCO continued until the end of the Shah's Regime. It is interesting to note that, years later, when Egypt was making plans to build the new Library of Alexandria, the government contacted UNESCO. UNESCO suggested that they use the plans elaborated by the team of numerous Iranian and foreign librarians –headed by the internationally well-known Swiss expert in librarianship, Jean-Pierre CLAVEL – for the Pahlavi National Library of Iran. I was informed of Mr. Clavel's request when I was living in France. The Egyptian government had asked him to develop the new Library program. We met in Paris where he submitted to me the 3 volume program of the Iranian Library project. I knew him well, having worked with him for many years on the project. Because of his integrity I could not deny him the permission he sought. The Egyptian government did not have the same financial ability as Iran. N With the help of international organizations including the

French President's, François Mitterrand, the new Library was built. As I may say, the soul of the Pahlavi National Library of Iran is somehow alive in the "Biblioteca Alexandrina".

A unique collection once part of the Pahlavi Library was of hand stamps,....? ordered by Persian Kings prior to Islam. They had been collected by a numismatic connoisseur as well physician and friend of mine. He had dedicated thirty years of his life, his salary and spare time to find and purchase these stamps. In 1976, the Italian Middle East and Oriental Institute (IsMEO), one of the most credible centers for the study of stamps, declared this collection one of the most precious of its kind. Within the collection was the stamps of ????, the Parthian King, which was the only one existing of its kind. The IsMEO issued a special publication for those stamps. At one time(?), the Pahlavi Library was aware of the financial difficulty the collection owner was having and asked if they could purchase it from him. With the help of the Shah's personal donations, the Library was able to obtain this

precious collection. Although he was attached to his collection, he agreed to sell it. The collection was to bear his name. He was also asked to carry on the care of the stamps at the Library. The fate of this unique collection during the revolution is one of the most painful memories. During the critical post-revolutionary days, the Library was occupied by the “pasdaran”, the revolutionary guards. The collection was declared worthless, labeled “fake jewel”, placed in burlap bag, taken out of Tehran, and destroyed –along with newly printed sets of the book “*Gâhnâmeh 50 sâlé shahinshahi Iran*” (50 years of the Pahlavi dynasty). I fortunately have one set in 5 volumes of this work.

One essential work I was in charge of for the Library was organizing, printing and publishing *The World Encyclopedia of Iranian Studies (The World of Iranology)*. It was to be a long-term project of over twenty volumes. *The Encyclopedia* would contain the detailed history and cultural relations between the old and new world countries and Iran. It

was to show the cultural exchange between these countries and Iran, and the influence they had on each other. It included the history –political and cultural – that linked Iran with that particular history and discussed relationships dating back to three thousand years ago, as well as collection of Persian art, artifacts, etc.. in the libraries, galleries and museums throughout the world. It also would contain an extensive index of the books published about Persia in other countries. In accordance with this project I had my own dream. I was hoping to request early retirement and spend my remaining years completing this *Encyclopedia*, in a way my “Shâhnâmeh”. Of course, I do not intend to compare my writing skills with those of Ferdowsi, but I believe the project would have been an extraordinary one. During the days preceding the revolution, I was beginning to feel a sense of danger. I, therefore, made a decision to take certain important materials and writings out of the country. I am happy that I succeeded in saving them although I had to sacrifice over

fourteen thousand books of my own personal library. Though the completing of the *Encyclopedia* remains my dream, knowing my time is short, I doubt it will become a reality.

To date, only the first volume covering 5 countries has been completed and published. It was saluted ??? by universities, institutes of Iranian studies and academies from all over the world. I received an honorary doctorate from the University of Moscow and the joint award from Soviet Union and Iran called the Ferdowsi Prize, which I shared with Dr. Parviz Khanlari.

My collection of documents I often used in preparing the Shah's speeches while abroad or at state dinners. Of course, his speeches had to be written with the general directives of the Sovereign and the Foreign Ministry. They also had to receive final approval from the Shah. Once the final approval of all was received, the speech would be sent to the

Government Head of the country that Shah was to visit, or to the Head of State who was to visit Iran. This was in order for all to be prepared to respond. I guess you could call it political protocol and manners.

