The Zands in Iran, *Attorneys of the People*

Anthology of Diplomats and Scholars on the Zands, Shiism, and Irano-Judaica

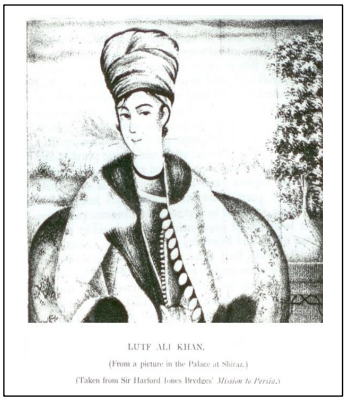
"If Persia (today Iran) ever had a fair, people's choice king, it has to be Mohammad Karim *Khan* Zand."

– Dynasties out of Europe [1]

Karim *Khan* Zand

Sovereign of Iran
1750-79

Portrait from Sir John Malcolm, British Ambassador to Iran, in his *History of Persia*, Volume II, First Edition, 1815, pp.114-115



Lotf Aly *Khan* Zand

Sovereign of Iran
1789-95

Portrait from Sir Harford Jones Brydges, *Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from His Britannic Majesty to the Court of Tehran, in Mission to Persia,* 1833

British Ambassador Sir John Malcolm, on the Christians of Iran under the Zands:

"This body of Christians were the first who benefited from his justice, and to the last moment of his life he was anxious for their prosperity."[2]

Editorial and Commentary by Richard N. Frye and Afshin Zand
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1 '*Dynasties out of Europe*': https://web.archive.org/web/20020207061507/http:/www.almanach.be/search/i/iran_zand.html
2 Sir John Malcolm, *The History of Persia, From the Most Early Period to the Present Time 2nd Edition*, 1829, Volume 2, pp. 58, 83.

Attorneys of the People in Iran : The Zands

This documentary is to make available the facts about the Zands who established and fulfilled the institution of *Attorney of the People* in Iran which marked the transition from overlord, Shah, to servant of the people.

British ambassadors and US Supreme Court Justice William O Douglas with first-hand experience, historians, other diplomats and specialists on Iran, scholars of history and culture, speak on the legacy of the Zands and its aftermath in Iran which continues to the present day. It is illustrative of what Iran would be under a democracy, in its relations with the West and others when its native beliefs and values are expressed in government.

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KARIM KHAN, ZAND.

(From an engraving after an original Persian painting in Sir John Malcolm's *History of Persia*, 1815, vol. ii.)

Karim *Khan* Zand

Sovereign of Iran 1750-79

Founder of the Institution of *Attorney of the People*

Portrait from Sir John Malcolm, British Ambassador to Iran, in his *History of Persia*, Volume II, First Edition, 1815, pp.114-115

"If Persia (today Iran) ever had a fair, people's choice king, it has to be Mohammad Karim *Khan* Zand."

Dynasties out of Europe

Cambridge History of Iran on the Zands, under whom the prince fourth in line of succession, Ibrahim *Khan,* and the governor of the capital city were Jewish:

> "Under Karim Khan Shiraz became the largest Jewish centre in Iran
>
> …
>
> There are more stories told of Karim Khan's kindness, simplicity, generosity, and sense of justice than about any other Iranian monarch. As the archetype of the good king with a genuine concern for his people and who thus gained their respect and love, he ranks with Anushirvan the Just[3], Sultan Sanjar[4], and Shah 'Abbas[5]. Where these and other rulers surpass him in military glory and international prestige, the Zand Khan quietly retains even today [2008] an unparalleled place in his countrymen's affection as a good man who became and remained a good monarch." [6]

Parviz Rajaby, Iranian sociologist and historian.
Author, *Karim Khan Zand and His Age*:

> "Malcolm wrote of Karim Khan that 'the Persians to this day [1829] venerate his name'. Persians to-day [1976] may hold Karim Khan in even greater esteem than in Malcolm's time but their knowledge of the particular traits of character of Karim Khan is less."[7]

---

3 Anushirvan the Just :Ruled 531-579 AD

4 Sultan Sanjar : Ruled 1118-1153 AD

5 Shah 'Abbas : Ruled 1587-1629 AD

6 *Cambridge History of Iran,* Vol. 7, *From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic,* 2008, John Perry, pp. 99,102.

7 Parviz Rajaby, *Karim Khan-e Zand and His Age (in Persian). Karim Khan-e Zand va Zaman-e U,* Tehran, 2535 (1976), pp. 133-34, 136-37, 148.

Attorney of the People : Transition from Overlord to Servant

The institution of Attorney of the People founded by Karim Khan marked the transition from overlord to servant of the people in Iran. The Zands fulfilled this function from 1750 to 1794.

Following Karim Khan's rise to power in 1750, he tried a few titles, others than *Shah,* and settled on the title *Attorney of the People* or *Advocate of the People.* Due to historical traditions and expectations of the Zands they were invested with the power of the shah, as sovereign, and during their time exercised it to establish justice in the land. Under Zand rule as Attorneys of the People the institutions of government, such as the military and the treasury, came closest to resemble what the country would be under a democracy with checks and balances.

As observes Clements R. Markham, British historian, of Karim Khan Zand "The memory of this great and good man is still revered by the Persians and his name is immortalized in the splendid bazaar and other buildings of Shiraz."[8] And this still remains true in our day.

The legacy of the Zands is based on the deeds of two of their ruling members by whom the nation remembers the Zands: Mohammed Karim Khan Zand the founder ('Karim Khan' for short), and Lotf Aly Khan Zand the last prince, serving as Attorney of the People. Others who ruled briefly in the interval, such as Mohammed Sadegh Khan, brother of Karim Khan and grandfather of Lotf Aly Khan, are not a part of popular memory.

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8 Clements R. Markham, *A General Sketch of the History of Persia,* 1874, pp. 319-28, 337.

Iranian governments that have enjoyed popularity are representative of what a democracy would be. The Zands are the prime example of that government in modern history. They embodied the beliefs, values and culture of the Iranian people, and enacted those in government. Thus their rule in many respects represents what Iran would be under a democracy, with its people running the government.

Saeed Naficy, dean of historians in Iran and sociologist of the post-Islamic era, in his introduction to the *History of Zandieh*, 1938, writes of the history of the post-Islamic era of Iranian governments:

> "Karim Khan Zand is one of the most beloved men of history and, besides kingship, he would be fit to serve as a model of ethics for mankind. . . . Loft Aly Khan is one of the dearest and most beloved martyrs of Iranian history, and even now, when one considers his life and times, the great hardships he endured, his astonishing courage, his magnanimity, both that which is evident and that which goes unseen, one is filled with sorrow and feels compelled to mourn his fate in company with others." [9]

This transition to a government that would be a servant of the people led to a development in society of the need to have a constitutional government, which led to the constitutional revolution of 1906. A constitutional monarchy and parliament in 1906, was the result of that development, whereby the king would reign rather than rule. At that time only fourteen countries of the world had constitutions. However, a year after that, the Islamic clergy who were opposed to having a parliament or popular rule managed to force their way and gain the right of veto on what laws the Parliament may enact. In essence they usurped the new Constitution.

In the twentieth century Iran's democratic government were twice overthrown by outside powers (1911 and 1953). In the West and other parts of the world

9 Saeed Naficy, in his introduction to The History of Zandieh (in Persian): Tarikh-e Zandieh, Tehran, 1938, pp. t, th, s.

democratic institutions have been in existence and have undergone a course of evolution over the centuries leading to the present state of maturity.

The Islamic regime came to power in opposition not only to the previous dynasty, but to the institution of monarchy. But although they set about removing or effacing the names, institutions, monuments and legacy of previous dynasties, they excepted the Zands. Thus the monuments and remains of the Zands endure. In part this was because they were unable to do away with that legacy among the people, but it was also of a genuine desire to continue the legacy.

Etymology of the Name

Sir John Malcolm, British Ambassador to Iran, author of *History of Persia* in two volumes, 1815, and before him Sir Harford Jones Brydges, had learned Persian in India and been availed of Persian manuscripts which they used in composing their history.

Photo courtesy of Wikipedia

Sir John Malcolm, British Ambassador to Iran who Arrived with a retinue of 500.

Malcolm on the "Reign of Kerreem Khan, Zend": "He was chief of a small tribe, who, though described as a branch of that of the Lac, claimed a high rank among the native Persians."[10] Referring to his sources, Malcolm gives the origins of Zand: "Some authors assert, that this tribe received the name of Zend from being charged by Zoroaster with the care of the *Zend-a-vesta*, or scripture of that prophet."[11]

The name Zand derives from the Zand-Avesta, the collection of holy books of Iran. After founding a dynasty, Iranian

10 Sir John Malcolm, *The History of Persia, From the Most Early Period to the Present Time,* Second Edition, 1829, Volume 2, pp. 63.

11 Ibid, p. 63n

family names acquire the suffix “ieh", or “ian”. Thus the Zands became known afterwards as Zandieh. Often, this was abridged to Zand for the sake of brevity. Except for the Iranian tribes, people had patronymics and honorifics instead of a surname until the early 1920s. At that time by decree of Reza Shah they chose a last names to use and patronymics and honorifics became obsolete. On the Shah’s decree, many around the country and in particular Shiraz, Kerman and Bam, sites of the last stand of Lotf Aly Khan Zand, chose the name Zand as their surname for themselves out of the reverence they held for the Zand dynasty. Lineal descendants of the Zands are situated in southwestern Iran between the Lurs and the Kurds, among the Zand clan. In recent generations they have moved to the principal cities nearby such as Kermanshah and thence to Tehran.

How New Governments Come into Being in Iran

The right conditions need to be in place for a new regime to come into being in Iran, the qualities, characteristics and experiences of a leader whom the people would regard as leader. Frye on requisites of a leader for regime change:

Richard Frye of Harvard University

"So in Iran this aspect is present in what one might call the myth of the founder of a dynasty, which myth has become almost a dogma in the Persian concept of kingship. The general features of this myth, which becomes then real history for the Persians, are relationship to the preceding dynasty or possessing royal blood, persecution with flight or exile, and concealment of royal origins, plus a difficult life among nomads or peasants. Finally, a son, a grandson, or later descendant of the exile by manifest signs and qualities receives recognition and the *"khvarnah"* or imperial glory descends upon him so that he founds a new dynasty ... We are not interested here in the origin of such tales, or even whether they were true or not. What is important in our context is that they were believed to be true by Persians throughout their history." [12]

. . .

"In my opinion, the persistence of motifs about the founder of a dynasty in Iran can be attributed to several factors. First, the resilience of the Persians under pressure of foreign rule and mass invasion has been demonstrated time and again throughout history. Second, the

12 Richard N. Frye, *Iranica Antiqua, Leiden,* 1964, Volume 6, pp. 53-54.

> tenacity of the Persians in maintaining old traditions is a feature of their history . . . Third, Iran is one of the few countries at present which has an epic tradition . . .
>
> Finally, the figure and office of the Shahanshah throughout the history of Iran have provided a rallying point for those seeking to preserve a unity and a continuity of Iranian culture and nationhood. The King of kings is a concept peculiar to Iran. Throughout history, others who have assumed this title were copying Iran. The 'mystique' of the Shahanshah then is a potent force, as difficult to analyze as any dream of humanity, for the yardsticks of logic and sensory 'truths' cannot give us the whole story about such intangibles".[13]

To be acceptable as leader to the people and govern Iran, he must be perceived as a person possessing the necessary quality of leadership, *khvarnah*, or Divine Grace of Kings. It is a quality nascent in every human being, believed to derive ultimately from the higher being. The duty of such a leader is not so much to speak the words of God as a prophet, but to enact the will of God on Earth and establish social justice, and in the process to be insensitive to his own worldly whims, personal interests and desires. This has been the principle of government, or even leadership on smaller scale, throughout history among the Iranians and is rooted in Zoroastrianism and the pre-Islamic religious tradition of Iran.

