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Monticello

Home of Thomas Jefferson

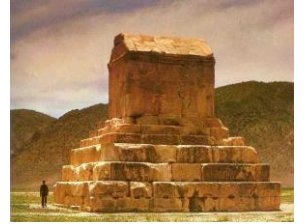


photo : Bruno Barbey

Mausoleum of Cyrus the Great,  
ca. 530 BC

# Jefferson and Cyrus

**How the Founding Fathers of America, in Their Own Words,  
Were Inspired by Cyrus the Great**

**How the US Constitution’s Establishment Clause was Inspired by Darius the Great**

**From Jefferson, Adams, Madison, Franklin  
and Truman who declared “I am Cyrus”**

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Though twenty-three centuries apart in time, continents apart in space, their systems of republican and monarchical government ostensibly the diametric opposites of each other, the Founding Fathers of America and the founders of the Iranian state were close in spirit and in ideas that underlie systems of governance vying to institute liberty and justice among mankind. Their systems of government were different implementations of the same underlying principles. America's Founding Fathers were avid readers of the biography of Cyrus the Great (ca. 600-530 BC), founder of the Iranian state. The *Cyropaedia* is regarded as the *magnus opus* of Xenophon, a classmate of Plato, both students of Socrates. It describes Cyrus's traits of character that made him into the ideal ruler. It is an exposition of timeless qualities of leadership. Leaders at any age stand to benefit from those before them, and from inspiration which plants its seeds for later manifestation and realization.

The *Cyropaedia* has served as the World's manual of leadership, from Alexander, Scipio, Cicero, Caesar, Machiavelli who read and drew inspiration from it, to the US Founding Fathers and onto our own times. In the estimation of Peter Drucker, widely recognized as the father of the modern science of management, this first book on leadership, *Cyropaedia*, remains the best book on leadership as his biographer and student William Cohen describes: "Despite all the books published on leadership by well-known academic researchers and successful CEOs, Drucker never altered his opinion. Xenophon was still the best."<sup>1</sup> Such inspiration, as will be seen, that the U.S. Founding Fathers drew from Cyrus and Darius, amongst all the ancient and modern sources they were exposed to, was because they found those ideas and aspirations resonating with their own inmost beliefs and convictions, and because of the record of success of the ideas of ancient Iran.

Xenophon was in the employ of the Persians for over a year. He lived among the Persians, and knew the language. He acquired his knowledge of Iran first-hand, in comparison to Herodotus whose emphatic statement that all Persian names end with the letter *s* reveals that his information came greccized from intermediaries, for they rarely ended in *s*. Xenophon and Plato are the two main students of Socrates whose works are extant and through whose works, aside from minor fragments, Socrates is at all known. Thomas Jefferson, John Adams and many others over the course of history held Xenophon in far greater esteem than Plato, for Xenophon's clarity and forthrightness and for his application of philosophy to practice. Jefferson, Adams, Madison and others read the classics in the original. Seemingly making an example of Plato's allegory of shadows and the cave, Jefferson wrote of Plato to Adams in July 5, 1814:

"His foggy mind, is forever presenting the semblances of objects which, half seen thro' a mist, can be defined neither in form or dimension. Yet this which should have consigned him to early oblivion really procured him immortality of fame and reverence."<sup>2</sup>

Adams replied on July 16, 1814 (in shorthand style of the time):

“I rec<sup>d</sup> this morning your favour of the 5<sup>th</sup> and as I can never let a Sheet of your’s rest I Sit down immediately to acknowledge it. . . .

...

I am very glad you have Seriously read Plato: and Still more rejoiced to find that your reflections upon him, So perfectly harmonize with mine. Some thirty Years ago I took upon me the Severe task of going through all his Works. With the help of two Latin Translations, and one English and one French Translation comparing Some of the most remarkable passages with the Greek, I laboured through the tedious toil. My disappointment was very great, my Astonishment was greater and my disgust was Shocking.”<sup>3</sup>

There is perhaps no more fitting appellation for Thomas Jefferson than the *Apostle of Americanism*, as he has aptly been called. Recognizing the role of the major architect of the nation, one comes to the realization that he is the one President who stepped a little down into the presidency, while all others stepped up, relative to the positions they held before, which explains in his epitaph making no mention of it. In characterizing the place of Jefferson in the American ethos, the late Gore Vidal stated :

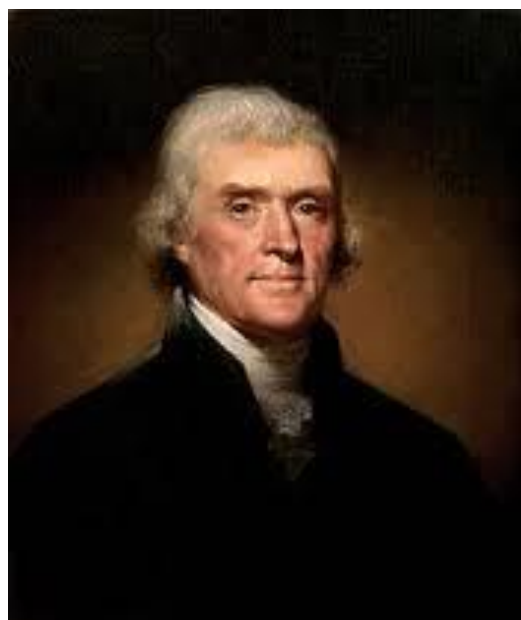


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**Thomas Jefferson**  
1743-1826  
Apostle of Americanism

"If there is such a thing, which I think there is and others perhaps do not, as an American spirit, then he is it. . . . And it still goes 'round; it still inspires, and it is still the essence of whatever spirit we still have and that we once had, indeed."<sup>4</sup>

Long before the ancestors of Americans and Europeans emerged from the dark ages, their elder cousins had established a state hither East, which they named, after themselves, *Aryana*, denoting 'the Land of Aryans'. The term "Aryan" had no physical connotations prior to its re-adoption in Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a self-designation. Originally, in Old Persian, it meant, simply, *noble*. In Sanskrit, ancient cousins of the Iranians in India also referred to themselves as "Aryan" and in their language it also meant *noble*. In the language of their yet distant cousins in far west Europe, Old Irish, its cognate *eire* likewise meant *noble*. In the course of time the term *Aryana* underwent phonetic changes to evolve to today's *Iran*.

In due course, in the southern and warmer reaches of *Aryana*, in a region called *Parsa*, to Greeks *Persia* of southern Iran, arose Cyrus who created and with his successors led for over two centuries the World's first multi-national, multi-lingual multi-cultural, multi-religious, and multi-ethnic *unity of states*. Much as the United States is to-day. Although the term *empire* in the later sense historically, with connotations of exploitation of other nations, is not applicable to Cyrus's unity of states, it is often employed for lack of a better term as convenience.

Cyrus was also the gentile *Savior* of the Jews from Babylon, and other nations and tribes hitherto in a state of captivity or slavery. The Bible's greatest prophet, Second Isaiah of the Babylonian Exile about five hundred years before Jesus, declares Cyrus the Great as *Messiah*, for he freed and restored nationhood to the Jews. The establishment of Israel today under President Truman was modeled after his work. The Persians are the only people in the Bible who are not condemned, but highly praised. The term "Messiah" is a rendition of Hebrew *mashiah* translated in English as *Anointed of the Lord*. It comes to us in this form because the Greeks and Romans largely lacked the sound represented by the digraph "sh" and converted it to s. Some five hundred years after Cyrus the same term, *mashiah*, is used in the New Testament as descriptive of Jesus.

#### **DIRECT EVIDENCE FOR JEFFERSON'S KEEN INTEREST IN THE INSTITUTION OF CYRUS, *Cyropaedia***

Several years ago, while we were supporting a project by Cyrus Kar in the capacities of consulting scholars and donors, it came to our notice that there were two editions of the *Cyropaedia* in Thomas Jefferson's library.<sup>5</sup> This library formed the nucleus of the Library of Congress after the war of 1812 when the British had burned much of Washington including the Library of Congress, which had less than half the number of books in Jefferson's library. But as Jefferson's library

contained more than 6,400 books, what was the significance of a few books on ancient Persia ? In looking further into the holdings of the new library that was received from Jefferson, I noticed other works dealing with Iran such as Xenophon's *Persian Expedition* and *Oikonomicus*. In visits to Monticello and meetings with the staff I found Jefferson had at least two more copies of the *Cyropaedia* – altogether four separate editions. These findings and Jefferson's letters recommending Xenophon's works to his grandson were indicative of his interest.

As Wm. Scott Harrop of the University of Virginia reports: "Family letters provide further hints of Jefferson's high regard for Xenophon and the *Cyropaedia*. In early 1803, Anne Cary Randolph wrote to "Dear Grand Papa" that her brother, Jefferson Randolph, was busy "translating the history of Cyrus by Xenophon,"<sup>6</sup> by which she meant *Cyropaedia*. Jefferson made it requisite for students seeking to enter the University of Virginia, which he founded, the ability to find their way around the works of Xenophon and other classical authors in the original Greek or Latin.

A brilliant work of scholarly forensic analysis by Julian Raby, Director of the Freer and Sackler Galleries, and colleagues, further established Jefferson's keen interest in the *Cyropaedia*. Of Jefferson's few copies of the *Cyropaedia* that have survived, one is an edition from 1767, having the original Greek on the left and the Latin translation on the right, on each opening. Raby observes how Jefferson combed through the two editions, comparing them line by line :

"What's extraordinary is that he scratched out one line . . . The particular passage that was crossed out is a problematic passage in the manuscript ... it is quite clear that Jefferson himself must have been collating line by line between his earlier edition and this later edition."<sup>7</sup>

Jefferson's mark on the *Cyropaedia* noted above was validated by forensic analysis during meetings I had with Marc Dimunation, Chief of the Rare Book and Special Collections Division at the Library of Congress. Marc Dimunation recognized Jefferson's ink on the passage, and found it was consistent with Jefferson's markings on his other books.<sup>8</sup>

Caroline Winterer of Stanford University reports of copies of the *Cyropaedia* in the libraries of Benjamin Franklin as well as Adams and Jefferson, and how Jefferson wrote to a friend in 1787 seeking books which included an edition of the *Cyropaedia* in Italian.<sup>9</sup> This indicates his having read the originals and other editions, but still interested in the Italian translation - perhaps for clarification of some fine points, as Adams had done with regards to Plato.

Neil MacGregor, Director of the British Museum, reported that Scottish intellectuals of the Age of Enlightenment had consulted the *Cyropaedia*. From their midst came Thomas Jefferson's Scottish

mentor, William Small, at the College of William and Mary in the early 1760s. Jefferson later expressed how deep his gratitude was to William Small, and regarded him “as a father.”<sup>10</sup>

In one of his letters to his grandson Francis W. Eppes, Jefferson advised:

“Your Latin & Greek should be kept up assiduously . . . I would advise you to undertake a regular course of history & poetry in both languages, in Greek, go first thro’ the *Cyropaedia*, and then read Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon’s *Hellenies* & *Anabasis*, Arrian’s *Alexander*, & Plutarch’s lives”<sup>11</sup> . . .