When I wrote these speeches, I would incorporate information from my research on the influences that Iran and that country shared. The Shah appreciated this because he felt it added a personal touch to the speech. Here are some of the examples used in these speeches: The relationship of a five-hundred-year old empire of the “Shirazes” in East-Africa between the 5th and the 10th centuries (HG) ; the presence of a great Iranian community in Siam and the Iranian roots?? of the Prime Minister of Siam contemporaneous of Shah Soleiman the Safavid’s first Ambassador ; the Persian speaking Imperial Court of Indonesia when Ibn Battuta traveled there and showed that the presence of the Persian shrines were related to mystics ; the presence of a sport centers named Pouria Vali in Malaysia ; the existence of the oldest Iranian museum in Nara,

Japan, from the Sassanid's ; the Persian calligraphy tiles found in the Chinese Mosques ; the Chinese moslem prayers in Persian ; four-hundred-year-old gardens of ice flowers in San Lazzaro of Venice, Italy ; the five-hundred-year-old Shiraz rose garden of Baghcheh Sara, the capital of the Crimean Tartars, by the Black Sea. ; the twenty-five-hundred-year-old Persian carpet from Pazirik, Siberia, the oldest in the world ; possibly the oldest copy of Hafez's *Divan* in Auckland, New Zealand ; the one thousand year history of the Jerez (or Xerez, or Sherez) wine in Spain, developed from the Shiraz grapes that were brought by the Shirazes who settled in Andalucía. Among Jerez wines production is the sweet one called "Sherry".

For the first time since the Samanid period (Dates) and especially after Ferdowsi, the largest effort to recreate and revive Iran's pre-islamic past was the Pahlavi period.

Unfortunately, this came to an abrupt end. And again, the old renaissance? was resurging proclaiming that the real History of Iran started with the conquest of the Arabs, and whatever existed before were fantasies, fantasies that were written by the foreign powers to denigrate Islam” says Mr. Moussavi, former Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic, who claims that “the Persepolis ruins were brought up to give identity to a period when Iran was nothing !

In 1979 our country experienced a revolution which was one of the most disastrous events since the Arab attack on Iran, 1,400 years ago. I make this statement fully aware of other destructive events that happened in my country. I base this claim on the fact that all the other small or large disasters within the last 1,400 years occurred during a time when Iran was in an unstable and disorderly situation. Some of these

events were expected because Iran was governed by non Iranians, peoples of the deserts such as the Turks, Tartars, Moguls, Turkmens' tribes and feudal autonomous rulers. The only time in which Iran could and did regain its geographic identity was during the Safavid period (16th – 18th century), but not long enough for us to regain our beaten cultural identity. Unfortunately, Ferdowsi, Khayyam, Avicenna or Behzad were replaced by mullahs (clergymen) : Jabal Amel of Lebanon and Alahsa of Bahrain. These mullahs not only did not know Persian language, but had sworn to be the enemy of anything that was non-Arab. They denied the roots of our national culture even though they knew of our past History through the *Shahnameh* (*Book of Kings*) which had been translated in Arabic in the 14th century. They stated that the story of “Rostam and Sorkhab” (the name of Rostam’s son is actually Sohrab) and other “bad” tales belonged to the Zoroastrians and fire worshipers. To confirm this statement they “found” hadithes (Prophet Mohammed’s ?????) related??

by Shiite Imams. We can find examples of these in the religious book that every mullah ought to study : *Bahar al Anvar (The Seas of Light)* by Mullah Bagher Madjlessi : “Imam Mohammed Taghi reports that the prophet Mohammed said : “Fabricated and baseless stories of Rostam and Sorkhab, Esfandiar and Javous,?? Zal, etc. are false. And, even if these stories were true, that ?????????? is such as the *Shahnameh stories about the Zoroastrians*”. I don’t need to mention that at the time of Imam Mohammed Taghi, Ferdowsi was not born yet, and there could not have been either trace of *Shahnameh*, or Rostam and Sorkhab !

The Kings of the Safavid dynasty benefited politically from religion and vice versa. Unfortunately, it was only for personal interests of the kings’ and the “imported” mullahs’. And this would repeat as well with the religious leaders of the Qajar Dynasty and the colonial British government. It is how Iran stayed behind from a progressive civilization during the 18th and 19th centuries and was one of the poorest, illiterate,

non-futuristic countries of the world in the early decades of the 20th century, at the end of World War I. We should not forget that this was the same country that Hegel called the first historical country of the world and that Toynbee described as a definite superpower of the ancient world and Goethe proclaimed that it offered one of the highest cultures to Humanity. The 1979 Revolution's roots date back to 400 years of religious background. It happened because of prevailing political conditions and opportunities, at a politically ripe time. Because of its strength and ability to return to its natural identity, Iran was prepared, along with a few other countries, to enter into the modern world. We were preparing for the next step, which was to reach the third millennium developed world. This rapid change forced us to face a number of difficulties, weaknesses and critical points, similar to those that existed in the fundamental period when the civilized world was building its democratic, economic and educational foundations. We might have been successful if we had

eliminated some of the difficulties which were not related to Iran, but had to do with the British Petroleum, the British government and the BBC.

