

## A Brief History of Metaphor in Persian Poetry (Part II)



To indicate something of the density and complexity of this artifice in pre-modern Persian poetry, here is a translation of a very early poem that is made up almost entirely of motifs that belonged to a common stock widely utilized by other poets for centuries to come. The poem is by the tenth-century poet Rabe'eh, who, as is appropriate for this volume, is the earliest-known woman poet to write in Persian:

The garden shows so many flowers, as though

Mani had painted their resplendent glow

Dawn's breezes never bore Tibetan musk,

How is the world so musky when they blow?

Are Majnun's eyes within the clouds, that they

Shed Layli's cheeks' hue on each rose below?

Like wine within an agate glass, his tears

Have filled each tulip with their crimson glow

Raise up the wine bowl, raise it generously

Since bad luck dogs deniers who say "No"

Narcissi glow with silver and with gold

It's Kasra's crown their shining petals show

Like nuns in purple cowls the violets bloom

Do they turn into Christians as they grow?

The poem is a baharieh—that is, a poem welcoming the spring, a form that is still, a thousand years later, a recognized category of Persian poetry—and it is set in the archetypal beautiful place for Persian culture, the locus amoenus to end them all, a garden. But what is "Mani," the third-century founder of the religion of Manicheism, doing in the poem? In Persian lore he was also a painter whose beautiful paintings looked so true to life that they deceived both people and animals, and this accounts for "painted" in the second line. Because the flowers are compared to Mani's paintings, this means they must be very beautiful, and Persian poetry takes it for granted that beauty is a major concern of every civilized person. And something else is also going on here: Mani was the founder of a pre-Islamic religion seen as a heresy by Muslims, and yet he is mentioned, apparently favorably, in a poem written by someone we presume to be a Muslim.

The Persian language, especially its literary form, has remained far more stable over the past millennium than is true of most European languages.

Persian poetry often mentions religions other than Islam, and in short lyric poems, like this one, the refer-

ence is almost always either favorable or neutral; it virtually never implies condemnation (this is less true of long didactic poems, in which religions other than Islam are sometimes implicitly or explicitly condemned). This suggests that Persian lyric poetry at least as not prepared to denigrate other religions, and this is indeed the case.

Persian lyric poetry is in general welcomingly receptive to both the pre-Islamic past and non-Islamic faiths. The implication is that there is not one sole Truth applicable at all times to all people; that other ways of being, from the past or as an adherent of another faith, can be considered to be equally valid. Later on, such references were read as allegorical (the mention of a figure from another religion, for example, was seen as a metaphor for one who transmits mystical knowledge—that is, a knowledge outside of the mainstream of Islam), and in later poems they are often allegorical, but they were meant quite literally, for themselves, in Rabe'eh's poems, as they were in the poems of her contemporaries and of many subsequent poets.

Courtesy: Literary Hub

# Iran Marks National Teachers Day

TEHRAN – Iranians on Wednesday marked the National Teachers Day named on the day Ayatollah Morteza Motahhari, a scholar, philosopher, lecturer, was assassinated in 1979.

Ayatollah Motahhari is considered to have an important influence on the ideologies of the Islamic Republic, among others.

He was one of the main axes of coordination among ulema and university professors. The awareness of the young generation was an important aim of Ayatollah Motahhari who has written whose Dastan-e Rastan received an award from UNESCO in 1965.

He has also written many books



on Islam, Iran, and historical topics. His lectures about Islam were transcribed and published as books

after his martyrdom. He served in Tehran University as the head of the Department of

Theology and Islamic Teachings. At the time of his assassination, he was the president of the Constitutional Council of the Islamic Republic of Iran and a member of the Revolutionary Council.

On May 1, 1979, he was assassinated in Tehran after leaving a late meeting at the house of Yadollah Sahabi. The Furqan Group claimed responsibility for the assassination.

Addressing a group of teachers here, President Ebrahim Raisi said, "The issue of education is the basis of building the country, protecting the society, the basis for cultural, economic and social growth, and the basis for the promotion of a generation."

## Minister of Culture in Baku to Attend Int'l Forum



TEHRAN – Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Muhammad Mehdi Esmaili on Wednesday departed Tehran for Baku to attend the 6th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue.

The event brings together representatives from various organiza-

tions, including the Islamic World Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, and international bodies like the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations.