Over the centuries invaders of Iran following the orthodox forms of Islam, whether Arabian, Mongol or Tartar, who sought the power, wealth and such possibilities had little notion of the social justice that underlay the creation of that wealth through work and agriculture. Although they had little notion of the responsibilities of kingship, one or two generations later, their descendants understood the above principles, and tried to follow it. Pio Filippani Ronconi, of the Oriental Institute, University of Naples, 1978, describes *khvarenah* or Divine Grace, in Iranian

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13 Richard N. Frye, *Persia,* 1968, page 28; and *Iranica Antiqua, Leiden* 1964, Volume 6, pp. 53-54.

government and culture, and how even after the conversion of Iran to Islam Iran has adhered to it:

> "As for the king, the actual presence of the khvarenah depended on his loyalty to the Essential Rule[14] (*arta, asha*), and was therefore granted in accordance with his personal worth. It was a gift that not only the king, but actually every man received from the Creator . . . In man this khvarenah is susceptible of developing itself (for instance in the case of the common man who becomes a king), for it is continuously nourished by wisdom, energy and virtues. Its presence within man actually depends on his spiritual awareness, that is, the extent to which he is conscious of his own original 'I-ness' . . .
>
> Originally, 'king' meant a man capable of realising, in full awareness, his own destiny by developing his inborn khvarenah . . . Thus the theory of the sacral kingship in ancient Iran appears to convey a meaning far beyond a class ideology; indeed, it points to an eschatological ideal regarding the mystical liberation of humankind as such. The Iranian people, through the tormented vicissitudes of their history, even after major changes in religion, have never lost sight of this ideal, sometimes personified as a worthy monarch or as a righteous dynasty".[15]

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14 The 'Essential Rule', arta, asha, in the holy books of pre-Islamic Iran, the Avesta, one of the main doctrines of Zoroastrianism, defined in the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, and compared to Old and New Testaments: "In the Avesta, whether as an abstract or as a personified name, Asha is almost exclusively conceived in the moral sense, as 'righteousness,' 'holiness,' the 'justice' of both the OT and the NT . . .The moral interest corresponds with the practical and political character of the Persians themselves; but the Zarathustrian ethic has its real foundation in the religious system of the Avesta . . . It is the sacred duty of man, and constitutes his moral uprightness, to uphold the forces of good; and so we see purity, holiness, righteousness, appearing as identical conceptions, and all included under the one word Asha. This Asha is the fundamental idea of the Zarathustrian religion . . . The final aim of religion, the regeneration of the world, corresponds with this idea of righteousness".
- *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, James Hastings, editor, NY, 1961, Volume 9, under the entry "Philosophy", page 866b, and Volume 5, under the entry "Ethics and Morality", pages 513a-513b.

15 Pio Filippani-Ronconi, *The Tradition of Sacred Kingship in Iran, in Iran Under the Pahlavis*, edited by George Lenczowski, 1978, pp. 62-64.

A US Plan for New Government in Iran Based on Said Principles

A prior US plan to bring about a new government in Iran follows the principles articulated above. US Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, was a close friend and confidant of the Kennedys. He travelled around the world with his family during court recesses. He would not spend his time in hotels. He and his family lived and were hosted among the Persian tribes, including those that the Zands come from. In one of those travelogues he notes how they were now headed to "Iran, a country I had visited so often it was a second home to me." [16] In his widely published travelogue *Strange Lands and Friendly People* Douglas noted: "Persia shows the West the true art of hospitality. Persians are spiritually close kin to Americans", and reiterated: "In great measure Persians and Americans have a close spiritual affinity."[17] He held to the wisdom, now often lost, that: "We will be secure only when the bulk of the world is aligned on the democratic front."[18] Justice Douglas made friends with then Prime Minister Mosaddeq of Iran, and was the Prime Minister's host when he visited the US. Of Prime Minister Mosaddeq overthrown by the CIA in 1953 Justice Douglas wrote:

> "This man, whom I am proud to call my friend, was a democrat in the La-Follette Norris sense of the term. We united with the British to destroy him; we succeeded; and ever since our name has not been an honored one in the Middle East."[19]

The comparison to La-Follette Norris was a reference, *inter alia,* to the fact when in 1953 the first CIA/MI6 coup led by Kermit Roosevelt failed and he was hiding in the basement of the US embassy Mosaddeq was urged to gather those responsible and have them shot, but he refused, saying no-one will be subject to summary justice, without trial and lawyer, under Iran's government. Kermit Roosevelt,

16 William O. Douglas, *West of the Indus,* 1958, p. 203

17 Ibid., pp. xiv and 53.

18 William O. Douglas, *Strange Lands and Friendly People*, 1951, p. 326.

19 William O. Douglas in *The U.S. and Revolution*, published by the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions. 1961, page 10.

though ordered back by his boss to the US, was emboldened to take advantage of Mosaddeq's humanity. Roosevelt tried again and succeeded.

In his autobiography Justice Douglas revealed the US plan to undo the 1953 CIA/MI6 coup and restore the Iranian constitution of 1906, that he and the Kennedys had devised in accordance with principles of regime change in Iran as described above by Frye, as follows:

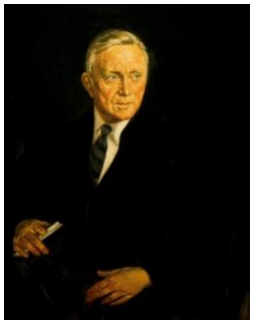

Photo courtesy of Oyez

USSC Justice William O. Douglas. Confidant of the Kennedys.

"I talked to Jack frequently about conditions in Iran and the corruption that was rampant. Then, when he entertained the Shah at the white House when he was here on an official visit, Jack concluded that the Shah was corrupt and not a person we could trust. Nasser Khan of the Ghashghais, a Persian tribe, had met Robert F. Kennedy, then Attorney General, and as a result of that contact and my conversations with Jack, the Kennedys became interested in the problems of Iran. The idea was to withdraw American support from the Shah, causing his abdication, and to put his son on the throne and establish a regency around him."[20]

20 William O. Douglas. *The Court Years, 1939-1975: The Autobiography of William O. Douglas*, 1980.

Karim Khan Zand, *Vakil,* or Attorney of the People

The Iranian tribes have traditionally been situated in the highlands of southwestern and central Iran. In the interregnum after Nader Shah, Karim Khan Zand succeeded in uniting them and becoming the ruler of Iran.

When after an interregnum of a few years the Zands emerged as victors and rose to power in 1751, kingship had become equated with tyranny and despotism in that age. Karim Khan Zand chose not be called or regarded as *Shah*.

Karim Khan appointed a prince of a former dynasty as a nominal figurehead king. Karim Khan himself, after trying out a few titles decided he would be called the *Vakil*, or *Attorney of the People*. In searching for or inventing the title that he wanted for his position, Karim Khan Zand first picked "Attorney of the Regency", then "Attorney General". After a few such variations on the theme he adopted the title of Vakil of the People. Its meaning in English lies at the confluence of *Attorney of the People,* and *Proxy, Representative* or *Advocate of the People*.

The Zands came from one of the Iranian tribes, the Lak (a.k.a. Lac), a branch of the much larger Lur tribe. The Lak tribe is an interface between the Lurs and the Kurds. They are Shiite like the Lurs, but their customs resemble those of the Kurds. Physically they resemble more the Kurds.

The Zands today are remembered in part because they resemble the pre-Islamic dynasts, for they enacted Persian cultural values and religious beliefs in government. For more than seven centuries, the dynasties of Iran had been of Turkoman background. Khanak E. Sanaty, Iranian historian of the post-Islamic era, describes:

> "Karim Khan-e Zand was the first ruler of true Iranian lineage to rule the entire realm of Iran following the Buyian dynasty[21]. … Under Karim Khan, security and freedom reigned in Iran, and the people lived in peace and prosperity . . . ".[22]

The Qajar (a.k.a. Kajar) tribe had been exiled to the Syrians desert for sixty years by Tamerlane, on account of what he regarded as their savagery. The Qajars are described in historical sources as having Tartar, Mongol and Arab elements in their background. Their leader, Agha Mohammad Khan, a pretender to the throne, was kept for sixteen years as a guest at the court of Karim Khan rather than be killed. Upon Karim Khan's death he escaped the court, gathered an army from among his tribe and after years of fighting succeeded, by way of treachery, to overcome the young Lotf Aly Khan who was 25 years of age. In later generations the Qajars became Persianized through multiple marriages to Iranians so that today their differences with the rest of the Iranians have faded away. Invaders of Iran within the first one or two generations of their arrival in Iran became Persianized, so much so that they became ardent patrons of Persian literature, art forms as well as religion.

For despots to have ruled Iran it meant to have ruled the cities, seats of government, and points of concentration of wealth. But well over 90% of the population continued to live until the modern age in the rural countryside. Included in that is the Iranian tribes, living in mountainous terrain. It is only relatively recently, in the past few decades, that the country has become more urbanized and over 50% of the population has moved to the cities. In a process of give and take, the rural population has imparted some of its characteristics to the cities while itself benefiting from the advantages of higher education and a more modern world than the one its parents knew.

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21 1055 AD

22 Khanak Eshghi Sanaty, *National Political Movements in Iran (in Persian). Jonbeshha-ye Nasionalistee dar Iran* 1985, published in Canada, pp. 335-6.

After the establishment of their dynasty in 1796 the Qajars massacred the remaining Zands in the capital Shiraz. The descendants of the Zands in the protection of the mountains of their homeland in southwestern Iran, Luristan and Kurdistan, survived. With the establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty (ca. 1925), also Persian, some of the Zands who had survived the Qajars moved from the mountain villages to cities such as Kermanshah.

First-Hand Accounts of Zands from British Diplomats

Contemporaneous British diplomats, envoys and visitors who were fluent in Persian and were rather keen observers of Iranian political history describe their personal experiences in Iran and specifically with the Zand dynasty, and the place it occupies in Iran's culture and national ethos. These diplomats later translated books from Persian into English, and authored books of their own on Iran, their information drawn from Persian manuscripts, their first-hand experiences and other sources.

Their titles alone are suggestive that in our day, in many respects, we are re-living their times. Sir Harford Jones Brydges was Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from His Britannic Majesty to the Court of Tehran, having spent thirty years in Iran. He dedicated his book to the King of England, which became posthumously published (1933). He was the first to arrange an agreement between Britain and Iran. Part of the result of his embassy and friendship with Lotf Aly Khan Zand appears also to have been British interest in the crown jewels of Iran. Sir John Malcolm arrived from British India with a retinue of five hundred in Iran. Later he wrote the first comprehensive book in English on Iranian history, in two volumes and two editions (1815 and 1829).

In reading these contemporaneous accounts, it becomes evident that they write from a slightly different Zeitgeist and milieu, but what they say applies to Iran today. Their spellings of names may slightly vary.

As it is often pointed out by historians, Iran has been the only country in the Middle East that has not become a colony of the European powers. Iran formally declared neutrality in both world wars, although its neutrality was violated and its territory was occupied by belligerent armies. In World War I this led to about ten million of the population being perished. This catastrophe in Iran is largely forgotten and often sidelined in accounts of human holocausts. Unlike Japan which limited European visitors to the port of Nagasaki, foreign visitors to Iran were not only allowed free

entry into the country, but were warmly received and given room and board by people in the country. They got to know the country well, As a result European powers came to exercise considerable influence in the internal affairs of Iran.

British Ambassador Sir John Malcolm on Karim Khan Zand, *Attorney of the People*

Sir John Malcolm authored the first *History of Persia* in two volumes, 1815. Here Malcolm writes on the *Reign of Kerreem Khan Zend*.

> "The happy reign of this excellent prince, as contrasted with those who preceded and followed him, affords to the historian of Persia that kind of mixed pleasure and repose, which a traveller enjoys, on arriving in a beautiful and fertile valley, during an arduous journey over barren and rugged wastes . . . The inhabitants of the principal cities in the empire showed from the first their partiality to Kerreem, which was grounded on their confidence in his humanity and justice . . . He had ambition, but free from the turbulence which almost always mixes with it. He preserved an undisturbed temper equally amid scenes of violence and repose, and was through life distinguished by a manly simplicity of mind, which kept him as remote from the pomp and vanities of his high rank, as from that affectation which endeavours to conceal its pride under the garb of humility . . .
>
> Kerreem Khan possessed that noble courage which dares to pardon, and the generous confidence with which he treated those whom he forgave, appears to have almost always attached them to his person. His virtues had nothing of a romantic character; they were, like all his other qualities, plain and intrinsic. He was esteemed pious, and was exact in the performance of his religious duties; but his religion was not austere. His natural disposition indeed was gay and cheerful; and

he continued to the last to enjoy the pleasures of is world, anxiously desirous that others should do the same . . .

Possessed of great bodily strength and an active frame, he was an admirable horseman, and expert in all military exercises but though unlearned himself, he valued and encouraged learning in others. His court was the resort of men of liberal knowledge . . .

The mode which Kerreem Khan took to attain and preserve his power was different from that pursued by any former monarch of Persia. He made no effort to gain strength by the aid of religious or superstitious feelings . . .

There is no part of his character more pleasing and surprising, than being able, amid such scenes as he lived in, to carry out the best affections and feelings of human nature into almost every measure of government; and his success affords a lesson to despotic monarchs. He lived happily; his death was that of a father amid a family whom he had cherished, and by whom he was beloved. The Persians to this day venerate his name, and those who have risen to greatness on the destruction of the dynasty which he founded, do not withhold their tribute of applause to his goodness. Indeed, when meaning to detract from his fame, they often give him the highest possible eulogium. 'Kerreem Khan', they say, 'was not a great king. His court was not splendid; and he made few conquests; but it must be confessed, that he was a wonderful magistrate."[23]

23 Sir John Malcolm, *The History of Persia, From the Most Early Period to the Present Time*, Second Edition, 1829, Volume 2, pp. 58, 63, 63n, 83-88.

Commercial Relations with the West Under the Zands

The Zands actively promoted agriculture, the crafts, commerce as well as literature and the arts. The memory of the Zands among the people, and the contract they entered into with the British is described by Sir Percy Sykes.