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They were predicting that after the Revolution, Iran should forget its entry among the great nations and be happy to stay at the level of their neighboring country : Afghanistan. This would have left us with the weakness of Iranian society itself ? and should have been recognized as problems that a developing country of the 20th century encounters ? and hence be evaluated with 20th century techniques and viable solutions for them ??????. It meant that Iran needed to build a strong economical foundation, which is a necessity for any real democracy. It also needed to abide by ??? the international rules for human rights and be willing to compromise. With the 1979 Revolution Iran got derailed.???? And its destiny fell into the hands of those who were frightened by progress

toward the Third millennium. This fear made them desire to go back to the first millennium. As Hassan Haykal, the well known Egyptian journalist said, “a confrontation of the revolutionaries with the intellectual and educated people was like a confrontation of history with fanaticism and always, in these confrontations, for a short period of time fanaticism wins”. And so, that is the way Iran lost its exceptional opportunity, after the Arab attack on Iran, to regain in its ancient purity ??????? and reach its highest potential, thereby receiving the glory?? and honor?? deserved.

With this brief explanation about the political and social atmosphere in Iran surrounding the Revolution, I believe I can now go back to our main discussion, my personal memories about that period and the following years. In those days, that we were to build our destiny, university professors and students who were demonstrating, abandoned their leadership to the religious leaders and merchants who run the bazaar (bazaaris). At that time I was the Director General of the

Pahlavi Library and had been abroad for a few seminars and international conferences. The fast changes that were occurring in Iran were very decisive. They were occurring in the Government and in the Royal Court. Jafar Sharif Emami was the Prime Minister at the time. His diplomacy of giving up unconditionally in front of the first group of strikers opened the door for a wave of more strikers. The Royal Court Minister was Dr. Ali Gholi Ardalan. I knew him since his service at the United Nations in New York. In October of 1978 I reported to him that my mission in Europe was over and that if there was no other assignment I would like to return home. Against my expectations I received –several times- the same response, that I should not rush home. Later I discovered that he, Ardalan, didn't want to be responsible for any mishap. Because of the sensitivity of my work and patriotic views, as well as my special interest toward the ancient pre Islamic History of Iran, that my return to Iran would have been very dangerous for me. It was during one of those days that I was wandering around, I

heard with surprise the famous speech of our late Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, on Iranian radio. He stated “I heard the Revolution’s voice”. I immediately became deeply upset with the fact that I was not in Iran. Perhaps I could have objected to those words being said at such a critical time in our History. The turn of events that followed ended in the Revolution whose consequences remain today even though twenty two years have passed.

Just as what happened 1,400 years ago, the late Professor Zabihollah Safa called the 1979 revolution, “the second Arabs’ attack”. Once again many Iranians escaped from Iran and emigrated **????**to other countries. Iranians spread all over the world and this resulted in the largest wave of immigration of Iranians in our History. It was not only large in size but also included some of Iran most educated and distinguished citizens, the brains of pre-revolutionary Iran. In the past twenty years the European and American official statistics show that more than 10,000 Iranians that emigrated were

architects, economists, engineers, lawyers, physicians, technicians....., now working in the western world. What a precious gift this “third world” country has given to the “first world”. Education expenses of these individuals were paid by the Iranian government, that is to say with Iranian people’s money who are now in great personal needs ?? . These generations have now grown up in those host countries and will remain there. It is doubtful to expect that they will ever return to Iran. Among those migrants, many were high level politicians, ministers, senators, members of Parliament, governors, ambassadors, high ranking Army officers, writers, poets, journalists, artists.... These individuals also took with them a great deal of wealth from the country. The estimated wealth now in American banks is around ten billion dollars. If even a small portion of this money had been spent to fund a real national opposition, unlike the phony (?) groups that appeared after their defeat our country’s destiny might have been different. We shouldn’t forget that in the early months

and years of the Revolution, heavy financial aids from the governments of Iraq and Saudi Arabia were given to distinct organizations of opposition, and big salaries were paid for many years by the American CIA to some other organizations of the same “opposition” group.