The forum aims to address global challenges related to civilizational discourse, cooperation

against hatred, and the promotion of peace values.

Esmaili emphasized that the forum provides a platform to discuss various aspects of minority culture.

Given the inequities in international systems, he stressed the importance of seizing every opportunity to present factual information to the public.

"We consider this event as an opportunity to express positions and convey Iran's view to the participating elites and officials," he noted.

According to UNAOC website, "The 6th edition of the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, operating under the theme "Dialogue for Peace and Global Security: Cooperation and Interconnectivity," is scheduled to

convene from May 1 to 3 in Baku, Azerbaijan."

"The primary objective of the 6th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue is to explore the critical intersections between dialogue facilitation, cooperative frameworks, leadership efficacy, and the complex dynamics of interconnectedness, all in the service of advancing global peace and security imperatives," it added.

"Over three days, a series of plenary sessions and panel discussions will bring together a diverse array of stakeholders, including government officials, representatives from international organizations, eminent cultural figures, journalists, civil society actors, and intellectuals from across the globe, to deliberate upon pressing global challenges."

## Iranian Researchers Develop New Method to Diagnose Cancer

TEHRAN -- Iranian researchers at a knowledge-based company have designed and made an imaging device by using SPECT scanning method (a non-invasive method in medicine) and advanced nuclear technology to diagnose different diseases, including cancer.

The device is used to record and reveal the accumulation of radioactive materials in tissues. In this scanning method, based on the patient's condition, the radiopharmaceuticals are absorbed in different organs and a fraction of the photons pass through the surrounding soft tissue and are finally detected by the gamma camera.

"Our company operates in the field of nuclear medical equipment production and has succeeded in using advanced nuclear medicine technology to design and manufacture SPECT scanning device," Behnoush Teymourian Fard, the deputy managing director of the knowledge-based company, told ANA.

"The device is capable of imaging the function

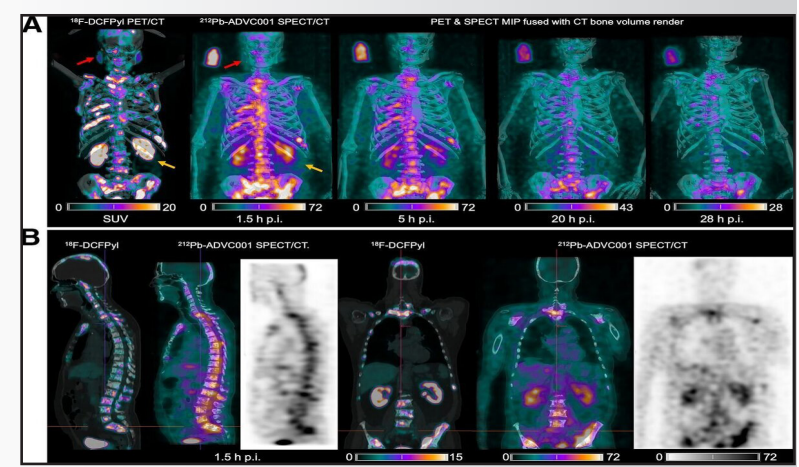
of all tissues and organs of the body and can be used to diagnose different diseases, specially cancer," she added.

Noting that radiopharmaceuticals emit gamma rays, Teymourian Fard explained, "In this non-invasive method, radiopharmaceuticals are injected into the patient's body. Then, based on its specifications, the radiopharmaceutical accumulates more in one of the tissues of the body and emits gamma rays. Finally, the gamma rays which come out of patient's body are received and converted into two-dimensional and three-dimensional images; in this way, the physician can obtain a report on the functioning of certain organs of the body like the heart, kidney, liver, and even bones."

She underlined that the device has no other domestic sample in Iran, adding that development of such a hi-tech technology in the world was monopolized by only a few advanced countries like the Netherlands, the U.S., and Germany so far.

While many imaging tests show what the internal organs look like, a SPECT scan can show how well the organs are working.

A SPECT scan can show how well blood is flowing to the heart; what areas of the brain are more active or less active; or what parts of the bone are affected by cancer.



## Picture of the Day



The village of Sasang is located 25 km south of Minudasht in Golestan province, where the main occupation of its residents is agriculture and animal husbandry.

Photo by ISNA