In correlating the letters of Jefferson with the *Cyropaedia* I come across passages that are indicative of his inspiration, such as with John Locke’s *Life, Liberty* and George Mason’s *Pursuit of Happiness*. They show how Cyrus’s ethics and leadership appealed to and inspired Jefferson. This may be seen in a comparison of what Jefferson wrote to his grandson with the description that Xenophon gives of Cyrus and how he was perceived by followers. Xenophon :

“His own temperance and the knowledge of it made others more temperate. When they saw moderation and self-control in the man who above all others had licence to be insolent, lesser men were the more ready to abjure all insolence of their own. But there was this difference, Cyrus held, between modesty and self-control: the modest man will do nothing shameful in the light of day, but the man of self-control nothing base, not even in secret. Self-restraint, he believed, would best be cultivated if he made men see in himself one who could not be dragged from the pursuit of virtue by the pleasure of the moment, one who chose to toil first for the happy-hearted joys that go hand-in-hand with beauty and nobleness.”<sup>12</sup>

Jefferson in a letter to his grandson Francis W. Eppes :

“Never suffer a thought to be harbored in your mind which you would not avow openly. When tempted to do anything in secret, ask yourself if you would do it in public. If you would not, be sure it is wrong. . . . Whenever you feel a warmth of temper rising, check it at once and suppress it, recollecting it will make you unhappy within yourself and disliked by others.”<sup>13</sup>

Jefferson’s interest in Cyrus is further indicated by the fact that the remaining lists of the books he owned show at least four different editions of the *Cyropaedia*, which came to light during my visits to Monticello and meetings with Foundation Librarian Endrina Tay. The different editions of the text of the *Cyropaedia* shed light on the slight variations between them as they came to us over the centuries via scribes. The different editions helped Jefferson to further clarify the text :

1. *Xenophontis institutio Cyri tomis quatuor ex editione T. Hutchinson*. Glasgow, 1767. 4-vol. at Library of Congress (Displayed at the Smithsonian exhibition).
2. *Xenophontis De Cyri institutione libri octo*. Oxford, 1727. Copy sold to Congress was either lost in the 1851 fire or is missing.
3. *Xenophontis opera*. Leipzig, 1811-1819. Five vols. of the original 6-vol set are at Monticello, which includes the *Cyropaedia*.
4. *Xenophontis quae exstant opera*. Edinburgh, 1811. Current location unknown.

### **JOHN ADAMS' FAVORITE AUTHOR**

John Adams adored Xenophon, author of the *Cyropaedia*, whom he referred to as:

“my favourite author, that ancient and immortal husbandman, philosopher, politician and general.”<sup>14</sup>



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**John Adams**  
1835-1826  
President 1797-1801  
Xenophon “my favourite author”

Adams, Madison and others concurred on the failure of prior forms of democracy, a fact which Xenophon starts with, as Adams' well-worn copy of the *Cyropaedia*, and his dialogues such as the following with John Taylor (a critic of his), indicate.

Since the American Revolution the term 'democracy' has undergone semantic evolution to indicate a Constitution with Bill of Rights wherein the rights and dignity of the individual could not be violated by even the entirety of the rest of the citizenry. But in their time for the Founding Fathers, based on the experience of Athens whereby Socrates was tried and sentenced to death by a crowd, democracy denoted "mobocracy". Thus the framers ensured the term 'democracy' as then understood would not be in the Constitution, but *republican form of government*. John Adams wrote thus in 1814 to John Taylor:

"Remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There never was a democracy yet that did not commit suicide."<sup>15</sup>

That is what the *Cyropaedia* attempts to show, and John Adams copy of the *Cyropaedia* at the Boston Public Library is well worn in those pages. Adams further indicates his interest in Cyrus and the Persian ideals of government in his review of the *History of Persia* (1815) in two volumes written by British Ambassador Sir John Malcolm. Adams was looking for an account of Iran's ancient religion and government, but to his disappointment found none. He wrote to Jefferson:

"I have been disappointed in the Review of [Sir John Malcolm's](#) History of Persia. Those cunning Edinburgh men break off, at the Point of the only Subject that excited my Curiosity the ancient modern Religion and Government of Persia."<sup>16</sup>

Malcolm in the early 1800s had arrived in Iran with a retinue of about five hundred, his mission mainly to counter French influence in Iran under Napoleon. He was assigned to the post by Lord Cornwallis who, subsequent to his defeat at Yorktown in 1781 by America and France, had been made Governor-General (viceroy) of India and in 1792 created 1<sup>st</sup> Marquess Cornwallis.

John Adams persuaded his son, John Quincy Adams, who would later become President, to read the *Cyropaedia* at a young age. However, this pressure, as is often the case in the relationship between parent and children, may have had the opposite effect from what John Adams wished.

### **JAMES MADISON, THE *CYROPAEDIA* AND THE FEDERALIST PAPERS**

Madison, principal author and editor of the U.S. Constitution, was a neighbor, close friend and political lieutenant of Thomas Jefferson. Their friendship spanned some fifty years, during which



Jefferson was in the capacity of elder brother. Early on in 1785 when Jefferson had arrived in France as US minister, he selected and sent a collection of books in two crates to James Madison on the various forms of government and pertinent histories and philosophies, ancient and modern.<sup>17</sup> Jefferson continued that custom, sending books to Madison as well as to his predecessor Dr. Franklin and others. Madison was pleased and grateful to Jefferson for his selections. In 1787 having gained expertise in the subject of governance Madison was ready to hold the Philadelphia Convention ostensibly, to revise the Articles of Confederation, but with the real aim of forming a constitution. Madison managed to persuade George Washington, initially reluctant and on the fence, not knowing what was in the plans, to attend, which assured the attendance of all others. These books enabled Madison to prepare himself to lead the Convention, which he planned successfully and led to the formation and adoption of the U.S. Constitution in 1788.

Along with the *Declaration of Independence* of the United States, the *Federalist Papers* have served as an aid, first to ratify and then to interpret the Constitution. Central to this collection has been Federalist Paper No. 10, authored by Madison, published in 1787, the year most delegates from the colonies agreed on the U.S. Constitution.

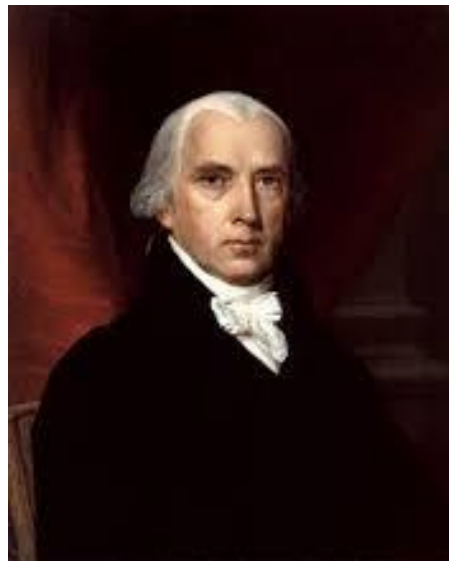


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**James Madison, 1751-1836**  
President 1809-1817  
Principal Author, US Constitution  
Jefferson's Neighbor, Colleague,  
Political Lieutenant and Friend of Fifty Years

Titled *The Utility of the Union as a Safeguard Against Domestic Faction and Insurrection*, the distinction therein is clearly drawn by Madison between a crude democracy such as that in ancient Athens and a *Republic*, which the founders meant for the United States to be, in which the fundamental rights of the individual are protected.

Madison wrote a treatise on *Ancient and Modern Confederacies* in 1787 showing the failure of all prior forms of government, in which he clearly exempted that of Cyrus and the Persians. In the *Cyropaedia*, Xenophon contrasts other forms of government with that of Cyrus, in words that at any point in time seem applicable and relevant- whether in Classical Greece, in Revolutionary America or our time. Xenophon writes:

“We have had occasion before now to reflect how often democracies have been overthrown by the desire for some other type of government, how often monarchies and oligarchies have been swept away by movements of the people, how often would-be despots have fallen in their turn, some at the outset by one stroke, while those who have maintained their rule for ever so brief a season are looked upon with wonder as marvels of sagacity and success . . . As long, therefore, as we followed these reflexions, we could not but conclude that man is by nature fitted to govern all creatures, except his fellow-man. But when we came to realise the character of Cyrus the Persian, we were led to a change of mind.”<sup>18</sup>

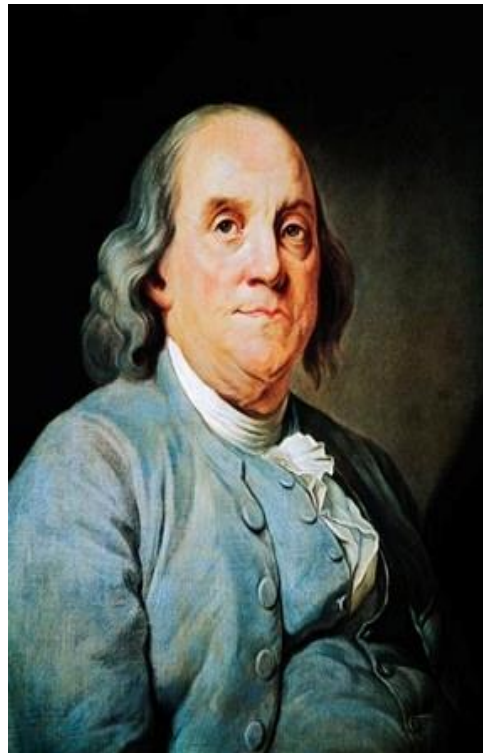
Madison writes in Federalist Paper No. 10 (1787), which he reiterates in No. 51 (1788):

”Hence it is that such democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths.”<sup>19</sup>

### **BENJAMIN FRANKLIN’S REVIEW OF THE AVESTA, HOLY BOOKS OF IRAN**

Thomas Jefferson, in his embassy to France and in other respects, was the successor and heir to Benjamin Franklin, senior-most among the first tier of the Founding Fathers, whom Jefferson referred to as the ‘immortal Doctor Franklin.’ Jefferson was a polymath, like Franklin. When he served in Paris as ambassador (1785-89), Jefferson found “more respect & veneration attached to the character of Doctor Franklin in France, than to that of any other person in the same country, foreign or native.”<sup>20</sup>

Earlier, when Ben Franklin was in London (1757-1775) and represented the colonies, he found the *Avesta*, the corpus of holy scriptures of the pre-Islamic religion of Iran, Zoroastrianism. It had been published in Paris in 1771 by Anquetil-Duperron, a French scholar of the Orient who had spent about six years among the Parsees (Persians who had emigrated to India) learning about their faith, and together with the Parsees translated the *Avesta* into French.



**Benjamin Franklin, 1706-1790**

Statesman, Diplomat, Scientist, Polymath  
Gained the Critical Support  
of France for the American Revolution

Franklin's intuition into the *Avesta* is remarkable. Nearly a century before a 'brilliant young German philologist,'<sup>21</sup> Martin Haug made the discovery that it was the Gathas within the *Avesta* that were the words of Zoroaster (Zarathustra) himself and are among the oldest parts of the *Avesta*, Franklin had developed a clear notion of that. Zoroaster, the Iranian prophet, according to modern scholarship<sup>22</sup> lived in the second millennium BC, and according to Aristotle some six

thousand years before Plato. Franklin related his finding in his letter to the president of Yale University Ezra Stiles wrote:

“Dear Sir : There is lately published in Paris a work entitled *Zend-Avesta* . . . I have cast my Eye over the religious part; it seems to contain a nice morality, mixed with abundance of prayers, ceremonies, and observances. If you desire to have it, I will procure it for you. There is no doubt of its being a genuine translation of the books at present deemed sacred, as the writings of Zoroaster, by his followers; but perhaps some of them are of later date, though ascribed to him.”<sup>23</sup>

Henry Marchant was then visiting Franklin from Rhode Island, having been referred to Franklin by Stiles. Franklin ended the letter to Stiles saying how Henry Marchant, “understanding you are curious on the Subject of the Eastern ancient Religions, concludes to send you the Book.”<sup>24</sup>

In his review of the Avesta Ben Franklin would have read the Persian ideology of agrarianism; it served as affirmation of his own and fellow founding fathers belief in a production economy based then on agriculture as the basis of prosperity and economic justice which makes society strong.