The most essential duty of such a powerful group with such a rich human and financial backing, and having the civilized world opinion on its side (after the taking of hostages, members of a foreign embassy in Tehran, and the numerous executions during the first few weeks of the revolution, which had stirred hatred and anger) was to form a real opposition with a strong leadership based on progressive national culture, constructive and futuristic. It was what we needed to oppose this governing regime with its regressive and destructive ideology built on Middle Age principles. On the contrary, the opposition which came up during the past 22 years was superficial and the Islamic Republic has remained causing defeats as well as the breakdown?? of these rich forces out of

Iran. A question still remains to me : How all these efforts did fail ? There has been much discussions about this and it will continue forever.

The lack of leadership was obvious and without leadership whether in a democratic or non-democratic society one cannot succeed. If a real leader had timely stepped in during the first few years of the revolution, Shahriar Shafigh and General Ariana would have probably been able to reach their goal at that time. Unfortunately all their heroic efforts were fruitless, leaving open path to the present regime. Had our politicians not been short sided and incompetent or inexperienced during those sensitive days, they might have succeeded in their historical roles. In all fairness I should mention that the news media, newscasters, journalists, writers, intellectuals and poets continued to fight the regime for protecting their culture of the past 1,000 years and to make aware Iranian people against the official religious propaganda. Their fight was much greater than the politicians'. They did it with significantly less wealth

and broadcasting means. We should not forget that those were the days Ayatollah Khalkhaki who –after the destruction of Reza Shah’s shrine – was planning to destroy Persepolis and Ferdowsi’s tomb. Khalkhali stated repeatedly in the media that whatever he did was with the permission of Ayatollah Khomeini himself.

°°?? Mir Hossein Mousavi, who would become Prime Minister, once signed an article published in the Islamic Republic Journal, saying that the pre Islamic History of Persia –mainly Achemenid and Sassanid periods – was all imported from the West for the purpose of eliminating Islam, as was Ferdowsi. And that in 1934 there had been a western plot to destroy Islam, adding that archeologists were excavating the Persepolis ruins to build a History completely stranger to Islam and force our people to feel honored about it ; that Iranian artists were talking about arts and literature of Iran, but not even mentioned one word about the Karbala story.

I, as a member of the cultural society, had the fundamental duty to write and publish a series of books as antidotes to that poisonous, anti-cultural and anti Iran propaganda. So, during the following years, I published four books which are today still considered to be among the most documented books published in Persian. My researches were based on more than 1,000 books, thesis and Persian and foreign publications. I worked nonstop during 4 years to write and publish these books because I felt that they were most needed. I know that thousands of these books are in Iranians' homes and tens of thousands peoples have read them and hopefully will continue to read them.

My first book, *Iran at the Crossroad of Destiny*, was published a year after the Iranian Revolution (1980) in Washington, DC. Part of this book was a series of articles published earlier in a Persian weekly magazine called *Pardis*, run in Los Angeles by the late Karim Roshanian. This book was the first open and clear criticism of the principles of the

“Velayat Faghih” (the religious’Guide principles), the new clerical regime of Iran. In the introduction of the book I wrote an open letter to the youngsters to tell them that they were at risk of losing their identity. Its contents sounded very new to the Iranian readers, so the book became popular in a few months and a second edition was printed in Paris.

My second book was published shortly thereafter in France, *At war with the Devil. A thousand years of Iranian Cultural Struggle against Merchants of Faith*. In a book review, the *New York Times* said it was the first Persian poem anthology of 230 classic Iranian poets from Ferdowsi to Bahar, more than 100 contemporary poets and short stories from 12 contemporary writers. All of them dealing with religious fanaticism. ??????

For this reason, I would like to write here a small portion of my introduction for the readers who perhaps have not had the opportunity of reading this book :

“Persian poetry has always been a fundamental base of our national existence and a way for Iranians to express it and though (?) becoming the guardian of Iran along the centuries, or as René Grousset (the famous French writer and orientalist) put it “to be a shining beacon above the Iranian Plateau from the dawn of History to its sunset”.

It was with such prophecy? that this culture again and again held on to its identity against the attacks of “strangers”, and did not allow any of the disasters to destroy our ancient “Iranshahr”. In spite of all crisis, the old phoenix always came out of its ashes”.

