

Time for Dipstick Examination of our Assumptions.

*"If truth sets you free, we must first set free the truth."
James Bacques-1997*

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Thru these observations, the authors do not intend to correct some historical inaccuracies per se, rather to offer some legitimate rationale for undusting and examining some deeply tucked in, unattended but active subconscious beliefs, which we all harbor but might deserve corrections or out right disposing of.

What are Assumptions?

Probably one of the most reckless practices we routinely do in our daily life, is ignoring to examine our set of assumptions. Assumptions, just like our peripheral vision, are an active thin layer of presumed-, fluffy-, or pseudo-knowledge sandwiching our interactive core knowledge. We say Interactive knowledge because we are conscious of its existence and therefore we interact with and thus change it. Our knowledge of particular skills and capabilities in our professions is a good example of it.

Conversely, our *assumptions* are active because they influence our way of thinking and decision making, but not interactive because we are not conscious of their existence and therefore we do not interact with them unless we are forced to. *Assumptions* are probably built up in several different ways but stay with us until we challenge them and delete invalid ones.

It might be the repetitious daily routine which might lead to the formation of an *assumption*, like going to bed every night *assuming* that we will wake up next morning at our usual time without any incidence during 7-8 hours of sleep that we have virtually no control over. It might also be the result of an adulterated formal and/or social education we receive.

Any one who has had a dog knows that dogs will not take their heart worm pills knowingly. You have to mix it with stew type of food so she won't notice it at all or tolerate a bit of bitterness in exchange of a ton of her favorite yumyum food. With the same token, perception xyz, for instance, that would most likely meet unpleasant resistance by people to accept as *knowledge* if you made a movie or wrote a book about and present it to them, can be planted in people's pseudo-knowledge or *assumptions* department if the jest of the xyz is sliced into say 20 one liners and tucked into 20 other movies that have no direct connections to xyz but a ton of actions and special effect trickeries around it. An individual who sees all 20 movies will eventually solidify all the pieces together to form the perception xyz in his subconscious without knowingly having accepted it.

Authors here make this prelude simply to make a case for the importance of *assumptions* in our decision making process and exchange of ideas. Maybe a couple of real world cases are in order now.

wwi and wwii

In the well organized western and some eastern countries, given the number of books and movies dealing with the issue, people *assume* they know the reason(s) behind the outbreak of wwi and wwii. That is until you persuade them to *talk* about it, or have them bring their perception out of their pseudo-knowledge *assumption* department to *knowledge* department. That is where quite a few of them will turn themselves into clowns realizing decades of harboring beliefs that they had actually nothing to back it up with. We can find plenty of such *assumptions* unchecked, unexamined, but unfortunately quite active in people's behavior and decision making processes and again unfortunately without their own knowledge.

Book of Kings

Let's look at a more familiar example. I have never seen an Iranian second guesses the English translation for Ferdowsi's Shahnameh to be *Book of Kings*. But the same person will not translate Shahrag, the Artery of Kings. He would translate it the Main Arteries. He will not translate Shahkaar, Accomplished by Kings. He would translate it Master Piece. He will not translate Shahrah, Road of Kings. He would translate it Highway.

Then *why Shahnameh is not translated King of Books, the Master Book, the Master Piece, the Core Message, the Supreme Tenets?* Is it possible that we have nonchalantly accepted Shahnameh to be Book of Kings because in our *assumptions* we have been made to believe Shahnameh is about kings (of modern day meaning)? *Is Shahnameh really about (modern) kings or is it about tracing the main arteries of Iranian spiritual value system?*

If Shahnameh is about Kings, *was the concept of King of the period Ferdowsi refers to, equivalent to that of today's?* Did Rumi really mean *crazy* (of today's meaning) when he mentions *Deivaaneh* in his poetry? *Deiv* (Diva, Devil) in *Deivaaneh* (driven by devil) stood neutral and simply denoted an extracarnal power. So *Deivaaneh* originally meant possessed, spell bent, obsessed, powerless, submissive, defeated, taken over, and most likely irresistible to love. Somewhere along the way, however, *Deiv* was assigned a morally defective character and subsequently *Deivaaneh* pointed to irrational and harmful misbehavior, or *crazy* of today's understanding. But it would be a stark task to find out when exactly the transition took place. Most likely not before Rumi's time.

Further more, we know many words we use today are the exact negative replica of the original meanings. We use '*Effreiteh*' to point to an evil ugly woman, a female gargoyle. But few know *Effreiteh* comes from *Aphrodite*, the goddess of beauty and love. We use '*Setam*' to depict *Abuse of Power*. But few know *Setam* comes from its precursor *Staxma* (stamina), *Power*.

Did Iranians knowingly substitute the meaning of *Effreiteh*? A sensible answer is probably not. It was more likely planted into their subconscious and gradually became part of their self destructive *assumptions*. Did they know they were massaging *Setam* from *Power* to *Abuse of Power*? Considering the last tumultuous 2800 years of political and social history of Iran with 1/3 of it, 900 years the land being run by noniranians, the likely correct answer is yes. *It was probably a giant philosophical metamorphosis to realize that there is little intelligible difference between Power and Abuse of Power.* It's ticklishly tempting to dig out when exactly this transition took place. The founding fathers of America pointed to this view by the famous phrase "*Power Corrupts*".