Photo Courtesy of Wikipedia

Sir Percy Sykes, KCIE, CB, CMG, Brigadier-General, British Army, author of *History of Persia*, a sequel to Malcolm's *History of Persia*

Sir Percy Sykes, KCIE, CB, CMG, Brigadier-General, British Army, author of *History of Persia*, a sequel to Malcolm's**:** "The total length of Karim Khan's reign was twenty-nine years, and for over twenty he was the undisputed ruler of Persia. He refused the title of Shah. … Of his justice, his sense of humor, and his kindliness, I heard many instances when living at Shiraz, where his name is still loved and revered . . . In close touch with the people, affecting no state and yet shrewd and capable, Karim Khan gave exhausted Iran two decades of sorely needed rest, and when he died at a great age the homely Zand chief was genuinely and deeply mourned . . .

The Afghan invasion (ca. 1720) and the period of confusion that followed were responsible for the closing of most of the European factories in Persia, and some of them were not reopened . . . Karim Khan was anxious to foster British trade, and his *farman* [decree], of which I give a copy,[*] was highly favourable in its terms.

[*] "Art. 1. "The English Company may have as much ground, and in any port of Bushire, as they choose to build a factory on, or at any other port in the Gulf. They

may have as many cannon mounted on it as they choose, but not to be larger than 6 pounds bore; and they may build factory-houses in any part of the kingdom they choose."

(2) No Customs' Dues to be Levied on Goods Imported or Exported at Bushire or elsewhere.
(3) No other European nation to Import Woollen Goods.
(4) Payment of Debts due to English Merchants and others.
(5) Right of English to Buy and Sell Goods.
(6) Prohibition against Clandestine Trade.
(7) Wrecks.
(8) Religious Liberty.
(9) Surrender of Deserters.
(10) Exemption of Brokers, Servants, and others belonging to Factories from Payment of Taxes or Imposts.
(11) "Wherever the English are, they shall have a spot of ground allotted them for a Burying Ground; and if they want a spot for a Garden, if the King's property, it shall be given them gratis; if belonging to any private person, they must pay a reasonable price for it."
(12) "The House that formerly belonged to the English Company at Schyrash I now re-deliver to them, with the garden and water thereto belonging" " [24]

24 Sir Percy Sykes, *A History of Persia, Third Edition,* 1930, Volume II, pages 279-281

Iran Under Zand Government

Under the Zands Iran experienced a return of government to one that, like its pre-Islamic dynasties, derived from its native values and culture. People knew that government was there to serve them. The Zands were the only dynasty of Iranian origin and culture to have ruled the country in seven centuries. As Emineh Pakravan, Iranian historian, writes:

> "Karim Khan had not learned the art of being a good sovereign from anywhere, nor seen it in any living role-model. It was, rather, the result of his own august genius. He was the son of the chief of a barely known clan of the Lur tribe, called *Zandieh*."[25] . . . "Although his bones may have withered, his legacy to-day is more than just memory; the Vakil [*Attorney of the People*] continues to live, among the people."[26]

The reforms that the Zands undertook were wide-ranging. They encompassed the whole realm of government and included:

Responsible government
Establishment of order, peace and security in the country
Establishment of social justice
Development of friendly foreign relations
Clemency for adversaries of the state and pretenders to monarchy
Advent of the office of *Advocate of the People,* as opposed to Shah
Instituting religious freedom
Protection of Jews, Christians and other minorities
Actively upholding the rights of ethnic and religious minorities
The lowest tax rates of any government of Iran, on individuals and businesses
Re-establishment and promotion of international trade

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25 Emineh Pakravan, *Agha Mohammad Khan Ghadjar,* translated from the French by Jahangir Afkary, 1988, pp. 24.

26 Ibid.

Eliminating piracy and terrorism in the Persian Gulf
Promotion of the arts and sciences
Revival of the economy, including agriculture, crafts, commerce
Fiscal responsibility of the State
Establishment of emergency and famine reserves
Patronage of the arts, poetry and cultural traditions and activities
Enacting happiness, by decree, as a principle of government

William S. Haas of Columbia University in 1946, sociologist & historian of Iran, trainer of US troops in WWII :

> "Immediately after the death of Nader Shah, it was Karim Khan Zand, of the Zand tribe, in the southern province of Fars[27], who was victorious and ruled over Iran from 1750 to 1779. He was one of the most likeable and humane rulers who ever occupied the throne of Iran, and his memory is still cherished in the minds of the Persian people. His reign constituted a real oasis of happiness in a history rich in oppression and tribulation".[28]

Likewise wrote Clements R. Markham, British historian, of Karim Khan Zand:

> " The Wakil [Attorney of the People] chose the city of Shiraz for the seat of his government. Various causes combined to induce him to make this choice, among which were the love its citizens always bore him, its great beauty, its proximity to the powerful tribes in the mountains of Luristan – the chief supporters of Karim's power".[29]

27 Karim Khan Zand, although from Luristan & Kurdistan, chose first Shiraz, provincial capital of Fars, and then Tehran, for his capital, due to their being more central.

28 William S. Haas, *Iran,* 1946, pp. 29, 68.

29 Clements R. Markham, *A General Sketch of the History of Persia,* 1874, pp. 319-28, 337.

State Policy Under the Zands Toward the Islamic Clergy

The institution of the Imam is an eschatological one in Shiism. One cannot have political leaders called Imam in Shiism, as they have been called in the Islamic Republic, a fact commonly overlooked today.

The Islamic clergy came to Iran from Arab countries in the early 1500s, and were established with endowments from the state. Their function was to create religious fervor and through religion unify the country, that was facing the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire was seeking to expand into Europe, and thus was at war with Europe. Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, a Flemish diplomat, writer and herbalist was sent in 1554 as ambassador of the Austrian-Habsburg Empire under the emperor Ferdinand I to the court of Suleiman the Magnificent. Busbecq detailed the deep-seated political and religious rivalry between the Sunni Ottoman Turks and the Shia Safavid Persians. He regarded the Persian resistance to the Ottomans as Europe's Salvation. Busbecq observed the precarious state of the European powers and the relief provided by the Safavid Empire of Persia in his *Turkish Letters* (circa 1581):

> *"When I compare the Difference between their Soldiers and ours, I stand amazed to think what will be the Event; for certainly their Soldiers must needs conquer, and ours must needs be vanquished ... Tis only the Persian standing between us and Ruin. The Turks would fain be upon us, but only the Persian keeps him back; the Turk's War with the Persian affords us only a Respite, not a Deliverance: when the Turk makes a Peace with the Persian, the Turk will bring all the Power of the East upon us, and how ready we are to receive him, I am afraid to speak."* [30]

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[30] Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, *Travels into Turkey: containing the most accurate account of the Turks, and neighbouring nations,* ... Translated from the original Latin of the learned A. G. Busbequius. ca. 1581, tr. 1744, p. 138. https://archive.org/details/bim_eighteenth-century_travels-into-turkey-con_busbecq-ogier-ghislain-_1744/page/138/mode/2up?q=%22only+a+respite%22

The Ottomans were seeking to defeat Iran and make it a vassal state. If that had happened there would not have been an Israeli state. Thus the Islamic Shiite clergy played their role in history. Had the Ottomans succeeded. Europe would have been a different form. There may not have been an Israel, or one in its present form.

While prior and successive kings of Iran set endowments for the Islamic clergy, the Zands rejected the plea of the Islamic clergy to continue to do so. The Islamic clergy do not work to earn a living. They have not worked except during the period of Zand rule. The attitude and policy of the Zands in this regard, being the temporal representative of the people, is representative of how a preponderance of the Iranian people view the Islamic clergy. The founder of the dynasty, Karim Khan Zand, is characterized by historians to have regarded the Islamic clergy as "parasites" on society.

When asked by the clergy and their representatives for a stipend for them, Karim Khan responded by listing what he regarded as the legitimate civil occupational categories in society, their engagements and how he required that people pursue an occupation in these categories as : "those engaged in agriculture, those engaged in trade and commerce, those engaged in the professions, and those engaged in the service sector," four in all, adding: "the order of wisdom mandates that people generally should belong to one or other of these categories" and earn their livelihood, noting that he himself had made a living from being a craftsman, equivalent to an engineer of the time. As for those who exist outside such categories Karim Khan remarked : "let their faces not be seen"[31] around the court.

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31 Rostam ol-Hokama on Karim Khan-e Zand : the Islamic clergy and their stipend: Mohammed Hashem, Rostam ol-Hokama, *Rostam ol-Tavarikh* original in Persian. Editor: Mohammed Moshiry, Tehran, 1348, pp. 309.

He discontinued the stipend that had been set up from the public treasury for the Islamic clergy, with the exception of very few of their leaders as a token of acknowledgement of their status. Without state funding, the clergy's influence and power was thus greatly diminished, and they were deprived of their militia, to harass and terrorize secular leaders in society, until the Qajars (Kajars), the dynasty succeeding the Zands in 1796, restored their privileges.

Many leading members of society over the years have been persecuted or assassinated by the extremists in the Islamic establishment. Among those in recent political history prior to the Islamic regime is Ahmad Kasravy, a nationally known author and scholar, who wrote in bitter opposition to the Islamic clergy. Kasravy's books still remain popular reading stock for much of the educated in Iran. He was called to the supreme court of Iran to defend his position in 1945. While in court was assassinated by Islamic fundamentalists. Perpetrators and criminals behind this act went unpunished, because of the influence of the clergy over the Shah and his own lack of interest to support or do much to uphold popular, secular leadership that would be rival to himself. In addition he paid the Islamic clergy an oil share, which they used to develop and strengthen their organization.

The Shah's financing of the Islamic clergy and his lack of support for secular leaders led to a vacuum of popular leadership, with the result that the Islamic clergy were the only leaders and had the only organization, which though in appearance religious, was in fact political and thus filled that vacuum when the Islamic revolution came about in 1978-79. Another example was Prime Minister Razmara who was supported by the U.S. and assassinated in the 1950s by the same elements of the Islamic clergy.

After the Zand dynasty, during the Qajar period which lasted from 1794 and to 1921, the power and influence of the Islamic clergy and their organization grew. During the Pahlavi period, which began in 1925 and ended with the advent of the Islamic regime in 1979, initially a political stance was taken against the Islamic clergy, but this was not later followed up by action, and the power and influence of the Islamic clergy grew again. They were paid regularly by the late Shah from state funds in

large sums, which what was called their "oil share". With this they financed their organization as a state within a state. The Shah found it easier to appease the Islamic clergy than confront them. There were more prominent, and moderate, clergy who were household names, in contrast to Ayatollah Khomeini who was relatively unknown. At the same time he oppressed and eliminated the popular, secular leaders of Iran, for it was easy to do so. The Islamic clergy used state funds to gain power and in the end hijacked the revolution against the Shah from the people.

The revolution in 1978-79 did not begin as an Islamic movement. The Shah had eliminated potential political rivals, leaving the clergy as the only equivalent to a party left. The clergy filled the void left by the Shah and then eliminated what political opposition remained or could emerge.

Although following the Islamic revolution of 1978-79 the regime changed or effaced the names of institutions (such as universities), buildings, roads, monuments etc. having anything to do with prior dynasties, and replaced them with Arabic or Islamic names, they have left intact all that was built by the Zands and all that was named after the Zands afterwards.

Karim Khan Zand's Polemic with the Islamic Clergy on Zoroastrianism and Islam

Several arguments and polemics are reported by Karim Khan's contemporaneous historians and court chroniclers to have taken place between him and the Islamic clergy and their followers. One of these polemics concerns eschatology, soteriology, and Good and Evil. As known in the realm of religious scholarship:

> "The history of the conversion of Persia is not very well known, because it is to a large extent the story of an adaptation of a religious mentality to new forms without giving up any essential elements of

> the previous creed. All the traditions of Iran were preserved in Persia under a thin cover of Mohammedanism. Moreover, Zoroastrianism never completely disappeared from Persia"[32]

In Islam the *Traditions* or parables are episodes reported in the life of the Prophet of Islam. They are used along with the Koran to interpret Islamic law, and are analogous to precedence in secular law in the West. Church and State, religion and government, were mixed in both Europe and the Middle East. Europe freed itself of that. The Middle East is going through the same process.

When Karim Khan Zand was asked by followers of the Islamic clergy why he refuted an Islamic Tradition on the End of Days he replied :

> "I have had friends among the people of various faiths and ethnicities and have had discourse with those who have read books sacred and profane, Traditions, histories, legends and other accounts. They have related the contents to me. I am aware of a preponderance of these and although not educated, I have come to possess a knowledge and understanding regarding these matters more than those who claim to be divines. In any era, until the sovereign possesses such knowledge and wisdom he cannot govern".[33]

Karim Khan then continued, mentioning how he came to learn the *Jamasp-Namah*, part of the collection of holy books of Zoroastrianism, which deals with eschatology and soteriology :

> "I have come to know a Zoroastrian astrologer. He has read to me the Jamasp-Namah to the end. I recollect it recounts the events of more than five thousand years . . . It is sound and veritable." (Ibid.)

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[32] *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, James Hastings, Editor, New York, 1961, Vol. 12, p. 867b

33 Rostam ol-Hokama on Karim Khan-e Zand's polemic with the Islamic clergy : Mohammed Hashem, Rostam ol-Hokama, *Rostam ol-Tavarikh* (in Persian). Editor: Mohammed Moshiry, Tehran, 1348, pp. 323.