The greatest harm that the Persian culture suffered during the past 1,400 years was the swords of Arab invaders that imposed on us their rule and as Ferdowsi says “pretesting religion”. Such a heavy blow could have destroyed our national and cultural identity as it did in Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco. However, it was our national

culture that took the upper hand and in a very short time it created for that “new” Islamic world, the most important part of a culture that would be called up until today “Islamic culture”. I’ll just quote here the famous historian Ibn Khaldoun : “Without Iranians nothing from this culture would exist” . And inside its geographic boundaries, from China to the Atlantic Ocean, from Central Asia to India and North Africa, and the Balkans, Persian speaking poets were at profusion.

In such circumstances Persian literature was the most productive part of the culture because, as later Professor Pour Davoud wrote : “after putting down the ancient temples of fire, in the heart of every Iranian poet the fire-temple of love still remains”. Such a culture with such a prophecy?, if it followed the religious path of Islam, could not follow the shopkeepers of religion. Neither at the beginning nor along 1,400 years of Persian History and Literature did it happen. During all these years filled with ups and downs and struggles,

and in spite of potentates and religious leaders who went hand in hand, Persian culture did never give up.

There is a lot of similarity between the problems of today Iranian society and those of past centuries. For the reader of our recent poets such as Iraj, Bahar, Aref, Parvin, Naderpour, Forough, Shamloo, it is hard to believe that their poems have been written in the 20th century. Perhaps the main reason is that there is nothing new at the school of fanaticism. It is as it was in the past times and will be the same in the future. These are realities which can be found very early in selected poems, from Ferdowsi to Bahar and thereafter? in the new epic poetry before and after the Revolution. All these poems are gathered in my book *Dar Peykar ba Ahriman* (“At War with the Devil”), which shows the struggle of Persian culture against the “merchants of Faith”.

Shortly thereafter ? *ensuite* , in 1983, I published in Paris my third book, *Towzihol Masael*, subtitled “Response to Thousand

Year Old Questions , from Koleini to Khomeini”, on the subject of religion, more exactly analysis of the religious scholars’ thesis from the Safavid era onward.

Towzihol Masael was the first Persian book of its kind. A second and third edition came out in pocketbook and a revised edition has just been published due to the readers’ positive response during the past few years.

I would like to recall here the events which surrounded its writing and publication. From the moment I began preparing this book, I realized that the essential requirement for writing it was to study the basic teachings of religious exegetes, especially the wide collection of the *Hadiths* (narrations) ?? issued during the past centuries. More than 2,5 million of them were collected in Majlessi’s book, *Bahar al-Anvar* (?) and some others !

I must confess that before reading these books, I had no experience in religious research and my field of work mainly

covered the areas of culture, literature and history. After the revolution, instead of literature and cultural research about Iran, my desk disappeared under books like Koleini's *Kafi* considered the 2nd Koran of Shiism, 'Ameli's *Jame Abbasi????* , Majlessi's *Helliat ul-Mottaghin* and *Zad ul-Mo'ad*, Abas Ghomi's *Mafatih ul-Janan*, Dastgheib Shirazi's *Mo'ad va Towhid*.

These books constitute the foundations of the religious teachings of the past 1,000 years up to nowadays. Studying them was quite a new experience for me. I was, however, unable to figure out who were the messengers *????* of the Hadiths attributed to the Imams of Shiism. Nor was I able to identify the source of many of these *Hadiths*, a question that was also raised in the mind of many of my readers. The truth, as I see it, is that these statements did not have any reality *????????*. and were not the Prophet's words or his representatives', the Shiite Imams.

My book shows how the *Hadiths* were written to become the basis of the Safavid kings' power and its allies : the religious leaders and the Praetorian guards (the Ghezelbash). Through the years, the 17 original *Hadiths* left by Prophet Mohammad, (narrated by Abu Hanifeh), increased to 1,000 then 10,000, 100,000, 600,000 and later to 1,000,000 and 2,000,000, and finally in Madjlessi's *Bahar al-Anvar* to more than 2,400,000. As far as Majlessi is concerned, he insisted they were inspired to him by the Imams themselves. There are 300,000 *Hadiths* attributed ??? to Iman Sadegh. Some of which are contradictory to each other. If Majlessi spent only ten minutes on each *Hadith*, he needed eighty years round the clock to write down them all.

