

(p. 41). If so this would suggest that leadership was not necessarily synonymous at this time with the "marja'-ate".

⁵⁹ The 'atabāt remained the single most important academic center but until the marja' al-taqlid-ship of Shaykh Murtaḍā al-Anṣārī (Algar, p. 163), the shrine cities lost the ability they had maintained since the fall of the Ṣafavids to attract and hold Shi'ī scholars throughout their lives.

⁶⁰ Rijāl, pp. 92-4; al-Kāshānī, Mullā Ḥabībullah al-Sharīf, Lubāb al-Alqāb fī Alqāb al-Atyāb, Tehran, 1378 A. H. noting from the Muntahā says, "His marvels (karāmāt) were many but his compositions few". (karāmātuḥu kathīrah wa lakinna muṣannafātihi qalīlah)

⁶¹ Khān Bābā Mushār, Mu'allifin-i Kutub-i Chāpī, v. VI, pp. 439-440

Peter CHEŁKOWSKI

ROOHOWZI: AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN THE HOMEOSTASIS OF IRANIAN CULTURE AND MORES

The history of Iran is most impressive not only for its mere length of the cultural and artistic creativity of the nation, but mainly for its capacity for self-preservation. Despite constant encroachment by enemies and migrating peoples descending upon the Iranian plateau from all corners, the Iranians have maintained their identity and way of life for twenty-five centuries. Even the most significant invasion of Iran - the Arab-Islamic conquest - could not wipe out the language of the country, as it did in some other conquered regions. On the contrary, the old language was given a new vital infusion, saving it from stagnation, and elimination.

It is no exaggeration to say that there is a poet in every Iranian, and that almost every Iranian is familiar with the great poetical tradition of his country, to a degree that is rare among people of other cultures. In the long history of Iranian nation, the language and its literary idiom has played a pivotal role around which the nation and culture have revolved. Age-old values do find expression in poetry even in today's context. Poetry has been a reference system, a mirror of Iran's history and heroic myth, an expression of national identity. This is why, for example, despite the total commitment of Iran before 1979 to join the modern nations of the world, the Arabic script of the Persian language has not been replaced by the Latin one, as has been the case in Turkish. Rather, the script has been actively safeguarded as an ongoing proof that Persian, and the Persian literary corpus of today is

connected to and descended from the great national literature of the past.

Many scholars have been trying to find the roots of the Italian *Commedia dell'Arte* in Asia, while others have been working to develop an Euro-Asian model for the *Commedia Improvisa*. There is no doubt that there are many similarities between the Iranian improvised comedy, the *Roohowzi*, and the Italian *Commedia*. These can be observed especially in the fixed characters - Pantalone, Truffaldino, Haji, Siyah. However, it is still too early to prove any major Eastern influences on the Italian *Commedia dell'Arte*; whereas there is an extensive material readily available to show how the East, and particularly Persia, were destined to save the *Commedia* from total oblivion.

This happened in the middle of the eighteenth century A. D. when Goldoni and Chiari, the champions of the theatrical reform, acquired great influence. A part of the reformists' program was to cut the throat of the innocent *Commedia dell'Arte*. The defender of this truly spontaneous and original theatre of the people, was Carlo Gozzi, who wished to add novelty and excitement of the oriental fables to this endangered theatrical form. He succeeded in bringing the Near Eastern fairy-tales and the masks of the Italian *Commedia* into perfect harmony. The success of *L'Amore della Tre Melarance* (The Love of Three Oranges), based on a story from *One Thousand and One Nights*, showed, that the use of fairy-tales, may not only maintain the impromptu style of Italian comedy, and amuse the public with piquant novelties, but may also convey moral lessons, under the guise of allegory, mingled with tragic pathos and the humor of the masks.

Accordingly, Gozzi composed a series of pieces gradually suppressing the burlesque elements, and amplifying the dramatic action by relying less upon the mechanical attraction of transformation scenes and lazzi. He wrote the principle parts in full and versified a considerable portion of the dialogue, thus fusing

fairy-tale and comedy, and subordinating them to literary satire, without however destroying the nature of the stock characters. To quote Gozzi's own words he "took our old friends Truffaldino, Tartaglia, Brighella, Pantalone and Smeraldina under his own protection", and "introduced them into the Eastern fairy-tales". Thanks to this mixture we meet Truffaldino, Pantalone and Smeraldina even today in Prokofiev's opera "The Love of Three Oranges". Although Prokofiev's work is known as ultra-modern, it nevertheless retains the flare of the oriental story and the entertaining quality of the *Commedia dell'Arte*.

The most important of Gozzi's fiabe is *Turandot*, which greatly helped to arrest the decline of the *Commedia dell'Arte*, and later had a great impact on famous romantic poets of Europe such as Schiller and Goethe, and well-known opera composers such as Busoni and Puccini. *Turandot* derives its name from Turan-Doukht and is based on the story of *The Red Pavilion* in Nizami Ganjavi's *Haft Peykar*.

For those who have not read the bedazzling exploration of the pleasures of love in Nizami's masterpiece, I propose to give a very short summary of that tale:

King Bahram Gur had palaces built for seven princesses from the seven corners of the world, visiting one of them on each of seven successive days and nights. On the fourth day he entered the red pavilion of the Slavic Princess.

Toward evenings he requested her to tell him a story, which is as follows:

A beautiful Russian princess was more learned than any man, as well as excelling in the arts. She refused to marry unless a suitor could be found able to pass the ambush of decapitating swords she had placed on the approaches to her thick-walled castle on top of a hill. The suitor would also have to know how to open the heavy lock and chains of the fortress in order to gain entrance.