## **GEORGE WASHINGTON**

As George Washington had been, in the first place, a military leader and in the second a political philosopher, there was little or no expectation to find correspondence in political philosophy in his writings with that of ancient Iran. Yet Washington’s *Rules of Civility & Decent Behavior*, which he collected when still a teenager, bear a close resemblance to Zoroastrian *Andarz* literature, a corpus containing advice from the elderly and men of wisdom to the youth. The *Rules of Civility & Decent Behavior* absorbed by George Washington during his youth, part of a collection that had been developed by French Jesuits, formed an integral part of his upbringing, values and manners which later led to him becoming a leader. There are numerous entries having to do with ethics.

The Jesuits did have a mission in Iran. But they also had missions elsewhere. We do not know of Washington possessing books on Persian history or literature. The close correspondence may be regarded as grown from a degree of similarity of beliefs, values and parallel societal conditions between Revolutionary America and the formative stage of Iran. Washington’s writings on government and the economy, in particular the principles he articulates so eloquently in his Farewell Address, applicable and valid in our day as in his, are of as high a caliber as the works of the leading political philosophers among the Founding Fathers.

## THE IDEALS OF IRAN INCORPORATED IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTION VIA THE FOUNDING FATHERS

The separation of church and state and freedom of religion under Cyrus the Great was continued by and is seen in the records of his successors such as Darius the Great (ca. 550-486 BC). Cyrus's rule was secular, as is related in the *Cyropaedia* and other classical sources, in contrast to that of the Babylonians and others before him. In reviewing the notes Thomas Jefferson made as a young scholar it became evident that the experience of ancient Iran had caught his attention. In his extensive studies in various fields of knowledge and inquiry, and in his initial process of developing as an intellectual, then progressing to a polymath, Jefferson made notes of passages in the various books he read that were of interest to him. These would be passages he manifestly knew he wanted to refer to later, much as scholars in the libraries reading books do today, but using copying machines, scanners and cameras. These collections of notes became known as Jefferson's *Commonplace Books*. Being a polymath, Jefferson developed a few commonplace books for his main subjects of interest. He generally did not record what he already knew or was obvious to him, but recorded what he did not know, what appealed to him and what, as a record, had historical significance. Among his collections of notes that have survived are his *Legal* and *Literary Commonplace Books*, in both of which Iran figures. Jefferson read Voltaire's great classic on history *Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations*, written in 174 chapters, which was standard reading for intellectuals in the Age of Enlightenment. It went through no less than 27 editions at the time. Note no. 852 in Jefferson's *Literary Commonplace Book*, which he took from Voltaire's said *Essay on the Manners and Spirit of Nations*, deals with the aftermath of invasion and forcible conversion of Iran to Islam. It indicates Jefferson's interest in Iran and the issue of separation of Church and State. Jefferson made himself this note :

“Then that ancient religion of the Magi fell, that the conqueror Darius had respected. He never disturbed the religion of conquered peoples. The Magi regarded their religion as the most ancient and the most pure. The knowledge that they had of mathematics, astronomy and of history augmented their enmity toward the conquerors the Arabs, who were so ignorant. They [the Magi] could not abandon their religion, consecrated for so many centuries. Then most of them retreated to the extremities of Persia and India. It is there that they live today, under the name Gaurs or Guebres.”<sup>25</sup>

The Magi, whom the gospel of Matthew reports bearing gifts and seeking to find the infant Jesus, were the priests of Zoroastrianism. *Gaur*, or *Guebre*, is a derogatory term in Islam, likely deriving from Arabic *kafir*, meaning infidel,<sup>26</sup> referring to a Zoroastrian, an adherent of the pre-Islamic religion of Iran. Darius, a successor to Cyrus the Great, upheld and enforced the policy of

separation of religion and government. He had respect for other religions and enforced his policy vigorously, as shown in the following letter (ca. 500 BC) by Darius to one of his provincial governors, or satraps, in Asia Minor, by name Gadatas, on an inscription. It is consistent with the accounts of Xenophon as well as with the Bible and the Cyrus Cylinder on the protection of local religions and how people should be free in their relation to their higher being. Darius the Great :

“King of Kings Darius, son of Hystaspes, to Gadatas, Servant, thus says: I learn that you do not obey my orders in all things. Because on the one hand you work my land, planting the produce from beyond the Euphrates as far as the coast of the region of Asia, I commend your goal and on account of all these things there shall be established for you great gratitude in the King’s house. On the other hand, because you lose sight of my will on behalf of the gods, I will give to you, if you do not change, a proof of my offended anger. Indeed, you have exacted tribute from the gardener priests of Apollo, and assigned them profane land to dig, not recognizing my ancestors’ purpose on behalf of the god who spoke to the Persians only truth . . .”<sup>27</sup>

The chief authority on Jefferson’s *Legal Commonplace Book*, Gilbert Chinard of France has determined the range of dates for Jefferson’s notes that he made in the *Legal Commonplace Book*. Chinard, who became a professor at Johns Hopkins and eventually at Princeton, explains : “it seems that we may assume with reasonable certainty : that the bulk of the *Commonplace Book* represents the notes taken by Jefferson on law, political science, and religion during his formative years.” Born in 1743, Jefferson’s formative years may be reckoned to be from about 1760 to the early 1770s. All precedes his authorship of the *Declaration of Independence* (1776), the *Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom* (1777) *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1781-85) in which he also advanced the concept of freedom of religion and liberty, and his correspondence from Paris (1785-89) with James Madison, whereby Jefferson advised Madison to incorporate the Establishment clause into the first Amendments of the Constitution.

Jefferson drafted the *Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom* in 1777, which through Madison’s close collaboration with him was (1786) later enacted into law and became a cornerstone of the Bill of Rights (1789-91) in the U.S. Constitution. Initially, in 1779-82, Jefferson's statute for religious freedom had encountered opposition in the Virginia legislature, since it would deprive vested interest of their privileges. While Jefferson was ambassador to France, he worked closely with his longtime friend and fellow Virginian Madison on their issues of concern during the formative stages of the revolutionary government. Their letters were coded such that the British would not be able to spy on them along the route. Madison managed to gather the support of minority sects and get Jefferson’s statute passed through the Virginia legislature ca. 1786. With the

encouragement and support of Jefferson, Madison then made religious freedom part of the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights.

The freedom and full civil rights that minority sects including Jews, Moslems, Hindus, and members of numerous other faiths as well as atheists have enjoyed under the U.S. Constitution is directly attributable to the *Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom*, for which Darius the Great's policy served both as an inspiration and proven success in practice of government. To-day the concept, and usage of the phrase, *separation of church and state* in English and in other languages goes back to Jefferson's statute.

The Founding Fathers of America, not knowing initially if their experiment would be successful, sought a proven model that validated their ideas by virtue of success in the field. The model with the ideals that they, in particular Jefferson, felt closest to their own was Iran's. We should not be surprised in seeing German Philosopher of History (ca. 1830) Hegel's description of ancient Iran reading like America today, or at least the America intended by the framers in which States' rights are upheld and respected. In Hegel's remarks below one can substitute "America" for "Persia" and "Constitution" for "King" and it would hold true today. Hegel on the Persian form of government :

"We find it consisting of a number of states, which are indeed dependent, but which have retained their own individuality, their manners, their laws. The general enactments, binding upon all, did not infringe upon their political or social idiosyncrasies, but even protected and maintained them; so that each of the nations that constitute the whole, had its own form of Constitution . . . All this diversity coexists harmoniously under the impartial dominion of Light . . .

In Persia, the government, though joining all in a central unity, is but a combination of peoples –leaving each of them free . . . The King was only the abstract sovereign: the enjoyment of the country remained to the nations themselves . . . Thus the dominion of the Persians was by no means oppressive, in either secular or religious respects."<sup>28</sup>

In coming to know the character of Cyrus and Darius, the Founding Fathers found them appealing to their own ideals, beliefs and values. It becomes manifest that Jefferson and Cyrus in particular, were kindred spirits. One recognized this kinship and became inspired by the other. The result entered into history. Neil MacGregor, Director of the British Museum with his team, and colleagues at the Sackler Museum and elsewhere, has vied more than any other scholar to bring the message of Cyrus the Great's declaration of human rights and freedom to the modern world. Neil MacGregor aptly remarked to the BBC in 2013:

"The story of Persia – Iran – is part of the story of modern United States."<sup>29</sup>

When in Paris (1785-89), at the invitation of America's friend Lafayette Jefferson, concurrent with his influence on the Bill of Rights via Madison, came to exercise an influence on the French Revolution in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*.

The fact that Jefferson had at least four editions of the *Cyropaedia* and forensic evidence shows that he compared two of them line by line may be indicative that there is more correspondence between his thoughts and those of Cyrus than meets the eye. More than what textual equivalence of his expressions to that of Cyrus indicate. Neil MacGregor remarked during the display of the Cyrus Cylinder at the Sackler Museum in Washington DC:

“Cyrus has always been a point of reference to people wondering how you rule a society with different religions, different traditions without people fighting. So it's very important to us today, because all our big cities have people of different religion, different languages. But he is particularly important to the United States, because in the eighteenth century when the Founding Fathers are thinking how will we make a country where different faiths are all respected but there is no state religion, they look to Cyrus, and Thomas Jefferson studies Cyrus. He tells his grandson to study Cyrus. And the US Constitution is in some ways the direct descendant of this cylinder. ... The ideas and ideals of the Persian Empire are very close to the ideals and ideas of the modern United States.”<sup>30</sup>



photo : PressTV

### **The Cyrus Cylinder**

Cuneiform Inscription Commissioned by Cyrus the Great

Containing the First Declaration of Human Rights, ca. 538 BC.

A replica is displayed at the entrance to the Security Council, United Nations



## COMPARISON WITH THE INFLUENCE OF LOCKE, MONTESQUIEU, MASON AND OTHERS

The influence of philosophers of the Enlightenment such as John Locke, Baron Montesquieu, George Mason and others upon the Founding Fathers and the Constitution is well known. Yet these influences were at a theoretical level. The Founding Fathers needed a real-world model in which the implementation of the ideas they were reading about and contemplating had succeeded. This model they found in the experience of the Persians and their ideals in their system of governance. Their view of Persia in this regard received affirmation from the comparisons they found in the Greek classics they were reading, of Greece and Persia. Plato relates how Socrates stated to Alkibiades (a nephew of Pericles, leader of Athens) regarding comparison of Greeks with the Persians and articulated these differences in detail in his socratic dialogue Alkibiades I: “You should consider how inferior we are to them ... you will be ashamed when you discern your own inferiority.”<sup>31</sup> To the uninformed and uneducated mob of Athens, with these and similar statements Socrates sowed the seeds of resentment which led to his trial and execution by the Athenians for introducing foreign gods and corrupting the youth, which refers to such dialogues as cited.

The first two terms stated in Thomas Jefferson’s *Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness*, are believed to be inspired by Locke’s concept in his *Two Treatises of Government* of no man having the right to impinge upon the life, liberty and estate of another. The third term is believed to be inspired by George Mason’s pursuit of happiness in his *Virginia Declaration of Rights*. The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were the combined result of the wisdom of the ages, the efforts of the drafters including Jefferson and Madison, plus the give and take in the bargaining that took place during the editorial process with others. Mason’s *Virginia Declaration of Rights* was a precursor of the freedom of the press in the Bill of Rights, while Darius’s policy, and later Locke’s theories, inspired in Jefferson the freedom of religion.

John Locke’s treatises on government, establishing that human beings do not derive their freedom from a king or magistrate but from the Higher Being, had earned him great respect from Jefferson, who would later emphasize the point. While Xenophon accords similar natural rights in his theory of government in his various works, he limits it to people of strong virtue. Locke and others in that age who influenced the Founding Fathers were Europeans of a few generations ago, in some cases such as Thomas Paine contemporary, and their works were more widely distributed and read than Cyrus and Darius who were from the ancient past and another continent. The two sets of influences were viewed by the Founding Fathers in their own accord, the theoretical from the Europeans and the tried and proven from the Persians.