But, it would be wrong to think that "making" *hadiths* ended with Majlessi and other exegetes. An example of continuation of this tradition is in a speech given by one of the members of Iranian Parliament (also member of the Parliament's Defense subcommittee) in July 1982, during the Iran-Iraq war, and was

printed by the *Jomhuri Eslami* (Islamic Republic) newspaper.?????

Publication of *Towzihol Masael* with my own name was, at that time, like a suicide attempt ??, because of the wave of political terror inside and outside Iran. Not only my family, but also even my close friends believed it would secure the order for my death. My response to them was that anyone who believes in his work defending his views should either accept the consequences or not start the battle at all;???

In spite of my previous publications and the strong reaction to my book, the Republic Islamic agents never bothered me. Why ? As far as I know, immediately after the publication, the Iranian government, its diplomatic and religious offices abroad sent numerous copies to Tehran. I know that Mr. Bazargan read this book when he was no longer the Prime Minister and that he forwarded a copy to Ayatollah Khomeini through Ayatollah Passandideh. A diplomat, friend of mine, told me he

read it, as well as other Government members who became very unhappy. Mr. Hadi Ghaffari, a clergyman, militant and member of the Parliament, said in a private session of the Foreign Affairs committee that “now these royalists write *Towzihol Masael* for us! I don’t know why the officials don’t take care of them so that nobody would dare to do anything like this in the future.”

No further order was issued. Perhaps they thought that by killing me, more people would purchase and read this book. However, Khomeini had ordered a committee be assigned to answer my book. It was headed by Ibrahim Yazdi, future foreign minister. He had no knowledge of Arabic language or *hadiths* books. This mission was never followed through. Maybe they found out that they would not be able to neutralize the book because of its clear and definite sources that were distinctly referenced. So any attempt would be fruitless.

Along with that internal reaction to my book in the country was an opposition outside Iran. A protesting article was written by Mr. Mehdi Rohani, who calls himself the leaders of leaders of the Shiite residents in Europe. His article was printed in *Iran va Jahan* (L'Iran et le Monde), weekly newspaper in Paris, and I answered in the same paper. The defeat of Mr. Rohani in this debate made him so angry that he requested a death order from Ayatollah Kho'î in Najaf (Iraq). The requested was denied.

Following these three historical, literary and religious books, I wrote the 4th one, in four volumes and 2,500 pages : *Jenayat va Moqafat* (Crime and Punishment, Anatomy of a Revolution), one of the most complex work of the past two decades. I wrote it in 1986, at a time I thought our community was in a great need of awareness about a religion that had smashed the political and social life of our country and had pushed it back to the Middle Age. It was necessary for the continuation of its struggles. There were a lot of sources on the

subject, but they were not available to everyone, because inside Iran the regime's publicity apparatus, radio, television and newspapers, and 180,000 clergymen, were ready to alter, cover up and hide the truth to the people.

Outside Iran, the people's difficulties in their daily life and the tension between different opposition groups which, in spite of their financial ability were not ready to step out of their circuits and had obligations toward those who were paying them, had blocked all paths (to the recognition of the revolution realities ?????). This left only a few weak voices which, through books, magazines and newspapers, continued their struggle against the regime.

It was under these circumstances that my well documented book "Crime and Punishment. Anatomy of a revolution" was published. In all of its 2,500 pages, you cannot find a subject without references to all books and articles available in Persian and other foreign languages. This meticulous documentation

was the reason for its success and was repeatedly reprinted in France, Germany and USA. Today, you cannot find this book in any bookstore. I delayed another reprint due to the shortage of time and because a revision has become essential due to new world developments. The new edition is now ready for publication.

In this book, my attention is focused on the younger generation who must build tomorrow Iran. They have to know the realities about the Iran of yesterday, but not those that have been presented by the regime propaganda during the past 20 years.

My interview with Mr. Behrouz Sour Esrafil in *Kayhan* of London, following the publication, in 1986, of my 4 volume

book “*Jenayat va Moqâfât*” (“Crime and Punishment”) pushed me to write a series of articles in that newspaper. The series lasted for a few years. After “Crime and Punishment” I thought I should write something periodically about the evaluations of events to inform the readers, as letters to the editor. They emphasized the need and importance of strong constructive leadership to mobilize the groups scattered outside Iran. It also discussed the necessity of a plan to rescue the country on the basis of all national and international opportunities. In spite of all those opportunities we had, we were never able to get any results due to the absence of leadership. We were missing one chance after another. No one in the opponent groups had the credibility and legitimacy needed to handle the leadership.