The Princess had painted an alluring portrait of herself and inscribed it with a poem, stating that she would wed only the handsomest and the strongest man who would be able to answer her four riddles. The many heads of those who had failed to reach the castle were mounted on the city gates for public viewing.

A young and handsome prince fell in love with her portrait, and consulted a sage in the wilderness who told him how to escape the hidden swords, and how to unlock the palace gate. He also gave him clues to the answers to the four riddles the Princess would ask him when both subsequently would go before the King, her father's Court. He was therefore able to solve the riddles and produce correct gifts in exchange for hers. Since he could not faulted, the Princess consented to marry him.

Gozzi, writing directly for the stage, discarded the first part of Nizami's story concerning the treacherous of the suitors to the mountain-castle of the Princess, and started with the second part where the suitors try to solve the riddles.

Gozzi made *Turandot*, the daughter of the Emperor of China and moved the whole setting to Peking. In accordance with his prescription of mixing Oriental fables with the masks of Italian comedy, Gozzi brought all the stock characters of the Commedia to Peking so that they appear in the Chinese setting, but speak with the characteristics of the region of their origin. Tartaglia is the Lord High Chancellor of China; Brigella the captain of the Imperial pages; and Truffaldino is the chief eunuch of *Tourandotte's* harem.

The play opens with the gory background of the main gate of Peking, decorated with the heads of the unsuccessful suitors. The humorous characters of the *Commedia* accompany the prince of Samarkand who had failed to answer the riddles and is about to be executed. Their discussion deals with a place on the gate which would be most suitable for his head.

Gozzi's *Turandotte* is a tragic comedy in five acts. While the text of Three Oranges existed only in synoptic form, and al-

most the entire dialogue was improvised, in *Turandot*, it was written out not only for the serious characters but even the part of the masks. The masks became the mouthpiece for all kinds of satirical allusions to persons, customs and institutions in contemporary Venice - exactly along the line of Roohowzi. *Tourandotte* was staged for the first time in Teatro San Salvatore in Venice in 1762, by the famous traveling company of Antonio Sacchi, which specialized in Commedia dell'Arte. This was a blood transfusion given by Gozzi to the Comedia. And thanks to this new form of the *Comedia*, Persian Literature had a great impact on the romantics, especially the German ones. Goethe, who in 1786 had himself seen production of Gozzi's Fiabe was fascinated by Turandot, which he later described as "human destinies fantastically interwoven". Not only Goethe but Schiller, Schlegel, Tieck and E. T. A. Hoffman admired this story of the perennial war of the sexes - the male relentless in pursuit of the female, who both resists and desires conquests. When Goethe and Schiller conceived the plan of a German national theatre at Weimar, the repertory of which was to consist of the best native foreign plays, Turandot was included in their choice. Puccini drew for the libretto of his famous opera Tourandot on the Schiller's German adaptation of Gozzi's drama. However, before Puccini, another Tuscan composer, Busoni tried to create a new Commedia dell'Arte in his Turandot and Arlecchino in which masks merged with the essential drama and music. In Busoni's opera the masks are treated in the traditional manner. Puccini was under the influence *Chinoiserie*, Chinese mannerism, which is why Gozzi's Pantalone, Tartaglia, Brighella and Truffaldino were transformed by Puccini into Ping the Grand Chancellor, Pang the General Purveyor and Pong the Chief Cook. The more essential transformation, however, one can observe in Puccini's picture of princess *Turandot* - she becomes an human person.

Let us now return to our original discussion. For several thousand years, Iran has been one of the most prolific sources

of folk literature and legends. The extensive classical and formal literature at times has drawn heavily on popular sources; suffice to mention only Kalila va Dimna, Marzban Nameh, Tuti-Nameh, Sinbad Nameh, Layla va Majnun, Khusrow va Shirin etc. During the long and cold winter nights these stories were read and retold century after century in Iran. In the contemporary Persian literature the interplay between the popular and the formal is even more observable, as the writers try to reflect the social changes of the country in their writing. Let us hope that the rapid changes in Iran will not eliminate certain traditional forms of artistic expression like Roohowzi, thus allowing the principles of homeostasis to be at work.

Farhad KAZEMI

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN IRAN:
THE FADĀ'İYĀN ISLĀM *

Origin and Development

Religion and religious issues have always had a significant impact on politics in modern Iran. On many occasions religious issues have been responsible for violent confrontations with the government. At other times the support of the established religious hierarchy has made political victory possible for secular groups and organizations. In post World War II Iran, several religious organizations and parties emerged and played important roles in the political arena. Among these, the Fadā'iyān-i Islām (The Devotees of Islam) stands out for its extremist views and violent participation in Iranian politics in the decade following the war. The purpose of this article is to briefly review the Fadā'iyān's history, organization, ideology, and social base from the date of its inception to the present time.

The Fadā'iyān-i Islam was formed in 1945 by Sayyid Mūjtabā Navvāb Ṣafavī in Tehran¹. Navvāb Ṣafavī was born in 1923 in Tehran in a religious family known as Mirlawhī. The family name was changed to Navvāb Ṣafavī (deputies of the Safavids) to identify with the famous Shi'i dynasty of the Safavids who in the sixteenth century made Shi'ism the state religion of Iran. The family was deeply religious and claimed descent from the Prophet Mūḥammad and on the mother's side, from the Safavids. Navvāb had his early schooling in Tehran. He had completed the eighth grade when his father passed away. Navvāb quit