Montesquieu is deemed to have been inspired by Locke. The concept of checks and balances through separation of powers of legislative, administrative and judiciary acting as counter-weights on each other, which Montesquieu argued for and came to be embodied in the Constitution, may be seen as having existed in principle in the realm of the Persians and the Medes but implemented quite differently in practice. Witnessing its existence in principle in past successful forms of government helped solidify the Founding Fathers' vision of the separation of powers in more practical form. In the *Cyropaedia*, Xenophon reports of a , of Persia<sup>32</sup> when it comes to making state decisions. Moreover, he reports of a Council of Persia, Council of Elders<sup>33</sup> who would qualify Cyrus and give him his first assignment in leadership when the time came. Darius in his inscriptions says that arbitrary claims do not hold, but only claims that fulfill the Ordinance of Good Relations. We find, Likewise in the Persian national epic, the *Epic of the Kings* composed ca. 1010 in Modern Persian from written and oral records of eons ago in pre-Islamic Iran by the great poet Ferdowsy, that it is a council of elders who qualifies and tests the princes for leadership when it comes time for transition to kingship A successor to Cyrus, Darius the Great (ca. 500 BC) who expanded and administratively structured the empire writes of the ingrained, moral and legal controls over him. Note that *the Lie* (Old Persian *drauja*, Avestan *druj*, modern Persian *doroogh*) is not merely about lies but a system that is based on a lie, the force opposed to the Truth, the way of the Truth and the Lie being the political and practical implementations of Good and Evil that Zoroaster preached.

“Saith Darius the King: By the favor of the Wise Lord I am of such a sort that I am a friend to right, I am not a friend to wrong. It is not my desire that the weak man should have wrong done to him by the mighty; nor is that my desire that the mighty man should have wrong done to him by the weak. What is right, that is my desire. I am not a friend to the man who follows the Lie. I am not hot-tempered. What things develop in my anger I hold firmly in control by my thinking power. I am firmly ruling over my own impulses. . . . What a man says against a man, that does not convince me, until he satisfies the Ordinance of Good Relations.”<sup>34</sup>

The great philosopher of the causality of history, Ibn Khaldun (ca. 1400 AD), analyzing the Persian kingship, describes and how, typically, the Persian king came into being:

“The Persians made no one king except members of the royal house. Further, they chose him from among those (members of the royal house) who possessed virtue, religion, education, liberality, bravery, and nobility. Then, they stipulated in addition that he should be just. Also, he was not to take a farm, as this would harm his neighbors. He was not to engage in trade, as this would of necessity raise the prices of all goods. And he was not to use slaves as servants, since they would not give good and beneficial advice.”<sup>35</sup>

Aside from the express cases of checks and balance on the king as mentioned, the Persian system vied to ingrain the necessary checks and balances in the human being. As such they knew that it had to start early in life, from childhood. Xenophon reports of the way Cyrus and Persian children were brought up, the distinction of laws being imposed from without (the Roman principle, Hegel would have it) versus qualities inculcated from within, thus the U.S. Founders' stress on virtue:

“It is true that he was brought up according to the laws and customs of the Persians, and of these laws it must be noted that while they aim, as laws elsewhere, at the common weal, their guiding principle is far other than that which most nations follow. Most states permit their citizens to bring up their own children at their own discretion, and allow the grown men to regulate their own lives at their own will, and then they lay down certain prohibitions, for example, not to pick and steal, not to break into another man's house, not to strike a man unjustly, not to commit adultery, not to disobey the magistrate, and so forth; and on the transgressor they impose a penalty. (3) But the Persian laws try, as it were, to steal a march on time, to make their citizens from the beginning incapable of setting their hearts on any wickedness or shameful conduct whatsoever.”<sup>36</sup>

When Europe emerged from the Dark Ages, became Christianized and during the Crusades learned of and set about improving upon the work of the Greeks and Romans, part of the role of Iran and in general the East was known (at least to the degree of their medieval contributions), but not their more ancient role because it had come through the intermediary of the Jews, Greeks and Romans. With the advances of Europe over the East during the past few centuries the knowledge of the transfer of learning to Europe from the Middle East slowly began to fade. The philosophies of the Enlightenment had grown out of the experience and under the influence of older systems. They were developed in the framework and background of the Judaeo-Christian and Graeco-Roman heritage of Western civilization, both of which had developed with significant influence from Iranian civilization<sup>37</sup>. Though absent from popular culture, this fact has long been known to scholars, as Pio Filippani-Ronconi, University of Naples and School of Orientalistics, Venice states:

“The heritage handed down by Iran to the West and still living in its ideological conceptions and cultural institutions is manifold. If its patterns are sometimes difficult to recognize and trace back to their origin, that is due to the fact that this legacy has been received through intermediate and Westernized models. . . . The leading elements of what we would call the vertical organization of the state are part of this age-old heritage.”<sup>38</sup>

In deriving the natural rights of man Locke often draws upon the Bible. Since the mid 1800s, it has been shown by a chorus of scholars in Europe and America, that the Jews, liberated from fifty years of captivity in Babylon by Cyrus, followed their Messiah in matters of belief in religion. Further, as a result of marriages with Persians and exposure to their society they inherited much

of the belief system of Zoroastrianism which they blended with their own beliefs to make what we know today as Judaism, also referred to as Judaism of the Second Temple, or Later Judaism, from which emerged several sects, chief among which was Christianity.

Compilation and dissemination of the Bible was made possible by Cyrus's restoration of nationhood to the Jews after freeing them from their fifty-year captivity in Babylon. The Old Testament was compiled, edited and published on orders of the Persian King, as stated in the edict of the Persian King in Ezra Chapter 7. This was carried out by Persian Jews headed by Ezra ca. 440 BC. The visitors to the infant Jesus, Magi, were Zoroastrian priests. The New Testament is composed in Aramaic which contains a significant number of Persian loan words, indicative of the concepts that originated in Iran. Darius made Aramaic *lingua franca*. In our day the people among whom the language in which Jesus spoke is alive, Aramaic, are the Christians of Iran and Iraq.

## **VIRTUE AND ITS ENACTMENT IN GOVERNMENT**

The underlying recurrent theme in the *Cyropaedia* and nearly all of Xenophon's works is how virtue may be brought into the form of government. As stated aptly by George Cawkwell of Oxford University, the *Cyropaedia* is "a delineation of virtue as embodied in the person of the founder of the Persian empire."<sup>39</sup> The traits of character of Cyrus described in the *Cyropaedia* derive from his Zoroastrian upbringing. The Persians at the time of Cyrus were Zoroastrian, whose principles, in particular Justice and Free Will, form the tenets of Shiism today in distinction to orthodox Islam.

America's founders regarded virtue as essential to the formation and subsequent development and preservation of the Republic they were forming and repeatedly beseeched its practice. *Virtue* was what Revolutionary America ran on. Thomas Jefferson advised his nephew Peter Carr in 1785 : "from the practice of the purest virtue you may be assured will derive the most sublime comforts in every moment of life, and in the moment of death."<sup>40</sup> We find such ideals expressed passim in the *Cyropaedia*, in particular in Cyrus's will and death-bed address. Consistent with Cyrus one of his successors, Xerxes inscribed ca. 450 BC, how he worshipped the Wise Lord and *Arta* (righteousness/cosmic order), and *whoso should worship these, truth and happiness forever shall be his, both while living and when dead.*<sup>41</sup>

George Washington in a letter to his brother in-law upon ending his second term as President (1797), advised: "Without Virtue and without integrity, the finest talents and the most brilliant accomplishments can never gain the respect or conciliate the esteem of the truly valuable part of mankind."<sup>42</sup> Benjamin Franklin preached much the same.

Secular and sacred literature from the twin pillars of Western Civilization, Graeco-Roman and Judaeo-Christian, corroborate the virtues in the form of government of Cyrus the Great and his successors. As Xenophon describes in the *Cyropaedia*, the qualities of leadership that Cyrus possessed transcended nationalism, sectarianism and partisanship. In his account Xenophon, who is the secular, Greek counterpart to Judaic II Isaiah, in effect gives us the secular definition of *Messiah*. Cyrus and his successors were able to draw together the various nationalities and disparate cultures of the world, many of whom were situated so far and apart from each other that they could not see Cyrus, some of them at odds with each other. The Persians knit together and united a host of nations and tribes, Xenophon reports, “whose very names defy the memory of the chronicler.” He tells us of the effectiveness of the soft power of Cyrus:

“It is obvious that among this congeries of nations few could have spoken the same language as himself, or understood one another”, and yet “all they asked was to be guided by his judgment and his alone.”<sup>43</sup>

The Persians’ philosophy of government was based on their Zoroastrian background, the pre-Islamic religion. Major principles of that religion absent from Islam such as Free Will of man and the inherent quality of Justice in God were inherited by Persians and continued in their modern form of religion, Shiism. The admiration felt for Cyrus and his popularity was not only the case in his own time but, as has been aptly noted by Neil MacGregor and others, continued through history and into our time.

Leaders from across the political spectrum have identified with Cyrus, ranging from US President Truman to Prime Minister Ben Gurion of Israel, and in Iran itself from the late Shah to those who vied to overthrow him, such as former President Ahmadinejad.

In our day we have been witnessing the evolution of the United States, in part by manifest destiny, in part by default, toward fulfilling much the same role in the World that Cyrus and his successors had realized the need for and fulfilled. We see the nations of the World looking to America for leadership and emigrants from many parts of the world coming to America to live under the Constitution for protection, in their intuitive trust that their personal freedom and rights would be secure under the justice system based on the Constitution.

Cyrus and the Persians of his age were Zoroastrians, the ethical religious belief system conceived and taught by Zarathustra. Today the beliefs and values of Zoroastrianism survive among the people of Iran in the form of persianized Islam, with its chief tenets fundamentally different from those of orthodox Islam. Those differences are seen more among the people and their culture, than in the politics. Zoroastrianism also survives, albeit in small numbers, in its own right in Iran,

India (the Parsees) and in the form of immigrant communities around the world. Though perhaps not immediately perceived by political observers of Iran, the ideals of Cyrus and Zoroaster persist among the people. This is partly because as wrote Richard Frye in 1951 “the Persians were Persians first and Moslems afterwards.”<sup>44</sup> The preponderance of what is reported of Iran in the media in the world is about the politics. Though little known or covered by the media, the fact did not escape the attention of astute and educated visitors, such as Dr. R. S. Morton, that “The Iranians who accepted the Mohammedan religion did not altogether forsake their loyalty to Zoroastrianism, for they subtly developed a type of Islam which embodies many of the ancient religious ideas.”<sup>45</sup>

Centuries after the invasions of Iran and the Middle East, and the forcible conversion of most of the population to Islam which began in the 600s AD, groups of Iranians emigrated to India, much as the Pilgrims did to the shores of America, and in India they have been called *Parsees*, or Persians. Their population is estimated at over one hundred thousand. There are also Zoroastrians in Iran itself, their numbers being smaller than those in India. There are a few thousand in the US, Canada, Europe and smaller numbers in other countries due to recent immigration following the Revolution in Iran.

Conversion of Moslems to Zoroastrianism or any other religion is prohibited by Islam, regarded as apostasy and punishable by death. But there have been modern conversions outside the realm of Islam. One example is Charles D. Poston (1825-1902) ‘Father of Arizona’, who, upon travelling to visit the Parsees in the 1860s and learning about their religion, adopted Zoroastrianism. Poston wrote that “the great Zoroaster had promulgated the sublime laws announced to him by the “Bright shining essence of light” for the government of mankind”<sup>46</sup>.