Prince Reza Pahlavi, as the Crown and Throne inheritor sworn in November 21, 1980 in Cairo, was accepted by many Iranian patriots. ????

I would like to mention that I was invited to attend the swearing ceremony which was held in Qubbeh Palace in Cairo, Egypt. On that day, I talked thoroughly, in detail, to the Prince about his responsibilities. He was expected in the eighties and nineties to act accordingly to the duties assigned to his Function (job ?). Many Iranians in those days were killed, others were suffering. Many families were mourning. Every day, blows were damaging more and more our broken economy and harming and defeating our culture and international prestige. If the inheritor of our Crown and Throne had fully complied with his mission at that time, as he does today, many of the disasters that stroke our people would have been avoided. There would not have been so much blood spilled and the changes that harmed our blossoming economy would have been kept at bay.

????????? During my twenty years in exile, I have concluded that the reason of our fundamental difficulty to return to a monarchy or establish a republican system, runs

much deeper than these simple political or economic problems. It is a cancerous problem that has penetrated our nation's skin, flesh and bones since the Safavid dynasty. It has systematically gotten deeper and more organized with each passing generation. It is a religious root that was founded during the Safavid dynasty. For economic and military reasons, willingly or unwillingly that spoils the very nation and country that they tried to build on it???. Perhaps the best way to describe this situation is with a statement made by Dr. Ali Shariati, a famous Shiite scholar, in his book *Alavi Shiism and Safavid Shiism* :

“The stupefication (stupefaction ?) (estehmar) of the people by clergy's hand, from the blood made opium, from manhood made inferiority and suffering, from Shiism and purity made religious hypocrisy, from accepting responsibility made indifference and laziness, from understanding and creativity made copycat and imitation, from bravery made complain and cry. Whatever it was, it wasn't belief ; it was the business of

belief. The sole goal of the clergy was for the person who has the fear of sin, to depend on him. Thus, in this fashion he made religion a tool for backwardness and dogma and prevention of any change, progress and new achievements. It prevented any progress and changes. And it condemned any new thing and new saying whether it was in religion or in the way of life and thought and science and society.”

The consequences of this chronic illness, with an authoritarian Middle Age style governments, (especially before the Constitutional Revolution of 1906, part of which was related to the religious leaders who were looking for power and self interest), made our social structure so unorganized that no treatment could help. We now must look for “another birth”. Such a birth requires some type of miracle similar to what happened to the Christian world two centuries ago and rescued the West from the same chronic illness.

It was with this thought and intention that I wrote another book, and called it *Tavalodidigar (Another Birth* - title taken from the famous Iranian poetess Forough Farrokhzad's, book). The book includes a selection of opinions by famous western thinkers, such as Voltaire, Newton, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, as well as Nietzsche, Freud, Einstein, Bertrand Russell, My goal with this book was to open the eyes of Iranian society. Iranian society from Safavid till Pahlavi dynasties was prisoner of the religion shopkeepers' obscurantism. With the freedom of speech that Iranians living in exile have (in the West) we could get rid of this 200 years?? of unawareness and get people acquainted with the great world intellectuals. They then would be able to freely choose, with knowledge, their future direction. The unexpected success of *Tavalodidigar (Another Birth)* among Iranians, in Iran and abroad, made it the most read book of the past twenty years. To me, this showed how much our society needed to get out of darkness.

In this constructive life building effort, without a doubt, there are many traps and dangers for intellectuals just as it was earlier for the leaders and pioneers of today's advanced world. But, this is a risk that was worth taking for the future. All the people who chose this road have chosen it willingly, and I was and am one of them. Since the first day after the revolution that I took the pen for enlightenment, not one day has passed where I haven't felt danger close to me.

I would like to close these chapters with a memory that has left a very bitter and unforgettable impact on me. It is about an unsuccessful attempt on my life. Timely warnings given to me by my friends saved me from being trapped. Another friend of mine, Kourosh Aryamanesh was not as lucky. So many years after his death, I still feel responsible (?)

In spite of all this, no threats or actions can stop today and tomorrow intellectuals. For they seek truth which is the greater and bigger path.

For, as Hafez said :

*If my heart broke, let it be a sacrifice for her drunken
eyes,*

If the glass of wine broke, the jar of wine is still intact.