The clergy replied in a protest, to Karim Khan : “Do you give credence to what Jamasp the Zoroastrian would say, and refute the account of a saint” ? Karim Khan then made reply that: “A saint would never utter such irrational statements” (Ibid.) as you point in the Tradition.

Karim Khan concluded the polemic by saying : "We have heard tales and absurdities such as these many times. God has availed us of power of intellect and discernment, and it is with that which we have to get to know Him and distinguish between Truth and Lie, between Good and Evil.”[34]

The Zands, Islam and the Iranian Tribes

Under the Zands the influence and role of the Islamic clergy in government was abolished. Their influence in society was diminished also because Karim Khan Zand ended their stipend which they were used to receiving since their arrival during the Safavid dynasty (1501-1722). Karim Khan told the Islamic clergy they had to be productive and work for a living like the rest of society.

The Islamic clergy had been brought into Iran from Arab countries by the Safavid dynasty. In that era the Ottomans were invading Iran on the east and Europe on the west. The Safavid dynasty needed the Shiite clergy for the purposes of propaganda to support the state, and promote defense against the Ottomans.

The revolution of 1979 did not start off as an Islamic revolution. The Shah had eliminated all secular opposition. He had paid an “oil share” to the clergy. No secular leadership was allowed to emerge. The clergy, in diverting the revolution of 1979 into an Islamic revolution, sought a return of the privilege and influence they had under the Qajar (Kajar) dynasty. From the point of view of the Islamic regime, their control over the country now, politically, is in large measure a

34 Ibid. page 324.

restoration and expansion of their influence in the country during the Qajar period (1796-1925), in which they lived off the state.

The Zands are a branch of the Lak (or Lac) tribe, a branch of the Lur, which is situated between the Lurs and the Kurds which are two of the great Iranian tribes, numbering, including their descendants, from several million (Lurs and Bakhtiaris) to over twenty million (Kurds) today. In 1874 Clements Markham estimated the Lak to be about 200,000 families. As notes Iranian historian Habibullah Shamluee, 1969, on Karim Khan Zand:

> "Even though he had arisen from among the tribes, in statesmanship and politics he ranked alongside other prominent statesmen of Iran's past. He never stooped to circumstance, of time or place, but remained true to the end of his life to his tribal character and unsophisticated upbringing."[35]

Although the majority of the Iranian population, in cities as well as the country, are Shiites, the world in our day has generally come to know of Shiism through the ruling Islamic clergy, rather than the people. There is a difference between Shiism of the people and that of the ruling Islamic clergy. Karim Khan himself, coming from among the people, embodied that difference. Parviz Rajaby, Iranian sociologist and historian of the Zand period in his book in Persian *Karim Khan-e Zand and His Age*, 1976, quoting Sir John, British Ambassador and scholar (1815):

> "Karim Khan never tried to bolster his popularity by pretending to be devout, for he was not a hypocrite . . . In studying his life and times, it becomes apparent to us that he did not pay much attention to matters of religion . . .

35 Habibollah Shamluee, *The History of Iran, from the Medes to the Pahlavis* (in Persian), 1969. *Tarikh-e Iran, az Maad taa Pahlavi*, p. 742.

> Unlike other kings before him, Karim Khan did not try to win over the public by a display of splendid regalia. Rather, he tried to base his support on close ties with the people, and care for the underprivileged . . .
>
> Throughout life, he remained grateful to those who had at some point in time, in some manner, been of help to him, and paid respect to those who had previously held positions of seniority over him . . . His social measures were unparalleled in the history of Iran . . . After Karim Khan, historians without exception have extolled the traits of character of this king, the king who had no throne and wore no crown".[36]

Among the Iranian tribes, the differences of the people in religious belief and practices recede still further from the form of religion among the clergy. Take the case of prayer. After the Islamic revolution of 1979 in Iran, there was pressure to carry out mass prayers. But the relation of each person to the higher being is an individual one. Today people are coerced into mass prayer sessions at least once a week. In contrast, as reports one of the Iranian historians of the time, Qazviny (1796) "the Vakil never performed his daily prayers during the whole of his life."[37] [38] This was not special to Karim Khan; it is true in general of most of the people.

The Zands fostered and encouraged social activities festivities, parties and such gatherings that now the Islamic regime bans or suppresses. They appointed happiness patrols going about the neighborhoods at night time and on the weekends to enquire and report where the sound of people making merry could not be heard. Emineh Pakravan, Iranian historian, writes of Karim Khan Zand, ca. 1951:

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36 Parviz Rajaby, *Karim Khan-e Zand and His Age, original in Persian: Karim Khan-e Zand va Zaman-e U,* Tehran, 2535 (1976), pp. 133-34, 136-37, 148.

37 Abolhassan Qazvini, *Fava'ed ol-Safaviah*, 1797 original Persian MS in the Cambridge University Library, 00.6.41, p. 143a, cited by J. R. Perry, *Karim Khan Zand,* 1979.

38 Vakil being the term meaning Advocate of the People, the title the Zands chose in lieu of Shah.

> "Until that age, it had been unheard of that a king or regent would make the very enjoyment of life itself into an act of government. Karim Khan's wish was to see people be happy and prosper."[39]

These are the results of values inherited from pre-Islamic Iran. The promotion of happiness is not a feature of Islam. But the precursor to Shiism, "Zoroastrianism is a religion which enjoins upon its follower the pleasant duty of being happy," as scholars have observed.[40]

Justice Douglas' Visits to the Iranian Tribes that Led to US Plans for New Regime

Justice Douglas (1898-1980) of the US Supreme Court was perhaps the first American statesman to get to know Iran and the Middle East as a good-will ambassador and self-made scholar of the US and confidant of the Kennedys. He was aware that due to Americans having been busy building their economy at home, unlike colonial powers they had not developed experts on the Middle East and in general on Asia, and took it up on himself to go and meet people in many countries including Iran to find out the problems of those regions. He sought to relieve the U.S. from reliance on colonial powers on foreign policy. He describes the aftermath of Zand rule in Iran. He traveled to Iran several times in the late 40s and early 50s and lived with the tribes, of whom the Zands are a part. Prior to his visit he had studied the countries of the Middle East and later in several extended trips got to know first-hand the various countries and cultures. Douglas refers to Iran in one of his travelogues called *West of the Indus* as "a country I had visited so often it was a second home to me"[41], a point he reiterates elsewhere. As a close friend and confidante of the Kennedys, Justice Douglas was able to work his knowledge,

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39 Emineh Pakravan, Agha Mohammad Khan Ghadjar, translated from the French by Jahangir Afkary, 1988, p. 23.

40 This statement is attributed to Mary Boyce of the University of London, a lifetime scholar of Zoroastrianism and its literature.

41 William O. Douglas, *West of the Indus, 7000 miles through the cradle of* civilisation –West Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and on to Turkey, 1958, p. 203.

gained first-hand, into foreign policy. Using his experience and insights the Kennedys worked out plans to retire the Shah and establish democracy in Iran, ca. 1962. The revolution of 1978-79, prior to being led and taken over by the Islamic clergy due to absence of secular leaders inside Iran, was initially in large measure the people's backlash against the overthrow of Iran's elected government in 1953. The plans of Justice Douglas and the Kennedys did not come to fruition due to the untimely death of JFK but were actively under consideration at the time.

While most other visitors stayed in hotels and saw the tourist route, or met government and business officials in the capital, Justice Douglas explored the countries of the Middle East off the "beaten track". He was thus able to develop his unique knowledge and insights. He summarizes the results of his research of the problems of the Middle East in the last twelve pages of his book, *Strange Lands and Friendly People*. Most of his conclusions hold as valid today as then, such as: "We will be secure only when the bulk of the world is aligned on the democratic front."[42] Here we quote from Justice Douglas's readable travelogue *Strange Lands and Friendly People,* 1951, which he wrote as an account of "*discovery and adventure south of the Soviet border: Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria. Iraq, Israel, Greece, Cyprus, India*":

> "Persia shows the West the true art of hospitality. Persians are spiritually close kin to Americans" . . . "In great measure Persians and Americans have a close spiritual affinity"[43] . . . "Persia needs to be known more intimately by the West. Though far away and remote, it occupies a strategic and important place in world affairs. It possesses about one-fifth of the known oil reserves in the world. Its ports along the Persian Gulf give access to India and Africa. Its northern neighbor is Russia, who either may need oil or may desire to shut off Europe's supply from the Middle East . . .

42 William O. Douglas, *Strange Lands and Friendly People*, 1951, p. 326.

43 William O. Douglas, *Strange Lands and Friendly People*, 1951, pp. xiv and 53.

> The pages which follow attempt to introduce the people of Persia, to describe their problems, and to analyze some of the major stresses and strains within the nation. I use as my main material the four chief tribes of Persia -the Kurds, the Lurs, the Bakhtiaris and the Ghashghais who, I think are a good mirror in which to see the soul and spirit of the nation. These tribes -with whom I have lived intimately- reside in the rough and broken Zagros Mountains that stretch from the Russian and Turkish borders on the North to the Persian Gulf on the south . . . They have a tendency to sparseness. They are a quick-witted, friendly people with a yen for tall tales and dry humor. They know the art of hospitality; they thirst for discourse and argumentation. They love the outdoors -streams and mountains and the hunt. In the social sense they are as democratic as any people I have known. They have a reserve we associate with our New Englanders; but underneath they are close kin to our Westerners. These characteristics, most conspicuous among the tribes, tend to become diluted and modified in the cities . . . Though the Lurs today are Shiah Moslems, they have clung fast to some ancient customs dating back to Zoroaster . . . When the lamp[44] is lit at night and brought into the room, all members of the family rise out of respect".[45]

During the various invasions of Iran over the centuries, the Iranian tribes have managed, as a group, to maintain their culture and identity. They have inhabited the inaccessible mountains and have been able to have a degree of isolation and maintain their traditions and values. But as a consequence the tribes were situated away from educational institutions and the progress in science and knowledge, which took place in cities. They received little by way of formal education. Due to the strength of the oral tradition over the ages, they retained their culture and

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44 Lamp being the symbol of forces of Light and Good versus Darkness in the pre-Islamic religion of Iran, Zoroastrianism

45 Ibid, pages 52-53, 96-97.

traditions. The continuity and strength of the Persian oral tradition over the ages is manifest from the close correspondence of extant accounts separated by millennia in time, and thousands of miles apart. Mary Boyce of the University of London: "Oral literature is immensely conservative, and one finds individual works existing for centuries, recreated in Parthian [46] and Middle Persian [47], from Avestan originals."[48] Clements R. Markham, British historian, 1874, on the tribes the Zands originated from :

> "During more than twenty years, it was governed by the best and most virtuous sovereign of Persia since its conquest by the Muhammadans . . . The lofty chain of mountains, extending from Kermanshah to Shiraz, and covering great part of the provinces of Luristan and Khuzistan, is inhabited by numerous and powerful tribes of Persian origin . . . The Zand tribe is a branch of the numerous Lak tribe, which is subdivided into many clans . . . They date their origin from the time of the Kaianian dynasty;[49] and the Zands declare that their ancestors were charged with the care of the Zand Avesta,[50] by the great prophet Zoroaster himself."[51]

46 Eastern Iran, the Parthian Dynasty ca. 250 BC - 225 AD.

47 Western Iran, spoken ca. 200 BC - 1000 AD.

48 Language of the Zand-Avesta, or collection of the holy books of Zoroastrianism., placed by modern scholars concurrently with Vedic as around 1800 BC, while the Greeks, including Aristotle, placed it about 6,000 years before their time.

49 During which, based on oral history, arose Prophet Zoroaster.

50 Zand-Avesta: Collection of holy books of Zoroastrianism.

51 Clements R. Markham, *A General Sketch of the History of Persia,* 1874, pp. 319-28, 337.

Differences Between Shiism and Sunnism and their Impact on Politics

The terms "Shiite" and "Sunni" are frequently encountered in the context of the Middle East in the media without a statement of what the audience is supposed to understand by those terms. Even scholars outside their fields of specialty and thus unfamiliar with the subject can take on the same notion of laymen. Here we summarize the differences. Sunnism is the orthodox form of Islam. Most Moslem countries profess Sunnism. Shiism is a form of Islam prevalent in Iran and nations and tribes with historic connection to it. While it is regarded as a sect of Islam its basis is the pre-Islamic religion of Iran, Zoroastrianism, and Mazdaism.

By developing Shiism to its present state, Iranians imparted to Islam the belief in a just and righteousness God, Free Will, the conception of Judgment Day, Messiah and Afterlife. Thus although on the surface it may seem that Iran is like much of the rest of the Middle East in its traditions, it has in fact retained its own religious beliefs under an Islamic garb. This was due to the fact that the conversion to Islam was through force, not inculcation.

Richard Frye

Harvard University

Frye: "Persian artists painted the figures of men and women in their miniatures, and the wine of Shiraz, famed in poetry, is still consumed by the worthy citizens of that city. How can this be reconciled with the precepts of Islam ? It is difficult, if not impossible. The answer, however, is partly that the Persians were Persians first and Moslems afterwards. Further, the answer is to be sought in the revolt of the Persians against orthodox Islam, their acceptance of a heresy, and their transformation of it into something more in accord with their own traditions. This heresy is the schismatic sect of Shiites."[52]

[52] Richard N. Frye, *The United States and Turkey and Iran*, by Lewis V. Thomas, and Richard N. Frye, 1951, page 203.