## **THE FOUNDING FATHERS AND PERSIAN IDEOLOGY OF AGRARIANISM**

Jefferson also possessed others works of Xenophon on Iran, one of which is *Oikonomicus*, rendered into English as an ‘Essay in Estate Management.’ The culture of the soil, Jefferson would say, was most pleasing to him. *Oikonomicus* provides us with an informative account regarding agriculture and the economy in Iran. In those days, leaders and emissaries from various nations would go to Iran to seek aid, economic, political or military, as they do today to the United States. In a Socratic dialogue in Xenophon’s *Oikonomicus* we find how, to the astonishment of the Spartan leader Lysander, who had gone to seek aid from the Persians in Sparta’s long conflict with Athens during the Peloponnesian war, he found the Persian nobility proud to garden with their own hands. Jefferson declared “those that labor in the earth are the chosen people of God.”<sup>47</sup> Agriculture was the major medium of creation of wealth then, as industry is today. Thus by this Jefferson meant those who create wealth without misappropriating from others enable and advance the moral law

of God, in contrast to the law of the jungle whereby people would forcibly take or steal from others, which cannot lead to a wealthy and orderly society. Jefferson's declaration then is applicable to the productive citizens of any society, regardless of the underlying medium.

Zoroastrian ethics are simplified in the motto of the Zoroastrian religion: *Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds*, of which the latter count the most, for it is easy to speak words but hard to accomplish deeds, in building and making a better world. The application and implementation of these ethics as the means for human beings to produce an honest livelihood, without having to misappropriate from others directly or indirectly, became the foundation of settlements and the agrarian economy. The spread of agriculture by the Persians in the World was the practical result of Zoroastrian ideology.

The passage below, from *Oikonomicus*, is from Socrates about the Persian love and pride in gardening, recorded by the Greek historian Xenophon. At that time Iran's role in the World resembled the USA, and leaders of other countries would go to Iran to seek aid. The Cyrus in this passage is a prince and descendant of Cyrus the Great, whom to Xenophon embodied all the virtues of Cyrus the Great and was the noblest prince who lived after him. Lysander was the leader of the Spartans and their allies at war with Athens, whom the Persians saw as the most valiant among the Hellenes. A policy of the Persians, especially towards the Greeks, was that when acquiring control in peacetime Persians would promote those among the native population who fought most bravely against them, to advance noble traits of character and virtues among mankind. Lysander had gone to seek aid from Cyrus, which he received, and with which Sparta overcame Athens and concluded the Peloponnesian war.

Socrates tutoring a student, Critobulus, reported by Xenophon:

"Socrates: Well, we shall not be ashamed, I hope, to imitate the kings of Persia?<sup>56</sup> That monarch, it is said, regards amongst the noblest and most necessary pursuits two in particular, which are the arts of husbandry and war, and in these two he takes the strongest interest.

What! (Critobulus exclaimed); do you, Socrates, really believe that the king of Persia pays a personal regard to husbandry, along with all his other cares?

Socrates: We have only to investigate the matter . . .

Lysander, it seems, had gone with presents sent by the Allies to Cyrus, who entertained him, and amongst other marks of courtesy showed him his "paradise" at Sardis. Lysander was

astonished at the beauty of the trees within, all planted at equal intervals, the long straight rows of waving branches, the perfect regularity, the rectangular symmetry of the whole, and the many sweet scents which hung about them as they paced the park. In admiration he exclaimed to Cyrus: “All this beauty is marvellous enough, but what astonishes me still more is the talent of the artificer who mapped out and arranged for you the several parts of this fair scene.” Cyrus was pleased by the remark, and said: “Know then, Lysander, it is I who measured and arranged it all. Some of the trees,” he added, “I planted with my own hands.” Then Lysander, regarding earnestly the speaker, when he saw the beauty of his apparel and perceived its fragrance, the splendour also of the necklaces and armlets, and other ornaments which he wore, exclaimed: “What say you, Cyrus? did you with your own hands plant some of these trees?” whereat the other: “Does that surprise you, Lysander? I swear to you by Mithres, when in ordinary health I never dream of sitting down to supper without first practising some exercise of war or husbandry in the sweat of my brow, or venturing some strife of honour, as suits my mood.” “On hearing this,” said Lysander to his friend, “I could not help seizing him by the hand and exclaiming, ‘Cyrus, you have indeed good right to be a happy man, since you are happy in being a good man.’”<sup>48</sup>

Thomas Jefferson wrote even from Paris to George Washington in 1787 of agriculture as : “our wisest pursuit, because it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals and happiness. The wealth acquired by speculation and plunder is fugacious in it’s nature and fills society with the spirit of gambling. The moderate and sure income of husbandry begets permanent improvement, quiet life, and orderly conduct both public and private.”<sup>49</sup>

George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison were farmers (“planters”) in Virginia, foundation colony, and even Dr. Franklin the scientist regarded farming as : “the most honorable of all Employments, in my opinion, as being the most useful in itself, and rend’ring the Man most independent.”<sup>50</sup> Among the passages Dr. Franklin would have come across in his review of the Avesta is one in the book of *Videvdad* (meaning “the code against the devil”, for ease of pronunciation: *Vendidad*), that represents the core of Persian ideology of agrarianism: “He who sows grain, sows righteousness.”<sup>51</sup> The places of greatest happiness on earth in the Avesta are, as given in the Videvdad :

The First        “It is the place where one of the faithful steps forth”

The Second:    “It is the place where one of the faithful erects a house, with a priest within, with cattle, with a wife within, with children within, with good herds, and wherein, thereafter, virtue continues to thrive, cattle continue to thrive, provender continue to thrive, the dog continues to thrive, the wife continues to thrive, the fire continues to thrive, and every blessing of life continues to thrive”.



The Third: “It is the place where one of the faithful sows the most grain, the most grass, the most fruit trees . . . Where he irrigates soil that is too dry or drains soil that is flooded.”<sup>52</sup>

All intended to drive out from the thoughts of man any temptation to gain livelihood by misappropriating from others. The success of this code to deal with the *Daevas* (meaning devils tempting man, demons) then is described as:

“When barley was created, the *Daevas* started up; when it grew, then fainted the *Daevas*’ hearts; when the knots came the *Daevas* groaned; when the ear came the *Daevas* flew away.”<sup>53</sup>

One would be hard-pressed to find these teachings in any other scriptures. This ideology, implemented in society, as would be expected, would make a country prosper. It made Iran so and become the wealthiest nation on earth. In his Socratic Dialogue *Alkibiades I* Plato compares the economies of the Greek states with Persia: “the Spartan wealth, though great in comparison of the wealth of the other Hellenes, is as nothing in comparison of that of the Persians and their kings.”<sup>54</sup> The Persians love of toil and of building and ordering the earth led Joseph Arthur, Count Gobineau, to remark, in the context of the ancient world: “The Persians were the only fraction of humanity that ever considered work as an embellishing virtue, that recommended it so equal to a religious act, that celebrated all its majesty in their holy books . . . that resolutely condemned idleness as a degrading vice.”<sup>55</sup>

The experience of agrarianism implemented in Iran affirmed the Founding Fathers’ conviction in the virtues of a society with an economy based on the productivity and livelihood that its citizens can create. They found Iran to be the successful model. With the adoption and implementation of such a model which reinforced what was existent, in time America became the wealthiest nation on earth. We see therefore that these principles, of the ethical earning of livelihood, of joy in building and bringing order to the world, operate independently of the era of history, independently of the people and of the underlying state in which they are implemented. With the degradation of these ethical principles that underlie the development of the economy, comes the decline of a society and the state that it constitutes, decline at economic, political, scientific and technological levels. It is what was witnessed in the courts of ancient Persia long after its founders had passed, and it is we are witnessing in our time in the United States. The medium of livelihood in the era of the Persian empire and the era of the Founding Fathers was agriculture. In time improvements in the tools and implements of agriculture gave way to the birth of industry, and industry to technology. But the productive principle still remains, still applies to all phases of development of a society.

George Washington was in full concurrence with Jefferson, Franklin and other Founding Fathers with regard to the virtues of an agrarian, productive society, so much so that the agrarian tradition in America became embedded more than ever before, forming the economic base of the United States. The ideology of agrarianism went further in the South and became incarnate much like Zoroastrianism, to such an extent that in the industrial age and its confrontation with the industrialized North, the South became handicapped.

The socio-economic system that Americans who lived at the time of the Revolution inherited and the one that the Persians had, differed in one significant respect, the labor force. Due to the establishment and entrenchment of slavery in the Colonies by the British Crown from the time that the colonies were still under the British Empire, the provisions that Jefferson first incorporated into his initial draft of the Declaration of Independence that would lead to the abolition of slavery were vetoed and redacted when it came under review by others. It was recognized that the issue would be left for another day, another generation. As the economic system which utilized slavery had the weight of history behind it, it was difficult to transform, and the day came to be 1861, the Civil War.

Yet it does not escape attention that in many plantations, as in Jefferson's Monticello, the 'slaves' were effectively part of the family in which there often existed a spiritual bond between the members. In the case of Thomas Jefferson this is evident from a number of signs. When Jefferson would arrive home, the slaves would gather and welcome him in jubilation. When British troops took over and laid waste to Monticello in June 1781, destroyed its crops and killed its domesticated animals, leaving Jefferson, along with other expenses he would incur in the Revolution, in debt for life, the slaves had the chance to go free. But they not only chose to stay, but to hide and protect Jefferson's treasures in the basement. They were loyal to Jefferson, who had been forewarned and left the plantation. He returned to find the results of the scorched-earth policy, of his crops ruined, and his domesticated animals killed.

It is held in Zoroastrianism that the human being is capable of embodying the spirit of God, *Spenta Mainyu* (rendered into English approximately as *Holy Spirit*). Thus, in Zoroastrianism, to enslave human beings was tantamount to constraining and penning the spirit of God. Based on this belief Iran was the only major empire whose monuments were not built by slave labor but paid and voluntary labor, in contrast with Egypt, Greece, Rome as well as modern empires. Cuneiform tablets extant from the Persian Empire (ca. 550-330 BC) and preserved and studied at the University of Chicago under Matt Stolper show records of wages paid. In addition, these ancient tablets show women as well as men in supervisory positions, and such advanced social programs, whether for then or now, as a year's worth of maternity pay when mothers gave birth.

The Zoroastrians in India, called Parsees, themselves once refugees, empathized with people in need. While they had begun as refugees centuries ago, in the 1800s and since they have practiced philanthropy in India but also around the world. Being in an environment free to practice their religion in India, and having the strong Zoroastrian work ethic, they were able to prosper. This has included aid to the Sanitary Commission in the American Civil War, as reports Alfred Martin:

“As for the generosity of the Parsees, it is unrivalled, extending far beyond the limits of Bombay. It went to Russia at the time of the Crimean War, when Florence Nightingale described the Parsee community as “the salt of the Bombay community.” It went to France in 1859, when the terrible inundations necessitated the supplementing of local aid by foreign help, and the Parsees were among the first to respond and among the most liberal of the contributors. It went to the United States at the time of the Civil War, our Sanitary Commission receiving a handsome remembrance from the followers of Zoroaster in India, sent, they said, because of their sympathy with the suffering soldiers and the Cause of Freedom and union.”<sup>56</sup>

The aid sent by Parsees was intended for the victims of both sides in the Civil War but was fated to end up in the industrial, well organized North with its more developed infrastructure and lines of transport and communications. Prior to the Civil War in a broader sense the infrastructure served the country as a whole or, as appropriate, the individual states. But during the war most of it fell under the control of the North, which was more developed, had a more advanced infrastructure and the means to further develop them. The agrarian South had fewer such means and was thus unable to plan and organize its logistics as well to stay even with the North. Thus the South lacked an organized sanitary commission or supply lines on a par with the North for such aid to reach them. In a battle in which a relatively inexhaustible supply of materials, machines as well as intellect, predominant in the North, was arrayed against limited supplies but strong spirit in the South, it was a given that flesh would succumb to machine.