Assuming Shahnameh is about kings of modern day stature, is unmistakably a masculine interpretation of Ferdowsi's narration of Iranian social history. Since the Iranian culture and spiritual under pinning of it is incurably feminine, this view is more likely the product of contemporary superstructure of the society and not indigenous to the Iranian core value

system.

Persian Empire

Let's move on to another active but questionable *assumption*. It's the super familiar clause *Persian Empire. Was Persia really an Empire?* The first question here is how old is the modern concept of Empire. This is important since if the concept of empire did not exist at a particular time period, obviously the empire itself could have not existed either. Imperial machination is a foreign policy mode and has little to do with the domestic administrative system. Any type of governance has the potential to become an imperial power. We can probably make a long list of attributes characterizing an empire. A few of them are listed below.

What makes an empire an empire?

- 1-Territorial expansion thru crude force accompanied by plunder.
- 2-Clear distinction between the home state and the colonies and protectorates in civic and legal rights; taxation and military service, etc.
- 3-Forced loyalty by monopolizing ownership of vital resources like water, live stocks, and farming crops.
- 4-Disproportional punishments for social unrests in the colonies.
- 5-Unforgiving assault on the core value system of the defeated nations to tear down the cohesive fabric of their communities by replacing their language, religion, and spiritual traditions over the dominion to strengthen loyalty and defuse rebellion.
- 5-Forced displacements, forced labor, and out right slavery.
- 6-Only masculine cultures build empires.

From the above list probably only the first characteristic is even partially correct about Persian so-called Empire. The rest are patently unpatchable to the Persian sc Empire. Why, then, in the face of such a scarce historical and academic support, *Empire* has been unfairly patched to *Persia*? Is it possible that the source of this subliminal characterization is recent and comes actually from the western historians who, knowingly or unknowingly, exonerated themselves of the overwhelming task of articulating the unique nature of Persian sc Empire? A grain of guilt or tight corners here and there seems to have persuaded some of these historians to fabricate yet another phrase *Benevolent Empire*.

Is it possible that Persia is called *Empire* because she had actually challenged the whole concept of supremacy and proffered an *anathema* to the imperial rule of the privileged: the modern concept of state? We know that far before Achaemenians to very present day the basis of statehood for the greatest part of the world has always been language, religion, ethnicity, place of birth, familial lineage, or in general any inherent attributes that is out of control of the citizens.

Achaemenians for the first time in history abolished national identity based on inherent attributes and replaced it with citizen's free will covenant with a government. Three commitments from the citizen's side earned him Persia's citizenship. The commitments being: 1-Pledge of allegiance to the central government. 2-Pay taxes twice a year. 3-Military service at the time of war. If I am not mistaken these are still top three of a longer list of commitments one has to make to become a US citizen today.

So if Persia was not an empire, what was it then? A quick inaccurate but closest to the truth answer would be United Satrapies of Persia. A more accurate answer requires a review of what we can call *Iranic spiritual value system*. ISVS covers cultural and spiritual traditions of peoples living under a giant U with Caspian Sea filling the concavity and Persian Gulf covering the convexity.

Far before entangling with different religions, *Masseih* (Messiah) or *Masheih* was Iranians' vernacular for *human*, which literally meant center core of potentiality. Today's word *Mosht* for *Fist* is a living reminder of that. *Masseih* was later and gradually replaced with *Aadam* (Adam) or *Ensaan*, which have different definitions and may influence our *assumption* of what human is supposed to mean.

Achaemenians believed in humans and human communities in terms of *Masseih* and believed in *rule by respect* (feminine). Since only good things can get adulterated, low caliber rulers of later centuries veered off to *rule by fear* (masculine). Achaemenians most likely intended to eventually create a community of nations in the image of a grape cluster (ISVS). Each community be administered by locals but connected by two innovated arteries resembling stems in grape clusters: paved roads over the ground and water tunnels under the ground.

Qanaats

Qanaats have been frequently labeled by archeologists and thus historians as a genius *irrigation* system in the face of water scarcity, again a claim poorly supported by facts and logics, but sustained due to the lack of a better explanation. The importance of water as essence of life and as a glue for attachment of humans in ISVS is a very relevant issue to consider in order to understand what the *Qanaats* were supposed to signify.

In Persian Garden designs, streams of water connects four corners of the garden (four, signifying four elements of life) not for irrigation or aesthetic purposes. A great majority of traditional Iranians still toss a bowl of water after a loved one walking or driving away to a trip, a symbolic gesture of keeping a connection thru a liquid glue. A liquid glue Rumi refers to as what attaches segments of a reed stem. A well practiced but poorly explained tradition of covering exposed skin with a thin layer of water before going to prayer also symbolizes how Iranians wished to connect with the lord. Iranians build a small pond in their homes which serves no utility purposes and only wastes space. But no one second guesses the need for it. Why?

Without a deep understanding of the meaning of water in ISVS, explaining *qanaats* will most likely be warped and unsatisfactory.

Authors realize that each of these topics requires and deserves much in depth articulations with accreditations and reference citing. But that again will inadvertently disinterest a wide spectrum of audiences and defeat the purpose. It probably is preferably to be a bit inaccurate and maybe even offensive to some, but DO make a point, than be perfect and be missed or dismissed completely.

We feel our underwear only the first few minutes we put them on. Then we don't see them, we don't feel them, we don't think about them, and we don't want to be made to think about them either. But we do know they play an important role and we routinely take them out and clean them. Our *assumptions* are our mental underwear that need a periodical cleaning too. And obviously the longer we miss tending to them the less appealing it will become to do so.