The differences described here apply more to populations in the course of time than rigidly to each specific individual of the faith on a daily basis. With individuals there are choices which shape the character and define the individuality of each person. A great many Sunnis may believe in divine justice, free will and morality even though these doctrines are part of Shiism. The distinctions are often not sharp but taper smoothly.

Beliefs and Tenets Held in Common in Shiism and Sunnism

Both sects believe (though in different ways as explained below) in the one God, in the Prophet and in Resurrection, Final Judgment, and Afterlife.

Due to the absence of separation of Religion and State within most Islamic countries, the beliefs of various sects in Islam often tend to translate directly into the practical, economic and political sphere.

Beliefs and Tenets of Shiism that Distinguish it from Sunnism

Shiism has a number of doctrines in addition to its commonly held beliefs with Sunnism. Shiite doctrines include the eschatological institution of the Imam, in Divine Justice as an inherent quality of God, in Free Will that God has endowed human beings with. One of these doctrines is logical self-consistency, that coherence and self-consistency must apply to religious doctrines, so the tenets of religion would not be refuting each other. These beliefs are what Shiism has added to Islam. Thus fundamentalist sects of Sunnism in Arabia, Wahhabis and Salafis, thus do not regard the Shiites as Moslem.

By contrast in Sunnism Imams are held to be earthly figures, employees of mosques who perform a job for wages, akin to secular jobs.

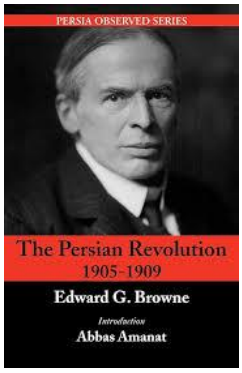

Photo courtesy of Mage Publishers

Edward G. Browne, University of Cambridge

Edward G. Browne on the forcible conversion of Iran to Islam ca. 7th century AD: "Yet, after all, the change was but skin deep and soon a host of heterodox sects born on Persian soil – Shi'ites, Sufis, Isma'ilis, philosophers- arose". … These sects transformed the religion forced on the nation "into something which, though still wearing a semblance of Islam, had a significance widely different from that which one may fairly suppose was intended by the Arabian prophet".[1]

The Eschatological Figure of *Imam* in Shiism, vis a vis Imam in the Islamic Regime

The only remaining Imam that exists in Shiite belief is an eschatological figure, the last Imam, *Mahdi*, equated with the second coming of the Messiah. The institution of the Imam has been hereditary in Shiism, and the last Imam lived in the 800's. Thus the notion and title of "Imam" applied to Ayatollah Khomeini which the Islamic clergy adopted from the outset, also later applied to Khamenei, is un-Shiite. It is anathema to Shiism. The eschatological nature of the Imam in Shiism goes back to Iran's pre-Islamic religious beliefs.

Richard Frye

Harvard University

Frye: "in the official religion of Persia is the belief that the twelfth *imam*, descended from 'Ali, vanished and will some day reappear as the Messiah to lead his people to salvation. This concept is an ancient one in Iranian religious thought, for in the *Avesta*, long before the birth of Christ, the coming of a savior is predicted. Thus, native Iranian tradition reasserted itself after the Arab conquest."[1]

The Belief in the Inherent Justness of God

A major tenet of Shiism is the belief in the inherent quality of justice in of God, a quality which is held to translate to justice that God expects from man on earth, in relations with fellow human beings, and the political and practical sphere. While Sunni people do believe in justice, the religious doctrine of Sunnism does not. The two sects' differing conceptions of God exist under the same name.

The Doctrine of Free Will in Shiism and Sunnism

Shiism doctrine has it that God has endowed human beings with Free Will, who are held to be morally responsible for their actions. Though bounded by the time and place and society they are born, within those bounds human beings can exercise their free will. While beliefs in morality and fee will are also prevalent among Sunni individuals, they are absent from official Sunni doctrine in three of the four sects of Sunnism, where it is held that the actions of human beings are predetermined by Allah. As a consequence actions taken could be absolved of moral responsibility. This was manifest during the spread of Islam in its early centuries, where massacres of hundreds of thousands of civilians, and enslavement and selling of women and children, was commonplace.

The Doctrine of Logic as Applies to the Tenets of Religion

In Shiism it is held that the articles of faith have to be logically consistent. Thus moral responsibility, the notion of Judgment Day and Heaven and Hell would be meaningless without free will. William S. Haas, Colombia University:

> "In Sufism, the Persian spirit maintains its purity. The Shia, on the other hand, is an admirable, though inevitably only partially successful attempt, to discard Islam; it is, psychologically speaking, more of an escape than a solution."[53]

[53] William S. Haas, *Iran*, 1946, pages 132-35.

The Origin of the Beliefs of Shiism

The origin of the beliefs of Shiism is traceable to the pre-Islamic beliefs of Iran. The Magi were the pre-Islamic priests of Iran, as Matthew reports who came to see the infant Jesus. The beliefs of Shiism were adopted and carried over from an early sect of Islam called the Magi of Islam. As a model the Shiite belief system may be regarded as modified Zoroastrianism, on top of which lies a layer of Islamic trappings.

Photo courtesy of C-SPAN

Bernard Lewis, Princeton University

Bernard Lewis, Princeton University, on the forcible conversion of Middle East to Islam by the Arabs, notes "*Iran: The Exception"* : "There was one country, however, which though conquered by the Arabs and converted to Islam, nevertheless retained its own distinctive national identity. That exception is Iran."[54]

The *Mu'tazilites* (meaning the *sect detached* from the main body of Islam), were closely identified with the *Qadarites* or "*Free-Willers,"* together known as the *majoos*[55] , or Magi, of Islam, in the Traditions attributed to the prophet. *Majoos* refers to not only the priests but the laity also. The doctrines of the Mo'tazellites and Qadarites were adopted or inherited from pre-Islamic Iran. They survived with Islamic trappings. The characterization as the *majoos* of Islam occurs in a *Hadith*, or Tradition, which is akin to a parable. Referring to the believers in Free Will as the *majoos*, or Magians, of Islam it shows how the Qadarites, Mo'tazelites and by extension Shiites were viewed within mainstream Islam as the *majoos* of Islam. The mainstream sect of Sunnism then were the *Ash'arites*.

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[54] Bernard Lewis, *The World of Islam : Faith, People, Culture*, 1976, page 14.

[55] Edward G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia,* p. 281-83.

The Roots of the Islamic Clergy: Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Bahrein

Most of the leading Islamic clergy of Iran have their roots in the Arab lands they came from, that have historically been in conflict with Israel. Most descend from those who came from what is now Lebanon and Syria. Among them some are intermarried with the leading Hezbollah families. They were brought in by the ruling dynasty, the Safavids (1501-1722), for political and propaganda purposes to counter the Sunni Ottoman Empire. The ideology of the Islamic clergy differs from that of the people. The latter includes Justice and Free Will as tenets of the faith. As regards the Imam, in Shiism there is only the eschatological figure of the 12th Imam, the Mahdi, or Messiah. The Islamic clergy in Shiism are referred to as *ulama*, meaning 'knowledgeable in religion.'

In defending itself against invasion by the Ottoman Empire Iran was also helping Europe. The British brothers Shirley brought advanced cannon designs to Iran. The role of the Islamic clergy was to help unify the nation through religion to repulse the Ottoman empire which then had designs on Iran and nearly conquered Iran. Historically viewed, in this vein the Islamic clergy assured the survival of both Iran and Europe, the Europe which led to the United States.

Photo courtesy of MIT

Michael Fischer
MIT

As Michael Fischer of MIT states on the Safavid dynasty at war with the Ottomans: "Shi'ite ulama were invited from what is today Lebanon and southern Iraq. Theological colleges were endowed for them, and some were given posts within the state organization. . . . As the influx of ulama continued, a critical mass or class of religious men was formed apart from the state."[56]

56 Michael M. J. Fischer, *Iran, from Religious Dispute to Revolution*, 1980, page 29.

Photo Courtesy of The Association for the Study of Persianate Societies

Said Amir Arjomand
Stony Brook
University

The native clergy's beliefs and values were more in line with the people. As Arjomand of Stony Brook University notes: "The cultural outlook of the Imami ulama of the Arab lands was markedly different from that of the Persian clerical state" [57] The native Iranian clergy opposed the importation of the Arab clergy and the endowments being given to them. Arjomand notes "the resistance of the Persian clerical state to the reception of the incoming Arabs."[58]

The new clerics slowly formed a state within a state. As Juan Cole of University of Michigan describes: "Many Shi'i ulama were brought to Iran from Syria, Iraq, and Bahrain. The ulama gradually began to assert themselves"[59] In opposition to the Ottomans the government declared the state religion to be Shiite. In time the influence and power of the Islamic clergy grew and spread beyond the initial mandate they had been given, that of religious propaganda to counter the Sunni Ottoman empire. Their supposed role in society is guiding the public in the doctrines of religion. In usurping political power they acknowledge having failed in their primary role and lost the raison d'etre of a clerical class.

Photo courtesy of www.juancole.com

Juan Cole
University of Michigan

57 Said Amir Arjomand, *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam: Religion, political order, and societal change in Shiite Iran from the beginning to 1890*. 1984. Page 129, 125.

58 Ibid.

59 Juan R. Cole, *Imami Jurisprudence in the book Religion and Politics in Iran,* Nikki R. Keddie, editor, 1983, page 38.

The Heritage that Iranians and Jews Have in Common

Iran under the Zands was a microcosm of Iran under Cyrus. Through Israel's greatest prophet, so regarded continuously since his time, II Isaiah, the Lord calls his Messiah (Is. 45:1), Cyrus, to whom He has given control over all nations, saying of Cyrus: "I will make all his ways straight." (Is. 45:13). Two nations claiming the legacy of Cyrus the Great, Iran and Israel need not now be adversaries.

Under the Zands, the Jewish community in Iran and in particular the in the first Zand capital Shiraz prospered. The Zands promoted trade, commerce, agriculture and the crafts. The Jews and Christians were a major part of the economy. The fourth in line to the leadership, Karim Khan's Jewish son Ibrahim, plus a later a Jewish governor of the capital who were among the prominent Jews in government. . . . As the Cambridge History of Iran describes of Shiraz, near the mausoleum of Cyrus the Great: "Under Karim Khan Shiraz became the largest Jewish centre in Iran".[60]

President Harry Truman to the Jews: "I am Cyrus, I am Cyrus"

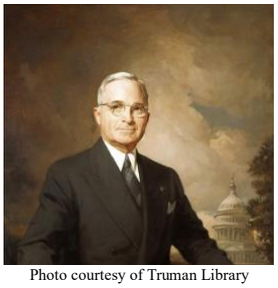

Photo courtesy of Truman Library

President Truman:
"I am Cyrus"

It is plain from reading the Bible that the relationship of the US and Israel today is modeled after that of Iran and Israel. This realization led President Truman to declare to Jewish elders gathered to thank him: "I am Cyrus, I am Cyrus."[61]

Photo courtesy of Truman Library

President Truman, Israeli P.M. Ben Gurion & F.M. Abba Eban

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[60] Cambridge History of Iran, Vol. 7, *From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic,* pp. 99,102. 2008 https://ketab3.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/the_cambridge_history_of_iran__volume_7__from_nadir_shah_to_the_islamic_republic.pdf

[61] Michael T. Benson, *Harry S. Truman and the Founding of Israel,* 1997, p. 189.

David Ben Gurion, Principal Founder of the State of Israel, on Iran

Photo courtesy of Christians for Israel New Zealand

Prime Minister David Ben Gurion
Principal Founder of Israel

Ben Gurion : "The Bible as we have it today ends with these two very significant verses: … Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord spoken in the mouth of Jeremiah be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying: "Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia. All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The Lord his God be with him, and let him go up". (II Chronicles XXXVI, 22, 23) A special privilege this, to be accorded to a ruler who was not a Jew – to close the Book of Books, and to close it with a word that in our day as well has a fateful meaning for the whole people of Israel, both for our State and for the Jewry in Diaspora, the Hebrew word that says "let him go up" … And no other foreign ruler was given such praise, and that by one of the grandest of the prophets of Israel, as Cyrus had from the lips of Isaiah… Beyond question Cyrus was deserving of these eulogies … he was besides a man of compassion and magnanimity in an age where there were but few such among the mighty conquerors."[62]

Cyrus the Great and successive generations of Iranians restored nationhood to a lost Israel. There is no basis for the two to be adversaries. Indeed, all signs are to the contrary, and show an innate and deep-rooted affinity that has existed for millennia. It is the basis for the common character of the righteous form of both religious ideologies.

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[62] David Ben Gurion, *Cyrus, King of Persia.* Published posthumously in Acta Iranica, *Encyclopédie permanente des études iraniennes.* Editor: Haerinck, Volume 1. ISSN: 0378-4215. EJ Brill Leiden, 1974, p. 127.