### **SIMILARITIES BETWEEN DEISM AND UNITARIANISM AND IRANIAN RELIGIONS**

Thomas Jefferson and most fellow Founding Fathers were Deists or Unitarians, a product of the Age of Reason and Enlightenment. Their interpretation of the teachings of Christ corresponded to that of Iranian religion, and Iranian forms of Christianity such as Nestorianism, in accepting the teachings of Jesus in the New Testament, but not necessarily the doctrines enunciated by the Church Fathers at the Council of Nicea in 325, including the Trinity.

Jefferson took it upon himself to go through the Bible and produce an edited version of the New Testament free of what was seen by men of reason as miracles and mythologies which had gone unquestioned by many over the ages. The mythology troubled intellectuals, leading many to doubt the rest of the Bible, and to adopt the *'irreligion of thinking men.'*<sup>57</sup> Jefferson's edited edition of the New Testament which became known as the *Jefferson Bible*, was a rational and self-consistent edition of the New Testament that accords in its principles with Zoroastrianism, in particular of free will, morality and justice in dealing with fellowmen, and is one that thinking men would have little reason to object to. Jefferson had meant to carry out the same task for the Old Testament, but it being a long undertaking, and his attention needed on numerous other projects and issues, he lamented how he lacked the time to do so, wishing others would. Zoroastrianism as taught by its prophet (and in its later sacred literature maintaining consistency with his teachings), is a rational belief system that would appeal to intellectuals once its starting postulate, which may be regarded as being arbitrary, of the existence of God (or Higher Being) is acceptable. One of its principles inherited by Shiism is logic and consistency in religious philosophy. The Jefferson Bible, in particular in ethically, corresponds to Zoroastrianism, which Jefferson came to know indirectly via the character of Cyrus.

### **EXPRESSIONS OF THE AMERICAN AND THE PERSIAN SYSTEM IN THE MATERIAL WORLD**

The American and the Persian systems of government are both conceived as systems in the service of humanity. Both have lasted over two hundred years. In our age we have seen the American system bring about technological progress and public works on a vast scale in America, which was then spread to, adopted by and instituted in other nations. This has ranged from electricity, electric light, audio and video recording and playback, the telephone, wireless communications, the automobile, the airplane, the network of highways on the ground and corridors in the sky, electronics, the computer, in addition to a judicial system serving the public, to name some major accomplishments.

Cyrus's unity of nations lasted for over two hundred years and was characterized by *"achievements of which a modern state might well be proud,"*<sup>58</sup> as aptly stated by John H. Iliffe, Director of City of Liverpool Museums. This included construction of vast public work systems<sup>59</sup> for all, and justice, peace and prosperity brought about in the World. These public works and services included agriculture on a large scale,<sup>60</sup> subterranean water delivery systems, some of which remain working today in Egypt transporting water under the ground for over a hundred miles,<sup>61</sup> the royal road with relays at intervals for fresh horses to take the mail, precursor of the Pony Express of the 1860s in the U.S,<sup>62</sup> the first Suez canal,<sup>63</sup> issuance of uniform currency<sup>64</sup> for commerce throughout their unity of nations, the development of reserves of medicine as Xenophon reports in the *Cyropaedia* and the establishment of the first medical school.<sup>65</sup>

By comparison to Iran and America, Alexander's empire lasted about a decade. It had no capital but the camp of its army. It immediately disintegrated after his death. What administration it provided for the people it ruled over was entirely adopted from the remaining Persian system. It gathered fame more through destruction than construction, a much harder feat to accomplish. But after fulfilling the 200-year Hellenic yearning for defeating the Persian Empire, he began to realize the value of what he was destroying. He adopted Persian customs and sought to bring about a world with an optimum blend of cultures of the East and the West. But living by the sword he died by the sword, at a young age as he was maturing and could not realize that goal. Some of the ideas for such an optimal state had to wait some two thousand years to be adopted by the Founding Fathers of America. Indeed some historians have come to the realization that Alexander delayed civilization by about two thousand years, the Persian unity of states having been on the same or similar track of development as the United States is today.

### **THE EAGLE : AN EMBLEM OF STATE, AMERICA 1782, IRAN 500 BC**

In considering a national emblem for the new, independent nation, Congress was not enthusiastic about ideas that Franklin, Jefferson, Adams and others proposed. After some trials and debate it was agreed to leave it to the Secretary of Congress, who came up with the Eagle in 1782. In the *Cyropaedia*, Xenophon describes the emblem of Iran ca. 500 BC and how it had remained so for 150 years:

“The standard was a golden eagle, with outspread wings, born aloft on a long spear-shaft, and to this day such is the standard of the Persian king.”<sup>66</sup>

Xenophon refers to an aureate eagle crafted likely after the species of the golden eagle, the species most prevalent in the Near East which are smaller than the bald eagle and catch their prey live. The species that happened to be most prevalent in North America and hence was adopted as emblem were the bald eagle, with wingspan as much as eight feet, as compared to the golden eagle wingspan of up to six feet. Later, due to the fact that, unlike the golden eagle, the bald eagle did not catch its prey live, President Theodore Roosevelt preferred the bear as a symbol of state.

### **THE ROYAL ROAD. THE PONY EXPRESS AND THE US POST OFFICE**

The Persians under Darius constructed the first network of highways in the World to connect the disparate parts of the empire. They then invented the first postal system. Herodotus describes these precursors to the Pony Express of the 1860s.

“There is nothing in the world which travels faster than these Persian couriers. The whole idea is a Persian invention, and works like this : riders are stationed along the road, equal in number to the number of days the journey takes – a man and a horse for each day. Nothing stops these couriers from covering their allotted range in the quickest possible time. Neither snow, rain, heat nor darkness.”<sup>67</sup>

The motto of the U.S. Post Office, founded by Ben Franklin, follows the account in Herodotus. The alternative translation of Herodotus’s text by George H. Palmer, Harvard University, that is used by the U.S. Post Office, reads:

“Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.”

### **HARRY TRUMAN TO JEWISH ELDERS IN NEW YORK: “I AM CYRUS”**

President Harry Truman, having come from humble origins, was a self-educated man. As regards biblical history Truman knew the significance of Cyrus, for he declared "I am Cyrus, I am Cyrus" in response to Jewish elders gathered in New York to thank him for establishing Israel as a state.<sup>68</sup> The Old Testament ends with the decree of Cyrus to rebuild Jerusalem and restore the Jews to their home.



photo: [www.noregard.net](http://www.noregard.net)

**Harry Truman**

1884-1972

The prophet Second Isaiah, regarded universally and continuously since his time as the greatest prophet of Israel, extols Cyrus and names him not only as Messiah (45:1) but also as the Lord's *Shepherd* (44:28), a term which in Psalms 23:1 is intended by David to mean the Lord Yahweh himself.<sup>69</sup>

The Old Testament concludes with the recognition of Cyrus by Yahweh and the decree of Cyrus to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem (II Chronicles 36.23): "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." David Ben Gurion, principal founder of the modern state of Israel, wrote of these verses: "Beyond question Cyrus was deserving of these eulogies."<sup>70</sup>

Cyrus and his successors were saviors of the Jewish nation. The relation between Israel and the U.S. in our day began being modeled after that. They assigned to the Persian province of *Yehud* a Jewish governor, Nehemiah, from among the Persian Jews. The Persians restored Israel as a state, and enabled the return of the Jews to what had been their homeland, from which they had been uprooted 597-587 BC. The Persians maintained Judah under their protection, and called the people *Yehudi*. Joseph Gaer, Founder & Director, Jewish Heritage Foundation, explains:

"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 . . . 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."<sup>71</sup>



photo : [www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org)

President Harry Truman (L),  
Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion (R),  
and Israeli Ambassador Abba Eban, 1951

Initially the Jews released from captivity in Babylon by Cyrus were reluctant and not ready to return. Their homeland had become largely a wasteland after fifty years of captivity in Babylon, much as it had been in many parts of Palestine prior to 1948. Thus they had long given up hopes of return, and married among the local population in Babylon. Further, upon being freed by the Persians, they sought to establish a lobby at the Persian court to advance their interests. After a period in which they had prospered among the Persians, some made the return. Ezra 4:3 states that Zerubbabel, Jeshua and others would build the temple “unto the LORD God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us.” In our day Jewish lobbies such as AIPAC in Washington are but a re-creation of the Jewish lobby at the Persian court.

In implementing the decree of Cyrus, the Bible relates that successive Persian administrations led, financed and provided security and supplies for the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem, restoring nationhood to the Jews. Arabs and others sought to undermine the process. Nehemiah (ch. 6) complains of how Sanbalat, Tobiah and Geshem the Arab sought to prevent the project of reconstruction of Judah. The Jews, sensing the reservoir of good will and generosity in the Persians, sought to go further than gains for their community. They did not wish to see the Samaritans helped by the Persians and due to the hardships they had suffered as captives sought the destruction of Babylon. Persia’s impartial and even-handed policy which derived from Zoroastrian teachings, and in turn appears in the Bible as *the Laws of the Medes and Persians which altereth not* (Daniel 6:8, 12, 15), led the Persians to establish peace and justice for and



between nations but disallowed one to destroy the other. The Persians constructed a temple for other Jewish sects also, such as the Samaritans. Babylon, as well as Jerusalem and other cities and states, flourished under Persian rule. The creation of the modern state of Israel in 1948 follows the Balfour Declaration by the British government some thirty years earlier, at which time King George was likened by the Jews to Cyrus the Great. The US has established and protected Israel to-day in much the same way as Cyrus and his successors did.

The Persian king Artaxerxes, the Bible relates, decreed the collection and publication of Jewish law and the books that came to constitute the Bible, a task which was carried out ca. 440 BC by Persian Jews led by Ezra. While the Persians had the full power to exert their will, their decrees such as on the return of the Jews to Jerusalem did not compel subject people or their own civilians to do the work of implementing these decrees. Rather, in respecting individual liberty, they sought volunteers for the implementation. It was part of the ideology and practice of humane power. Although militarily and economically Persia under Cyrus was the sole superpower on earth, it was soft power and humanity that won over and ruled most of the nations. As shown by Forrest McGill, Chief Curator of the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, this was celebrated in European art centuries ago in the form of depiction of a lamb on Cyrus the conqueror's flag.

The system of government and unity of states that Cyrus founded which became known as the *Achaemenian* empire, endured from about 550 to 330 BC. During this period, marriages occurred between Persian men and Jewish women. In the ancient world, as men conducted the battles and many gave their lives, their numbers in society were reduced below that of women. Thus it would be common for a man to have several wives, or for several women in a household who would be dependent on one man.

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, accepted and loved. They inherited beliefs from both parents and both traditions. Arnold Toynbee, world historian, University of London, summarizes the consensus of biblical scholars on the Persian Empire:

“it deliberately maintained complete religious toleration . . . . Consequently there was an active intercourse between local religions in and after the Achaemenian Age, and Zoroastrianism eventually had a great influence on Judaism, just because it was not propagated by force. The origins of Zoroastrianism and Judaism in their present form, and of Christianity and Islam too, can be traced back to the religious ferment in the First Persian Empire.”<sup>72</sup>

The now aryanized Jews, having the blessing, support and backing of their paternal ancestors formed the polity of the new moral, messianic and spiritual faith that came to be known as Judaism. In biblical scholarship it is referred to as *later Judaism* because the term is applied retroactively to the earlier, pre-Exilic form of the religion. From this later Judaism in due course emerged a number of sects, in particular Christianity.

Although Solomon, David, Moses and Abraham predated these new religious beliefs, in the new Judaism they would be retroactively called Jews and assume largely their same roles. In their time their religion had a different conception of God and soteriology. It consisted of monolatry and henotheism and was concerned with more earthly matters. It lacked spiritual dimensions such as belief in an afterlife, eschatology, angelology, demonology, heaven, purgatory, hell and in a universal messiah. These doctrines were inherited and incorporated into the religion, forming Judaism, following the interaction of Jews with Persians under Cyrus and his successors. Thus when we refer to Judaism today in the time of Moses, it is in a retroactive sense and in the context of nationalism, for the major doctrines of Judaism, in particular as came into Christianity date from the Persian period.