As generations of biblical scholars in the seminaries and Europe and the United States have found, Iranians are the only figures in the Bible who are attested outside the Bible in secular works of literature or history. Iranians are only people highly praised in the Bible.

The relation of Iran to Judaism is deep and profound. It dates from five centuries before Christ. It began with Cyrus who was the founder of the Iranian state, and Messiah (Isaiah 45:1) to the Jews. The function of Messiah, expanded and broadened after the Jewish encounter with Iran to resemble the universal savior Saoshyant as defined in II Isaiah of Cyrus the Great, is what the gentile apostle St. Luke states in his gospel (4:16-21) as the function Jesus says he came to fulfill.

Cyrus freed the Jews who had been captive for about fifty years and financed, and provided protection for the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the Temple, against those opposed whom the Bible names as Arabs and others; and sponsored the publication of the Bible.

Cyrus and Darius established the first superpower in the world and with it the first system of justice and prosperity for mankind. . . . Under the Zands Iran reverted to the same set of its native principles that Cyrus laid. Zand rule in Iran was a microcosm of Cyrus the Great.

Iran remains is the sole nation among whom Jews have had a home continuously for millennia, where they have long been integrated into society while free to practice their religion and traditions. For example, it is legal for Jews and Christians to make wine or alcoholic beverages, not allowed for the majority Moslem population. Jews were present at the Persian court as in pre-Islamic times, which is recounted in Esther and several other books of the Bible. Likewise under the Zands some Jews rose to prominent positions, such as governor of Shiraz Ibrahim, appointed to that post by Lotf Aly Khan Zand's father, Jafar Khan. . . . As with Esther the Jewish queen of ancient Persia, Karim Khan had a Jewish wife, who bore him a son, Ibrahim Khan, fourth in line of succession to sovereignty.

The Greek Adversaries of Iran on Cyrus, the Messiah

Whether Cyrus fulfilled the role of Messiah may be gleaned from the Greek adversaries of Iran. Plato's classmate and colleague, Xenophon, reported of Cyrus, intensely studied by the US founding fathers (Thos. Jefferson, John Adams, et. al. fond of Cyrus, see www.richardfrye.org): "Towards him the disposition of all men was such that every nation felt they had failed unless they could send Cyrus the treasures of their land. And every city felt the same" … and while with his power Cyrus warded off those plotting to disturb the peace and order he created, "he was able, at the same time, to inspire them all with so deep a desire to please him and win his favour that all they asked was to be guided by his judgment and his alone."[63]

The Heritage that Jews and Iranians Share

Upon being freed from captivity by Iran the Jewish people were destitute and needed to be supported and cared for to recuperate for a period. They were not yet in shape or ready to return to Jerusalem, for their home had become a deserted wasteland. It took successive generations of Iranians who supported them and restored Israel as a state. They were enabled over the generations to grow and prosper. Iran financed the rebuilding of Israel and protected the Jews militarily from Arabs and others the Bible states were opposed to its reconstruction. …

Richard Frye of Harvard University

Frye and Zand on the aftermath of freeing of Jews out of Babylon by Cyrus the Great: "Jewish women had entered Persian harems, the epitome of which is the story of Esther the Jewish Queen of Persia from the Bible. The Aryan tradition of descent was patrilineal, while the Semitic tradition was matrilineal, and there being no conflict as to heritage, the children of these marriages were legitimate heirs on both sides,

[63] Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, Book 1, C.5; Book 8, C.6.23 https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2085/2085-h/2085-h.htm

accepted and loved, whence the Jews today derive in ancestry. The offspring inherited beliefs from both parents and both traditions."[64]

There occurred marriages between Iranians and Jews, the epitome of which is Esther. The children of those marriages were given funding and protection by Iran to go rebuild Jerusalem. The relationship of the US today with Israel has come to be modeled after Iran's with Israel. Persian Jews headed by Ezra, Nehemiah and others established what in biblical scholarship is termed "later Judaism," from which grew the sects of modern Judaism and Christianity. Over the centuries since Cyrus, Jewish people when faced with pogroms and hardship elsewhere emigrated to Iran for safety and security such as during the Mongol period.

As Mary Boyce of University of London notes, during the Roman period when Iranians reconquered the land that is Israel today they replaced the hated Herod with a popular Jewish king. Following the fall of Judaea to Rome, ca. 73 AD, Jews became dispersed throughout Europe. Such displacements, pogroms, and having to adapt to new host countries and cultures altogether the vicissitudes of time, resulted in a fading of memory of Jewish roots. But today when meeting, both sides right-away often can sense that common heritage, a human sense that goes beyond language. During President Trump's first term Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu declared Trump as Cyrus. Following Cyrus the Great day in 2019, the US Secretary of State tweeted:

[64] A. Zand and R. Frye, *Jefferson and Cyrus,* 2013, p. 33 https://richardfrye.org/files/Jefferson_and_Cyrus11.pdf.

Joseph Gaer, Founder & Director, Jewish Heritage Foundation

Photo courtesy of Getty Images

Joseph Gaer (standing), Founder & Director, Jewish Heritage Foundation, Lecturer at UC Berkeley, and James Rosenberg

Joseph Gaer, Lecturer, UC Berkeley: Jews and Iran:

"Zoroaster was the first religious leader in the world to teach the belief in an abstract god, a god one could not touch or hear or see. That god was Ahura Mazda, the one wise lord who created all that was good in the world. … this religion, small as it is in the number of its followers, is very important for its influence on other religions – as we shall soon see. …

The Persians called the people of the Kingdom of Judah *Jehudis*, from which we get the word *Jews* . . . The Persians were friendly towards the Jews, and their king, Cyrus, permitted them to return to their land and rebuild their kingdom. And because the Persians were so friendly, the Jews studied the Persian religion, and learned many things from them . . . One of these was the belief in Life after Death . . . A much more important belief that the Jews borrowed from Zoroastrianism was their changed conviction about the coming of the Messiah . . . From the Persians the Jews learned that they, too, awaited a *Saoshyant,* a Redeemer. But the Redeemer of the Persians was not to be just a national hero who would bring glory and power to the Persians. Their *Saoshyant* would redeem all of mankind from the powers of the Evil Spirit. The Jews, too, began to think of their Messiah, their Redeemer, as more than just a national hero who would restore the Jewish kingdom to its glory. …

By the time the Jews returned to Palestine and, with the help of King Cyrus, rebuilt their Holy Temple in Jerusalem, their religion had greatly changed. A man known as Ezra the Scribe began collecting the histories, legends, and laws of the Jews into books. These collected works were called *The Book, the Bible*, and became the Sacred Scriptures of Judaism." [65]

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[65] Joseph Gaer, *How the Great Religions Began*, 1956, pp. 235-36, 267-69. https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=R2K9nYV-WHgC&pg=GBS.PA234&hl=en

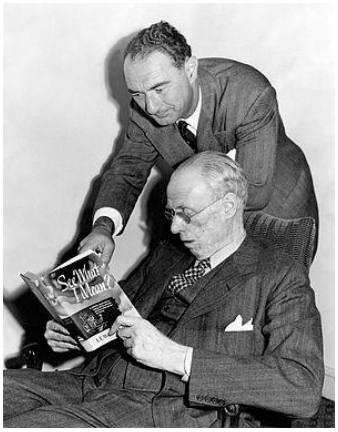

Photo courtesy of Wikipedia

Rabbi Lewis Browne (standing) of Temple Israel, Waterbury CT. Author: *This Believing World,* translated into 37 languages.

Rabbi Lewis Browne, Temple Israel, Waterbury CT, writing the same time as Hans Gunther in Germany, 1927:

"It was an extraordinary religion, this of the ancient prophet of Iran. It preached a technique of coping with the evils of the universe that was totally at variance with anything ever before conceived by man. …

But the importance of Zoroastrianism has always been more qualitative than quantitative. Its highest significance lies in the influence it has exercised in the development of at least three other great religions … First, it made contributions to Judaism … Through Judaism, the religion of Persia left its mark also on Christianity; and not merely through Judaism, but also through Mithraism … Only by virtue of this pervading influence of its ideas can Zoroastrianism be called a world religion today. Its nominal confessors are few, very few, in number …By worldly standards, Zoroastrianism failed … today it is the size of a forgotten denomination. But by truer standards, Zoroastrianism triumphed. It triumphed as have few other faiths on earth, for its fire, though often on the altar of strange gods, still illumines much of the world." [66]

The Lord says via II Isaiah, greatest of the prophets, to Cyrus the Savior (Is. 45:14-15):

> "they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee; and there is none else, there is no [other] God. Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour".

[66] Lewis Browne, *This Believing World*, 1950, pp. 205, 219.

Robert Oleson Ballou, Theologian

Editor, *Bible of the World*

Robert Oleson Ballou, Theologian:

"The Religion which Might Have Been Ours"

"Abraham's compact with Yahweh did not constitute the monotheism, the belief, the belief that there is one God only, which Judaism and its child Christianity accept today, but was rather "henotheism", the worship of one god, while recognizing others. Until long after the death of Moses the existence of other gods was believed in by the Jews. The first commandment did not say "Thou shalt believe that there are no other gods but me," but rather "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." This tacit recognition of the existence of other gods was reinforced by such admonitions as "Revile not the gods." When God appeared to Moses in the burning bush he did not say "I am the only God," nor did he apparently feel that the simple words "I am God" were enough to make him known. He identified himself among the gods by saying "I am the god of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Even years later when Moses' leadership had ended with his death and Joshua, having led his people through a long lifetime, was about to die, he urged them to put away the strange gods which are among you and incline your hearts unto the Lord God of Israel. …

In Ahura Mazda we find for the first time in the history of any religion a clear and vigorous conception of the universal loving Father-God as the only imaginable God - a conception which eventually came to us through later Judaism and Christianity. Ahura Mazda is 'the father of the Toiling Good Mind within us.' He is 'Lord of the Good Spirit.' 'The souls of the righteous … will dwell in eternal immortality … in his kingdom.' "[67]

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[67] Robert O. Ballou, The *World Bible*, 1972, pp. 167-72

How Iran Persuaded the Nazis to Reclassify and Free Jews as Iranian

At the risk of incurring Nazi wrath Iranian diplomat Sardari in Europe articulated the facts above to the Nazis about Jewish-Iranian marriages since ancient times and persuaded them to reclassify the Jews as Iranian, restoring to them the safety and dignity they so needed.

The ground work had been laid for Iran to be able to do that. Generations of German and European scholars and archeologists for centuries had elucidated Iranian's history. Despite millennia of the melting pot process in Iran the Germans had a fondness for Aryana, *homeland of the Aryans*, today pronounced Iran. They restored the self-appellation of the ancient people of Iran, India and Ireland, to all Europe. Aryan meant noble in the language of Iran, India and Ireland. In time in Europe it acquired physical connotations of blondness.

An early pioneer in research into the Bible and Talmud origins was a Jewish nobleman, Osiah Hershel Shorr who published his erudite works as *He-Haluz* 1865-69. In his honor and for the sake of scholarly community his works were republished in Israel in 1972. Over a half century later with many scholars active in Germany and elsewhere in Europe in the various areas of research in eastern antiquities, Hans F. K. Gunther published in 1927 his work on European history. Before Hitler's rise to power, along with Goring, Himmler and their entourage in 1933 Hitler would attend Gunther's lectures at the University of Jenna. In 1935 in the context of science they declared Gunther *Pride of the Nazi Party*, and in 1940 Hitler awarded him the Goethe Medal of arts and science. Gunther and other Germans were inspired by le Comte de Gobineau, for three years French ambassador to Iran, whom the Nazis are said to have made the "object of intense hero worship". Gunther regarded the Jews as an intelligent lot. He did not advocate their demise. After the war, and investigation and house arrest for three years, he was exonerated and set free. Mazdaism denotes the pre-Islamic religion of Iran where God, the Wise Lord, is named Ahura Mazda. Below, where Gunther refers to "the whole earth", he refers to the Persian heritage of Jews, which allowed Iran to claim the former to the Nazis as Iranian, issue them Iranian passports and set them free. The Nuremberg race laws stipulated that to be Jewish, one had to have more than two grandparents who were Jewish, or had to be a member of a Jewish organization, which Sardari used to

advantage to argue his case. Gunther's work on European history in 1927 expresses what his readership, most well-read Germans of his time, felt about Iran.

Photo courtesy of Goodreads

Hans F. K. Gunther,
University of Jenna

Gunther was declared *Pride of the Nazi Party* in 1935. His research and lectures that Hitler, Goring and Himmler attended in 1933 came to establish a platform that in the early 1940s in Europe Iran leveraged to persuade the Nazis to reclassify and free Jews as Iranian.

Hans F. K. Gunther on Iran and Zoroaster:

"Mazdaism, which this great religious founder brought his people, is important for the understanding of the Nordic spirit: it shows the Nordic essence in a Persian form, and seems to show it with great faithfulness. Mazdaism gives us a practical and trustworthy measure of values in religious culture, and from the standpoint of universal history in an authoritative and decisive manner. In it the ethical life of a certain people, the Iranians, resting on a heathen tradition, becomes the foundation of religious morality. . . . Thus for the first time in the world's history a conception had arisen of a positive religion, which spread over the whole earth in the form of ethical systems of various kinds. And thereby the conception of culture was at one stroke brought into the world, clear-cut and with deep foundations.