### **CYRUS AND DARIUS : THE ONLY MAJOR FIGURES OF THE BIBLE WITH HISTORICITY**

Cyrus the Great, Darius the Great and other Persian Kings are the only major figures of the Bible with historicity. Outside faith and the Bible no records remain that could likewise establish historicity for Moses, David, Solomon, Jesus, Mary and others.<sup>73</sup> Cyrus, Darius and other Persians are also the only nationality to be praised in the Bible. The evidence of their existence is strong in multiple Greek sources, accounts of several books of the Bible, and Babylonian and other sources. These include inscriptions in Old Persian remaining of Cyrus's successors such as those that Darius commissioned to be hewn, as he notes, "in Aryan"<sup>74</sup> and in other languages.

The concepts of liberty and human rights declared by Cyrus the Great and his successors that the Founding Fathers of America found in the *Cyropaedia*, were corroborated for them by similar accounts they read in other classical sources such as Plato and in several books of the Bible such as II Isaiah, Ezra, Nehemiah, II Chronicles. The Cyrus Cylinder containing Cyrus's proclamation of freedom and respect for human rights was discovered about a century after the American Revolution and confirms the Greek and biblical accounts the Founders read. Inscribed on clay ca. 537 BC, the Cyrus Cylinder is kept at the British Museum. A replica of the Cyrus Cylinder is kept on display at the Security Council in the United Nations. It is regarded as mankind's first declaration of human rights and human freedom.

## PERSIAN RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY THE ANTITHESIS OF NIETZSCHEAN PHILOSOPHY

In recent history in the West, Zoroaster, or to use his Persian name *Zarathustra*, has been known through the work of German philosopher Nietzsche (1844-1900), his *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, and through the same source been misunderstood. Nietzsche's depiction of Zoroaster, he explains, is the very opposite of what Zoroaster was and taught. As Nietzsche clarified in his autobiography *ecce homo*, or how he, philosophically, became who he is, morality, what Zarathustra taught, was what Nietzsche in his philosophy through logical analysis sought to nullify:

“I have not been asked, as I should have been asked, what the name of Zarathustra means to me, in my capacity as the first immoralist; for what distinguishes this Persian from all others in the past is the very fact that he was the exact opposite of an immoralist. Zarathustra was the first to see in the struggle between good and evil the essential cycle in the working of things. The translation of morality into the realm of metaphysics, as force, cause, as end in itself, is his work. . . . The self-overcoming of morality through truthfulness, the moralist's self-overcoming of himself into his opposite — into me — that is what the name Zarathustra means to me.”<sup>75</sup>

As Nietzsche explains in his autobiography a more apt title for his work would have been *Thus Not Spake Zarathustra*. Through a mechanistic argument, Nietzsche concludes to discard morality, without successfully having a replacement for its role in society. Long before the emergence of written law, codes of regulation and their interpretation, application and implementation in practice, it was moral law that people depended on in their relations and transactions in society, and even after the establishment of written law much of the effect of moral law remained. Thus to the present day a common commitment amongst people to moral standards and values has played a large role in bringing about greater peace and justice in society. Nietzsche's ideology was later adopted and practiced by the Nazis, whose rule of their own country and subject nations was in stark contrast to the rule of Cyrus. Nietzsche's ideology and its implementation by the Nazis ran counter to how in the U.S. the Founding Fathers devised and led the government. With the contradictions and conflicts Nietzsche had to cope with, it would not be a surprise that he became insane and committed suicide in 1900. A similar fate that followed those who implemented Nietzsche's theory – Hitler and his ministers, the suffering of the German nation in and after WWII, and the greater suffering that was inflicted on others, and the death of over fifty million non-combatants, serves as an indication that Nietzschean ideology is untenable in practice.

Besides the interest Jefferson and others took in the government of Cyrus and Darius, we see from Jefferson's notes how he also showed an interest in the government of ancient Anglo-Saxons. The

universality of Cyrus and his ideals for mankind as rooted in Zoroastrianism may be considered from what seems the position of diametric opposite of Judaism stated by Ben Gurion, being Germany and its ideology as implemented before and during World War II. After WWII and the fall of the Nazi regime, of the two top ethnologists of state, Alfred Rosenberg and Hans Gunther, Rosenberg was found guilty of planning and promoting the extinction of the Jews at the Nuremberg trials and along with others executed for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Gunther, while promoting the culture, preservation and advancement of Nordic peoples and their purity of thought and spirit, had not sought this at the expense of extinction of others. This is in part because he was inspired by Joseph Arthur, Count Gobineau, who regarded the Jews as an intelligent people. Gunther regarded the Germans, as many other populations, as ethnically diverse and about 55% Nordic. He saw the natural aptitude of the Nordics in history for leadership, their welcome by other peoples and the resultant drive of the leaders and followers toward a system of imperialism as the cause, in the end, of decay among Nordic peoples and Nordic classes in ancient societies. His opinion in this regard casts doubt as to whether he of his own will supported the idea of the empire of a Third Reich. What Gunther and others espousing similar ideologies looked past, however, is that at each such juncture in history and ensuing period when disparate cultures came together and assumed their respective roles in a society, the synergy led to great leaps forward in the arts and sciences, and that in fact in large measure this constituted the process of progress of civilization in the world as we know it today. Any single culture if isolated, is apt to be stuck in a rut by itself. At the end of World War II, after a detention of about three years during which Gunther's role was investigated, Gunther was exonerated and set free. Prior to the emergence of Nazism he had written in the 1920s with deep convictions regarding Zoroastrianism, also known as Mazdaism (after *Ahura Mazda*, the Wise Lord):

“In Zarathustra's teaching that lofty ethical sense characterizing the old Persians rises to sublime heights . . . Mazdaism, which this great religious founder brought his people, is important for the understanding of the Nordic spirit . . . This is the first self-conscious religious creation in history – long before Buddha and the oldest Jewish prophets – and also the earliest to give an ethical meaning to the whole world process and to the State, and to look on man as playing a part in this far-spread ethical system through his behavior. Zarathustra's teachings are set forth in the Gatha songs of the Avesta . . . 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 . . . 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 batters to-day, without being capable – it and its Arabic and Turkish protagonists – of creating anything new from out of itself.' ”<sup>76</sup>

### **A HIERARCHY OF SYSTEMS OF ETHICS AS IMPLEMENTED IN THE GOVERNMENT OF MANKIND**

The major struggle of man in each generation has been how to make a livelihood and how to realize his or her aspirations in life such as regards family and career. Those remain the same in our day as in the day of the Founding Fathers, as they were in the day of Cyrus the Great. The philosophies of government instituted to regulate man in this quest are, to a large degree, timeless and independent of their underlying medium, and degree of technological and social development. Of all the various beliefs comprising religion, including theology, soteriology, dualism of Good and Evil, Divine Justice, angelology, demonology, Armageddon, eschatology, Heaven, Purgatory, Hell, what pertains most to making a livelihood and to the manner of government is the principle of Justice and of Free Will. From a belief in the inherent Justice of the higher being and what he requires, man derives morality and ethics, which governs how people may treat their fellow human beings in the process of deriving that livelihood and advancing their aims in the journey of life. In the course of history various systems have emerged. Let us consider them in turn.

In the religion that Zoroaster brought into the world the impetus and exercise of Free Will is to be governed by the checks and balances inculcated within, the dictates of ethics and the inspiration of morality. Subsequent to the Babylonian captivity and the period that followed, Zoroastrian beliefs were inherited and adopted by Persian Jews in following Cyrus, Savior, including the quality of Divine Justice and, for some Jewish sects, Free Will. They became part of Judaism and then Judaeo-Christianity. After Islam they were also inherited by Shiism from a sect referred to as the Magi of Islam, the *Mo'tazelites*, known for the equivalence of their belief system to Zoroastrianism. Today these doctrines make up the present system of ethics in the religion of the Iranian people as well as other Moslems who inherited or share the same beliefs in other countries, although in name they may not be "Shiites."

These doctrines are regarded by orthodox Islam as having been added by Shiism to Islam, for which reason fundamentalist sects such as the Wahhabis and Salafis do not regard Shiites as Moslem. In orthodox Islam there has traditionally been no separation of religion and state, except where local traditions prevailed such as pre-1979 Iran or Turkey. Thus in talking about government in Islam, we are talking about religion. In the form of Islam that was carried by the Arabs (ca. 630 AD) of Arabia to the rest of the Middle East, not what the Prophet had taught, Justice as a quality of God and Free Will as endowed to man are both absent. Hence morality is absent. These differences, ultimately, are rooted in their conception of God and man. In Zoroastrianism and systems that derive from it, such as Judaeo-Christianity and Shiism, God is not only above us but in us; man is capable through what is believed as *Spenta Mainyu*, Holy Spirit, or, in Shiism, *Rooh ol-Ghodos*, to embody and be guided by the spirit of God. In those instances where the process is consummate, man becomes a mouthpiece for the spirit of God and functions as a prophet or a poet. In orthodox Islam this is heresy, because Allah is outside and far above, whereby the relation of man to him is an outward, mechanistic one. Man cannot have Free Will because that will resides in Allah; man's daily activity is predetermined by Allah, thus absolving him of moral responsibility; further, Allah is not conceived to be Just. Instituted in a society, it is what Ibn Khaldun (ca. 1400 AD) refers to as *asabiyya*. This then becomes an engine for claiming the wealth and civilization built by others with seemingly divine warrant, to plunder. Once the loot is spent, no more wealth is left or produced because there is no productivity. Economic progress entails the organized exertion of Free Will, and doing so within the ethical bounds of religion that brings harmony among its adherents, leading to a flourishing civilization. Where these conditions are absent, civilization decays or fails, as shown throughout history, most recently in the form of ISIS. The great philosopher of causality of history Ibn Khaldun reports the result of the Islamic invasions of the Middle East: "Yemen is in ruins except for a few districts; similarly Iraq, which was so flourishing under the Persians, is completely ruined; so too is contemporary Syria,"<sup>77</sup> and likewise other regions of the Middle East that suffered the invasions involving forcible conversion to Islam.

In the American system with its separation of Church and State it suffices to consider the principles underlying State in this comparison. The concepts of Justice and Free Will as they occur in Judaeo-Christianity and its precursor Zoroastrianism are worked into the mechanism of the Constitution. The checks and balances inculcated within humans through religion are enacted into the law, starting with the checks that the three branches of government place on each other. The rights of each individual, hence the Free Will they could potentially exercise, are bounded mainly by the equal rights of others, the Founding Fathers maintained. In such a system, as long as the Constitution is adhered to, the rights of individuals are maximized. Expectedly, implementing such a system over a whole society that is properly managed would lead to great prosperity and

progress, as has been witnessed in practice. Conversely, detracting from it through laws that may undermine the Constitution has the reverse effect, as has been the experience.

The foregoing shows the implementation of Free Will with Justice, and that of pre-determinism without Justice, and now we come to a system of Free Will without the bounds of Justice and morality, namely Nietzschean ideology. In Nietzsche's concept the *uberman* exercises unbounded Free Will, but without an ethical structure to deal with fellow human beings, without compassion or humanity. Indeed without any consistent structure that harmonizes the members of society. The implementation of such a system, as seen in Germany in the first half of the twentieth century, leads to conflict and is predisposed to failure, which is what was seen in WWII. It was not only a military failure, but conflicts and contradictions within and with other people that led to the weakening of the socio-economic system underlying the military, and to the fall of Nazism.