Mazdaism is the loftiest religious creation that has been produced by the peoples of Nordic origin; and the figure of Zarathustra, on which history can shed little light, is felt to be one of the most sublime of those belonging to these peoples, so rich in creative intellects. … The moral conflict in man has never been more deeply, more passionately, grasped than in Mazdaism; never has a loftier goal, a more sublime striving towards purity, been taught to mankind. … it brought for the early Persians industry, simplicity, love of truth, and righteousness, and made its kings true kings of the people, who knew how to join wisdom to mildness.

The more Mazdaism discloses itself to research, the clearer do we see the true greatness of the Persians and their culture, which stands as an equal beside that of Greece and of Rome, while ethically it is above them. Gobineau it was who first

pointed out how little our 'general education' knows of Persia compared with its real importance. . . .

The Persian people to-day still shows (Gobineau was the first, too, to stress this) characters which set it apart from the peoples around. These "Iranians," according to the descriptions and statements of nearly every traveller, and on the evidence of their literature, have a mentality such as we only find among Europeans. They are the only people in their area open to receive culture, and are marked off by this from all their neighbours in spite of their Islamic mask and of their backwardness to-day. They are the descendants and natural heirs of the old Iranians, on whose culture the whole of Islam has battened, and still battens to-day."[68]

How Irano-Judaica Rescued Jews from Nazi-Occupied France

Where Gunther refers to the religion "which spread over the whole earth in the form of ethical systems" he is referring to the faith that the descendants of marriages between Iranians and Jews inherited, who became leaders of Judaism and later formed Judaeo-Christianity. In a preponderance of their respective populations the two nations share the common heritage of Cyrus the Great. Their heritage became intertwined after Iran freed and re-established the captive nation of Israel. In biblical scholarship it has come to be called *Irano-Judaica.* It can form the basis for resumption of friendship between the two peoples which can grow to a friendship between Israel and Iran. The Zands being an Iranian dynasty, their policy as regards the Jews was similar to that of Cyrus the Great, as was later the policy of the Pahlavis. The hostility between Israel and Iran under the Islamic clergy, whose roots lie in Lebanon and other Arab lands, would end when the people of Iran are helped to have a government in which their beliefs and values are expressed and are implemented. Iranian diplomat Sardari in Paris with knowledge of the foregoing and his legal and diplomatic skills, persuaded the Nazi officials that the Jews were

[68] Hans F. K. Gunther, *The Racial Elements of European History,* translated by G. C. Wheeler, Methuen & Co. LTD, London, 1927. http://acdc2007.free.fr/gunther1927.pdf

Iranian and to let them free. The effort was coordinated and supported with a study of the subject based on the foregoing that the German embassy in Paris in 1940 affirmed.[69] Sardari developed relationships and held 'lavish parties' with the Nazi brass to develop rapport and be in position to articulate his argument on the heritage in common between Jews and Iranians to them. … As reports *The Times of Israel*:

> "Sardari is part of a broader narrative of Iranian heroism during the Holocaust. In addition to his achievements in Paris, the Iranian government welcomed 400,000 Polish WWII refugees, including 25,000 to 30,000 Jews." [70]

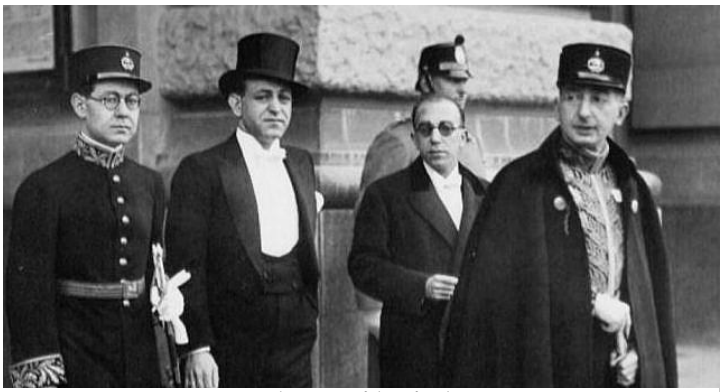

Photo courtesy of Times of Israel

Iranian Diplomat Sardari (2nd from left) persuaded the Nazi brass to reclassify thousands of Jews as descended from ancient Aryans, to whom he issued passports honored by the Nazis.

The leading contingent of Jews who would soon make up Israel were Polish. During the war A few hundred thousand Poles were in need of a home. Many arrived across the Caspian at the port of Pahlavi/Anzali, while others came overland to Iran, which they found as the Promised Land as noted in BBC™ documentaries.[71] Unlike Schindler, however, Sardari would not accept any money or compensation, whether before or after the deed. He held to the Zoroastrian adage that the reward of good deeds can either be in Heaven or on Earth, not both. He was a civil servant and held to doing his duty. When the Islamic regime came to power in 1979 in Iran, it executed Sardari's nephew, Prime Minister of Iran Abbas Hoveyda.

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[69] Holocaust Encyclopedia, *Abdol Hossein Sardari,* https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/abdol-hossein-sardari-1895-1981

[70] Rich Tenorino, *Unrecognized 'Iranian Schindler' said to have saved countless Paris Jews in WWII* Times of Israel, 1 May 2019. https://www.timesofisrael.com/unrecognized-iranian-schindler-said-to-have-saved-countless-paris-jews-in-wwii/

[71] Documentaries on hundreds of thousands of Poles including Jews hosted in Iran during WWII: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QpoNLpdUYAI ; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7AWrt4isARQ

Christians and Foreign Nationals in Iran Under the Zands

Under the Zands the separation of religion and state was instituted in government. Iran was a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural society comprised of Moslem, Christian, Jewish, Zoroastrian and other religious communities living and prospering in peace, a tradition of plurality that goes back centuries to the foundation of the Iranian state, ca. 550 BC by Cyrus the Great. In the administration of law and justice people were equal. Indeed, deference was shown by the Zands to the minorities and the weak.

Photo courtesy of Westminster Abbey

Sir John Malcolm, British Ambassador to Iran who arrived with a retinue of 500.

British Ambassador Sir John Malcolm, on the Christians in Iran under the Zands:

"The internal commerce of Persia, as well as its agriculture, had greatly revived during the latter years of Kerreem Khan. He gave particular encouragement to all the industrious classes of his subjects, to none more than the Armenians settled in his kingdom. This body of Christians were the first who benefited from his justice, and to the last moment of his life he was anxious for their prosperity."[72]

During an interregnum, conditions of lawlessness prevail in some areas. Thugs loyal to fundamentalist factions of Islam and their clergy view minorities and those Moslems who are not strict observants of the religion as easy prey, and set out to commit various crimes against them ranging

72 Sir John Malcolm, *The History of Persia, From the Most Early Period to the Present Time, Second Edition*, 1829, Volume 2, pp. 60 & 83 https://sanipanhwar.com/uploads/books/2025-08-28_04-49-37_331179769e2020192415e6a44b3a3908.pdf

from theft or confiscation or destruction of property to kidnapping and dishonoring of women and even murder, under the pretense of being warranted to do so by their interpretation of Islam. Minorities throughout history have been prone to this peril. Knowing such conditions were prone to exist, the Zands took special measures to protect the vulnerable minorities during the interregnum that led to their power, in particular those whom they viewed to be most at risk. Sir John Malcolm, British Ambassador**,** reports of the interregnum that led to the Zands' rise to power, and how they fared under Karim Khan Zand who protected them from "the slightest injury either to their persons or property. His conduct was the more remarkable, as they were almost all Christians".[73]

By contrast in our day Iran has undergone a large exodus of members of the minorities, not to mention the largest exodus of the majority, Shiite Iranians, to occur in history. Zoroastrian, Christian and Jewish Iranians whose roots go back millennia, as well as Bahais, not to mention several million Shiites, have had to leave their homeland.

Under the Zands the various religious and ethnic minorities lived in harmony and prosperity alongside and in association with the majority Islamic population and with each other. The Zands took care to actively protect minorities and foreign nationals. Many families among the minorities, in particular Christians, who had left their homes in Iran for abroad prior to the Zands assumption of power returned. Abbas Parviz, Iranian historian, 1964:

> "Karim Khan was conversant with the tenets of various religions and held in honor the followers of all religions. In regards to laws and regulations governing society, he did not discriminate against people but treated all equally. In that era where it happened that followers of a non-Islamic minority came under the pressure of the Islamic majority, he would support and protect the minority."74

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73 Sir John Malcolm, *The History of Persia, From the Most Early Period to the Present Time, Second Edition,* 1829, Volume 2, p. 60.

74 Abbas Parviz, *The 2500-Year History of Iran (in Persian),* Vol. 3, 1964, p. 160

Iranian society in several respects resembled pre-Islamic Iran. Emineh Pakravan, Iranian historian, reports, 1951:

> "In the age of Karim Khan there was no sign of religious fundamentalism, or mournful and sad faces. His grace extended to everyone, including foreigners and Christians."[75]

Reaching across ethnic lines to give people a greater sense of belonging and security was the policy of the Zands. This extended from the political and economic domains to social and family life.

The Zands were more interested in internal development, than conquest of other regions, ventures which had been historically and typically undertaken by rulers everywhere before them and had been viewed as the mark of prowess of a king or dynasty.

Through reducing taxes to the lowest they had been, before and after, and a series of measures to strengthen the economy, the Zands brought about conditions conducive to the main sectors of the economy, agriculture, the crafts and trade. They developed and held friendly relations with European and other countries and promoted international commerce. Under the Zands, Iran cultivated close commercial relations with the British, the Dutch and others. Sir Percy Sykes gave a description of the trade with Britain.

When foreign merchants resident in Iran such as from India passed away without leaving heirs or a will behind, rather than taking left-over property as part of the State, the Zands sent agents to their home country, seeking survivors to avail them of their inheritance. Abdollah Razee, Iranian historian, on Karim Khan Zand:

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[75] Emineh Pakravan, *Agha Mohammad Khan Ghadjar*, translated from the French by Jahangir Afkary, 1988, p. 23.

> "He sought to fulfill the needs and desires of his constituents. Not only Moslems, but also Armenians and other Christians benefited from his beneficence. Humanity, compassion, magnanimity and fairness were his innate traits . . . His desire in government and his ultimate goal were for all citizens to be happy."[76]

These sentiments toward minorities and foreign nationals were the sentiments of the Iranian people at large and would be expressed whenever a democratic Iran comes into being. William Francklin of Cambridge, who took a *"Residence of eight months at Shirauz, being domesticated with the natives, and living entirely as one in a family"*, 1786-87, writes of Karim Khan Zand, 1790:

> "If ever a prince deserved the name of Great, Kerim Khan may well lay claim to that title, as his actions prove to this day. . . Kerim Khan gained the throne by conquest, in those troublesome and tumultuous times, and established, during his reign, by natural skill and abilities, an uniform course of justice, moderation, and clemency. The blessings he conferred on his people are still deeply impressed on the minds of many now living. Whatever his religious principles may have been, he was by no means a bigot to them; men of all persuasions lived unmolested under his government . . . To strangers, and to Europeans in particular, he was remarkably affable, and never suffered any of them to depart without marks of his bounty and generous spirit. He valued money only as far as he could turn it to proper uses. Avarice and covetousness he abhorred".[77]

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[76] Abdollah Razee*, The Complete History of Iran, from the Foundation of the Mede Dynasty to the Present Era (in Persian). Tarikh-e Kamel-e Iran, az Ta'sis-e Selseleye Maad ta Asr-e Haazer, 4th ed.,* 1968.

[77] William Francklin, *Observations Made on a Tour from Bengal to Persia, in the Years 1786-7*, London, 1790, pp. 301-07.

Rev. Professor Charles F. Potter : Iran at the Inception of Christianity

The policy of the Zands to protect and enable Christians and Jews to prosper is the result of the native beliefs and values of the Iranian people, a Persianized form of Islam whose tenets derive from Iran's pre-Islamic religion, Zoroastrianism. The relationship of Iran to Christianity dates back to its very inception, and relates to Iran's religious beliefs, which were the subject of polemics between Karim Khan Zand and the Islamic clergy.

Photo courtesy of www.uudb.org

Rev. Prof. Charles Francis Potter, Antioch College

Rev. Professor Charles Francis Potter, Antioch College on Iran at the inception of Christianity:

"When we turn to the New Testament we find in the beginning of the first book, Matthew, an old story dear to the heart of all Christians which relates that the earliest visitors to the cradle of the infant Jesus were Wise Men from the east who said they had seen his star and had come to worship him. The Greek word translated "Wise Men" is *magoi* or magi, which enables us to identify these dignified travelers as Zoroastrian priests. The same word is used in the first chapter of the book of Esther to describe the Seven Wise Men of Persia who sat in the kingdom of Ahasuerus, that Zoroastrian king "who reigned from India even unto Ethiopia over a hundred and seven and twenty provinces." No wonder early Christendom rejoiced at the story that priests of this ancient religion had brought to the feet of the Christ-child precious gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, perhaps thus expressing the hope that this babe was the Saoshyant, or Savior, that Zoroastrianism had long awaited."[78]

[78] Charles Francis Potter, *The Story of Religion as Told in the Lives of Its Leaders*, 1942, p. 79-81, 90-99

Lotf Aly *Khan* Zand, Last *Vakil* Ruling Iran

LUTF ALI KHAN.
(From a picture in the Palace at Shiraz.)
(Taken from Sir Harford Jones Brydges' *Mission to Persia.*)

Lotf Aly Khan Zand

Sovereign of Iran 1789-95

Portrait reproduced from Sir Harford Jones Brydges, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from His Britannic Majesty to the Court of Tehran, in the account of his Embassy 1833

Lotf Aly Khan Zand (r. 1789–1794) was the last Vakil in office of the Zand dynasty, an era often romanticized in Persian history for his chivalry and brief period of relative stability before the rise of the Qajars. He was patron of the arts and Persian literature and ordered scholarly review and compilation of the works of great poets of Iran who have the place tantamount of prophets such as Hafez. Known for his remarkable physical beauty and legendary martial skill, he is frequently portrayed as the tragic hero.

Karim Khan Zand had wanted to break with the tradition of putting to death those who were pretenders to the throne. Instead, he treated kindly the pretenders including Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar (a.k.a. Kajar), chief the Qajar tribe, and kept him as a guest at his court for many years. Upon the death of Karim Khan Zand, Agha Mohammad Khan escaped, and gathered his Qajar tribal militia. He first killed his own brothers and relatives who could be rivals to him for the leadership of his tribe.

Beyond the clashing of swords and his legendary stand against the Qajars, Lotf Aly Khan was a man of profound culture, grace, and a deep-seated vision for humane government. He was the Poet-Prince of Shiraz.

While his life was consumed by conflict, Lotf Ali Khan was a true son of Shiraz—the city of roses and nightingales. He was highly educated in the Persian classics, finding solace in the verses of Hafiz and Saadi. Unlike many of his contemporaries who ruled through raw fear, he sought to maintain the "Zand way" of governance established by Karim Khan: acting as the *Vakil* (Regent) rather than a tyrannical despot. He was known for his eloquence and a magnetic charisma that drew poets and scholars to his court, even as his fortunes waned.

Despite a treasury drained by constant defense against Agha Mohammad Khan, Lotf Ali Khan attempted to continue the architectural legacy of his great-uncle, Karim Khan. He understood that a dynasty's legacy was etched into the stone of his capital. He focused on maintaining the integrity of Shiraz's infrastructure, ensuring that the city remained a sanctuary of beauty and trade. He famously

cherished the Arg of Karim Khan and the Vakil Mosque, treating the city not just as a fortress, but as a living museum of Zand prestige.

Lotf Aly Khan a Paragon of Chivalry

In Persian culture, the concept of Chivalry (*Javanmardi*) represents a blend of courage, honesty, and generosity. Lotf Ali Khan was the living embodiment of that ideal. Contemporary accounts describe him as strikingly handsome and possessing extraordinary athletic prowess, but it was his personal integrity that won the hearts and minds. He was known for his refusal to use treachery or poison—tools his rival, Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar, used with surgical precision. This commitment to an ancient code of honor made him a folk hero; even today, he is remembered for his noble character rather than political success.

Even when under siege, he attempted to keep the trade routes to the Persian Gulf open. He recognized that the health of the economy depended on the merchant class. He maintained a relatively fair tax system compared to the predatory practices of the later Qajar state. These qualities earned Lotf Aly Khan the fierce loyalty of the common people in Fars and Kerman.

Lotf Ali Khan's tragedy was that he was a man of the "Golden Age" born into an era of iron. He represented the final flicker of a decentralized, more humane Persian monarchy before the onset of the centralized, often brutal Qajar era.

It had been routine practice that pretenders to the throne, whether in Iran or in Europe, would be dealt with summarily and quickly be put to the sword. It continues to be so in parts of the world even today. Karim Khan Zand's goal was to establish a humane form of government, usher in an era of openness, justice and freedom. He sought to restore the multicultural, multi-religious and multi-ethnic character and pluralism that Iran had, since its beginnings. Thus Karim Khan would honor his enemies or pardon them, as would Loft Aly Khan, and the reputation of the Zands' clemency was well known.

That clemency included the Qajar chief Agha Mohammad Khan, pretender to the throne, who being descended from the Mongols and Tartars could not even speak Persian. The Qajar tribe had been exiled to Syria by the Tatar chief Tamerlane on account of the Qajar's extreme savagery, even relative to Tamerlane. Sir Percy Sykes describes the countenance of Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar the eunuch as one with a 'shriveled face horrible to contemplate." After his tribe's return East and settlement in Iran, the first few generation descendants of the Qajars were acculturated and integrated into the main Iranian population, and now in over ten generations of marriage have become culturally as well as in appearance indistinguishable from the rest of the population.

The main criticism to Karim Khan Zand is he did not name a successor in passing away. At the end of life, pioneering leaders sometimes hesitate as to who to name as their successor, unsure if the heir would have the same or requisite qualities.

Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar after sixteen years of warfare against his hosts, got his chance when a young Zand prince of 25, Loft Aly Khan, was in power. Sir Percy Sykes describes Lutf Aly Khan Zand's countenance as a youth with "remarkable beauty of physique." After a series of battles in which Lotf Aly Khan Zand gallantly fought the Mongol warriors, he was betrayed. He was blocked from re-entering his capital. Rendered without safe harbor, provisions and reinforcements he had to ride to Kerman. Agha Mohammad Khan then massacred the Zands in Shiraz, his former hosts.

He followed Lotf Aly Khan to Kerman. Eventually his forces severed the hamstring of Lotf Aly Khan's horse, forcing him to fight on foot, and overwhelmed him. Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar next personally blinded Lotf Aly Khan. Agha Mohammad Khan was himself a eunuch. Agha Mohammad Khan had his thugs rape Lotf Aly Khan's wife the princess. He massacred the people of Kerman, built towers of skulls, and had the eyes of thousands of others gouged out. He later had his thugs dismember Lotf Aly Khan, torture him and make him walk in chains on foot from Kerman to Tehran.

But after reaching Tehran the news got spread that the people of Tehran believed and wanted Loft Aly Khan to govern even when blind. Agha Mohmmad

Khan afraid of revolt against him based on the people's calls for Lotf Aly Khan then sent an executioner to his jail cell to suffocate Loft Aly Khan to death (1794 AD).

Clements R. Markham, British historian:

> "The Zand dynasty produced two great and worthy scions . . . The Kajars, raised to power by the hideous atrocities of that monster Agha Mohammad, have supplanted their rivals and still [1874] continue to reign."[79]

Lotf Aly Khan's tomb remains in the Grand Bazaar of Tehran at Emamzadeh ("Saint") Zeyd. Today, he is remembered as "the last chivalrous figure among the kings of Persia." A major avenue in Shiraz still bears his name.

British Ambassador Sir Harford Jones Brydges on Lutf Aly Khan Zand

Photo courtesy of Meisterdrucke

Sir Harford Jones Brydges

Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from His Britannic Majesty to the Court of Teheran

Sir Harford Jones Brydges, was 'Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from His Britannic Majesty to the Court of Teheran'. He was close to Lotf Aly Khan. When he returned to England he was author of books and translator of a Persian history into English. In his report to the King of England, *Dynasty of the Kajars*, 1833, Sir Harford Jones Brydges writes of his experience of 30 years in Iran:

> "Those scenes in which we were engaged in early life, and which were agreeable to us at that time, (and mine in Persia, from a variety of circumstances, were peculiarly so to me) the mind afterwards falls back on, with no common fondness; and at the close of life, few things are more cheering, than to recall to our thoughts

[79] Clements R. Markham, *"A General Sketch of the History of Persia*", 1874, pp. 319-28, 337.

the first impressions made on us by what we met with in youth, when visiting distant countries— the acquaintances we made; the friendships we formed there; the kindnesses we received; the mutual efforts made to amuse, to please and inform each other, and the joyous hours spent in the society of amiable and intelligent foreigners; and, in this instance, I may add, in a most luxurious climate, and amidst scenery where brilliancy and picturesque beauty increased the charm of novelty. . .

It seems fair to both parties[80], that I should lay before you some short account of the means I have had of becoming acquainted with Persia and its inhabitants, in order that you may the better appreciate the observations on them which I shall hereafter present to you. As a stranger and an humble individual, I was long ago admitted in Persia to a considerable degree of intimacy with Princes, Ministers, men of the law, shopkeepers, and agriculturists. I then mixed in society in Persia, at different times, from the Zenith to the Nadir of it. I was present in Shiraz when the abominable treachery of Hajy Ibrahim to his benefactor, and too-confiding master and sovereign, transferred the throne of Persia from Family of Zend to that of Kajar. I waited on the gallant and unfortunate Lutf Aly Khan, in his distress, by the desire of his fallen Minister, Mirza Muhammed Husain, whose guest I was at Shiraz: and the last time I visited Persia, I had the high honour to appear there as the First Minister in modern times, regularly accredited from the Sovereign of this country to the Sovereign of that. The space of time consumed in my acquaintance and intercourse with Persia and Persians was near thirty years; and it is now not far from twenty years since I left that country.

80 i.e., author and reader

The estimate I have made of the Persian character may be different from that made by others: and I acknowledge, that, in pourtraying their character, it would be difficult for me to repel—and indeed I should despise myself, if I wished to repel—those feelings which I must ever cherish, for kindness and attention received in sickness, for acts of the most disinterested friendship received in cases of unexpected and most dangerous personal emergency, and for unparalleled proofs of confidence, generosity and attachment received, when beaten to the ground by those who ought to have supported me."[81]

. . .

"I received great kindness and attention from him [Lotf Aly Khan], when he filled the throne, and under a miserable tent, I had the honour of sitting on the same horse-cloth with him when a fugitive! His virtues endeared him to his subjects and the bravery, constancy, courage, and ability which he manifested under his misfortunes, are the theme of poems and ballads, which, it is not improbable, will last as long as the Persian language itself. He was manly, amiable, affable in prosperity, and under calamities as great and severe as human-nature can suffer, he was dignified and cool and determined . . . . I will not travel through the account of a series of most heroic and unfortunate attempts made by the king to reestablish his fortunes, but hasten to relieve my mind from the sorrow and regret which, even after this length of time,[82] it feels for the misfortunes of Lutf Aly khan. . . . The remaining days of this great prince were few and sad; but Persia, even now, speaks of his heroic actions with pride; and the inhabitants of the southern part of the empire retain an affectionate and respectful regard for his memory and virtues." [83]

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81 Sir Harford Jones Brydges, *A Succinct Account of the History of Persia, prefixed to The Dynasty of the Kajars*; the former written by the author, the latter translated by him from Persian; 1833, pp. cxx-cxxi, cxc-cxci.

82 Some forty years after the tragedy that befell Lutf Aly Khan

83 Ibid.

The Aftermath, from Justice Douglas of US Supreme Court

Justice William O. Douglas visited and lived in Iran with his family during summer recesses of the Court. Rather than live in hotels he sought the friendship and lived with Iranian tribes who hosted him in the mountains. He was a confidant of the Kennedys. In his books and travel logs such as *West of the Indus*, and *Strange Lands and Friendly People*, as well as in National Geographic articles, Justice Douglas writes of the aftermath, the advent of the Kajar (Qajar) dynasty in 1796, when an alien tribe, "who could not speak the language, seized control of the country" :

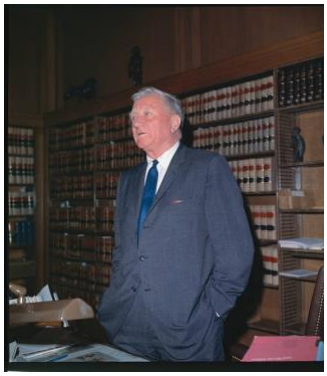

Photo courtesy of Getty Images

William O. Douglas, US Supreme Court, lived among the Iranian tribes on his visits and guided JFK & RFK's plan for regime change in Iran.

"In the eighteenth century disaster struck Persia, a disaster that has been a crippling force even to this day. … They established the Kajar dynasty, which laid a curse on the land. They ruled and exploited the people; but they did not govern . . . Thus government became a ferocious, devouring force. It lived on the people. It squeezed every copper from them. The feudalism that had been the strength of Persia became the means for bleeding it white . . . Justice was for sale, power was used to exact blackmail. The army and the police were weakened and corrupted. Decay took hold in the moral fiber. The religious ideas that had supplied the generating force behind Persia's great dynasties were discarded. Not all of the country was despoiled. The Kajar dynasty reached as far into the hinterland as it could, but the fastness of the mountains held treasures it could not reach. These treasures were the main tribes: the Kurds, the Lurs, the Bakhtiaris, and the Ghashghais. [84] They remained independent and largely untouched. Their power in fact grew under the Kajars, for peasants flocked to their dependencies for shelter from the long, oppressive hand of the central government. [85]

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84 The tribes have clans. The Lak tribe, interface of the Lurs and the Kurds, whom the Zands are from, are a clan.

85 Ibid, pp. 54, 55.