### **MONTICELLO AND CYRUS'S MAUSOLEUM**

Jefferson's beloved Monticello near Charlottesville, Virginia ([www.monticello.org](http://www.monticello.org)) designed by himself on a hilltop, needs little introduction for most readers. Jefferson was a polymath and architecture was one of the fields he had mastered, most of which he taught himself. Jefferson had mastered the craft of knowledge and acquisition of expertise in most any field of inquiry that he sought. In his study he employed mechanical devices that would copy his letters as he was writing them. It enabled him to keep a file of the many thousands of letters he sent, that he could refer to them in follow-ups when replies arrived. From the hilltop of the site of Monticello, which he cleared for the purpose, he had a commanding view of the estate. Monticello, in both architecture and construction, may be found to be on a par with modern buildings even today. Among the innovations Jefferson had incorporated into it was an elevator for food to be sent up to the dining room from the kitchen, "dumb waiter," raised and lowered by rope.

The home of Cyrus, Pasargadae, had architectural innovations for its time. It has been recently discovered that it is built on a slab that would isolate it from the ground in case of an earthquake<sup>78</sup>. Known as the base isolation system, it is used in modern times in advanced constructions in earthquake-prone regions. The mausoleum of Cyrus the Great built ca. 520 BC, still stands today. The ancient Greek historian Arrian (ca. 140 AD), nicknamed "*Young Xenophon*", was the author of the *Expeditions of Alexander*. Quoting from one of Alexander's companions, Aristobulus, who was Alexander's advisor and military engineer, Arrian reports of the tomb of Cyrus:

“The tomb was in the royal park at Pasargadae : a grove of various sorts of trees had been planted around it; there were streams of running water and a meadow with lush grass.”<sup>79</sup>

Alexander admired Cyrus and like the Founding Father, like Caesar and Roman leaders after him was an avid reader of the *Cyropaedia*. Plutarch (ca. 85 AD) reports of Alexander’s visit to the tomb of Cyrus:

“Having discovered that the tomb of Cyrus had been rifled, he put to death the perpetrator of the deed, although the culprit was a prominent Macedonian native of Pella, by name Polymachus. After reading the inscription upon this tomb, he ordered it to be repeated below in Greek letters. It ran thus:

"O man, whosoever thou art and whencesoever thou comest, for come I know thou wilt, I am Cyrus, who won for the Persians their empire. Do not, therefore, begrudge me this little earth which covers my body."

These words, then, deeply affected Alexander, who was reminded of the uncertainty and mutability of life.”<sup>80</sup>

## **THE LANDS OF JEFFERSON AND CYRUS TODAY**

Just as the Thirteen Colonies then needed the help of a sympathetic great power, France, to succeed in their quest to be free and be able to express their values in government, so do Iranians to-day. It is in dire need of expression in government for the sake of world peace and for Iran’s own sake. But contrary to what some have suggested or advanced, the Iranian people do not need military aid, or military intervention, which would in fact be counter-productive to that purpose, to peace and regional and world stability. Rather, they need the bona fide and steadfast moral and political support of the US, Europe and their allies. Moral support, the dissemination of truth, and words from leaders followed by serious diplomacy can accomplish what cannot be achieved by way of arms.



## THE PROCESS AND METHOD BY WHICH THIS RESEARCH WAS CONDUCTED

The presence of the *Cyropaedia* among Thomas Jefferson's books as Cyrus Kar had found was an exciting prospect that led to discussions between him, Richard Frye and Afshin Zand. The main question that initially posited itself was : Did Jefferson take more than a passing interest in the *Cyropaedia*, or any single book for that matter, among his over 6,000 books ?! His letters indicated a likelihood that this was the case with respect to the *Cyropaedia*. In the process of these deliberations the authors became motivated to undertake the research into the matter in greater depth to more critically settle that question, and the project was born in 2011. It opened a new dimension in the scholarly collaboration between them. They were in touch through visits, phone and email. Richard Frye worked from home, reviewed Afshin's drafts of the developing work based on their mutual thinking and provided feedback.

In 2012 Richard Frye's health took a turn for the worse. This was exacerbated in December 2013 when he suffered a fall at home in Cambridge from which he didn't recover and was in the ICU for a few days. In March 2014, at age 94, we lost him. However, this project was dear to his heart and he wished Afshin to continue his efforts to develop and bring it to fruition.

Thereafter, during my (Afshin) further visits to the presidential libraries of the Founding Fathers and associated libraries and institutions more information was uncovered, presented in the revised and expanded editions of this article. The research online was also indispensable and produced excellent results, since much of the writings of the Founders were being put online. It would not have been possible to produce these results in this span of time if a large portion of the records had not been digitized and made accessible via computer.

Thomas Jefferson left behind some 19,000 letters, a book that he composed, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1781-85), and his Commonplace Books. Searching in indices for keywords in these records as a first-level approach takes you only so far. If close correspondence lay between the writings of Jefferson and those in the *Cyropaedia* (akin to that with Locke, Mason and others) indicating where he may have been inspired by Cyrus the Great it would likely lie in the body of the texts, and not necessarily come with keywords. Thus my task became correlating the text in Jefferson's writings with the text in the *Cyropaedia* and other records which the Founding Fathers had of pre-Islamic Iran, to see if such correspondence occurred. There is much more conceptual correspondence, but not enlarged upon here, for it is open to interpretation. Eventually the task of textual review and correlation of close correspondence bore fruit, as seen in the passages quoted from Jefferson and fellow Founding Fathers above. In the process I found influences from Darius in Jefferson's Commonplace Books, being collections of hundreds of pages of notes Jefferson made from books of interest he read during his formative period as a scholar. In these, which go back to Jefferson's early years his interest in the Persian policy of freedom of religion becomes clear.

I carried out similar review and correlation with regards to Adams, Madison, and Franklin, which led in part to the results outlined here, and for George Washington which did not turn up direct correlations. What is outlined here thus is a blend of textual correspondence and clear conceptual correspondence. As

Washington was initially a military leader we did not expect to find the connections we found with respect to the political philosophers among the Founding Fathers but his rule book of civility was of interest.

Through these and other methods it became possible to uncover in part how the timeless ideals of Cyrus and his successors inspired the Founding Fathers of America, concepts which along with influence from other sources became incorporated into the US founding documents.

In the trips I made to the various presidential libraries and related institutions, conducting interviews and research with the curators, I had the pleasure of holding and reading Jefferson's own books.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We wish to express our appreciation for the efforts of other scholars, institutions, and individual supporters who have helped unveil Cyrus to the World. Likewise to colleagues, friends and family who with suggestions, referrals and tips have enriched this work.

A friend whose project we supported as scholars and donors, Cyrus Kar, in the process of his work had found that there were a few copies of the *Cyropaedia* in Jefferson's library. Kar also later informed us of Charles Poston and his conversion to Zoroastrianism.

In a few trips to the Library of Congress, including in July 2014, and meetings with Mark Dimunation, Chief of the Rare Book and Special Collections Division and Eric Frazier, Reference Librarian, I had the pleasure and honor of examining Jefferson's own books, including the *Cyropaedia* and other books of Xenophon which they pulled from the vault. To handle the pages Jefferson turned and see his markings in ink is to experience a part of history in his study two hundred fifty years ago. The text of these books was in remarkably good condition, as if printed today. Eric Frazier graciously provided complementary digital SLR high quality photographs of the pages of interest.

In a few trips to Thomas Jefferson's home Monticello including in July 2014, Endrina Tay, Associate Foundation Librarian for Technical Services, helped me research Jefferson's records and provided many useful tips and clues. She found the other two editions of the *Cyropaedia* that Jefferson owned, making at least four editions from extant lists of his books. Jeff Looney took time from his work on digitizing and putting online Jefferson's Retirement papers to see me and provided good tips.

In a visit in August 2014 to James Madison's Montpelier, Meg Kennedy and Tiffany Cole arranged for me to meet curators Grant S. Quertermous and Sterling Howell, who helped my research in James Madison's records.

In a few trips to the Boston Public Library including in April 2014, Sean Casey, in charge of the Rare Books & Manuscripts Department helped facilitate my research into John Adams' work, provided access to John Adams' well-worn and -marked copy of the *Cyropaedia* and enabled me to use their photographic station to take photos of selected pages.

In a visit in August 2014 to the library at American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia where Ben Franklin's records are kept, Ray Goodman, chief librarian availed me of Franklin's general ledger, where Franklin recorded his purchase of the *Avesta*, scriptures of pre-Islamic Iran.

In a visit in June 2014 to the University of Virginia Library Heather Riser, Director at the Harrison-Small Research Center, and Ann Benham, librarian, facilitated my research into the records left behind by Jefferson and other Founding Fathers.

In visits to the Massachusetts Historical Society including in December 2014 to research John Adams' records and Jefferson's private papers held there, Kelly Cobble and staff kindly availed me of their knowledge.

In a visit in August 2014 to the Mount Vernon Library Sarah Myers assisted my research into the records of George Washington.

In a visit to in December 2014 Adams National Historical Park in Quincy, Massachusetts, curator Patricia Smith helped with my research. Compared to Monticello, Montpelier and Mount Vernon in Virginia which were sprawling estates, Adam's home in Massachusetts was quite modest.

Jennifer Rose informed Afshin Zand of Benjamin Franklin and his interest in Zoroastrianism.

Eden Naby, wife of the late Richard Frye, and William Frye, elder brother, supported Richard's trips to California, and his review of Afshin's multiple drafts at home in Massachusetts and Palo Alto.

Tanya Egloff proofread the various editions before Afshin sent them to Richard for review and provided valuable suggestions.

There follows the list of curators and librarians at the Library of Congress, Monticello, Poplar Forest, Montpelier and Mt. Vernon in Virginia, Adams National Historical Park in Quincy and Boston Historical Society in Massachusetts, American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia and other institutions and universities graciously helped facilitate this research during Afshin's visits:

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Eric Frazier	Library of Congress
Endrina Tay	Monticello
Jeff Looney	Monticello

Anna Berkes  
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Tiffany Cole  
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Grant S. Quertermous  
Roy Goodman  
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Ann Benham  
Kelly Cobble  
Sean Casey  
Sarah Myers  
Patricia Smith

Monticello  
James Madison's Monpelier  
James Madison's Monpelier  
James Madison's Monpelier  
James Madison's Monpelier  
American Philosophical Society  
American Philosophical Society  
University of Virginia Library  
Massachusetts Historical Society  
Boston Public Library  
Mount Vernon Library  
Adams National Historical Park

## Bios



photo source: Kashi & Nirvana Anoosheh

**Afshin Zand** was born in Tehran. He grew up in Iran on compounds where his father worked closely with American engineers and technicians settled there as colleagues and neighbors, hired to build a TVA (*Tennessee Valley Authority*) complex of dams, farming and hydroelectric power. During family visits to numerous nearby archeological sites, Afshin developed a lifelong passion for history and the philosophy of history, influenced by his father's interest from whom he inherited a love for formative America. After about five years his family moved back to Tehran where his father taught at a graduate school organized and staffed by Harvard Business School, the *Iran Center for Management Studies*. At age 15 Afshin was sent to England to complete his high-school education. He then joined his family in coming to the U.S. and studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) where he earned his BS degree. Throughout Afshin was guided by his father, who during his sabbatical at HBS was given an honorary MBA. To fulfill his life-long passion in history, Afshin undertook studies as student of Professor Frye of Harvard University, 1985-1993, in non-degree professional development, fulfilling the requirements for PhD. His studies and research were inter-disciplinary and included pre-Islamic history, Persian literature, Zoroastrianism, Judaeo-Christianity, biblical history, comparative religion, linguistics and Indo-European studies and extended to Islamic and contemporary history, with focus on the causality of historical events and transformations. He resumed collaboration with Richard Frye on cultural history, lectures and their mutual editorial of work from 2003 onward. He may be reached at [zand@richardfrye.org](mailto:zand@richardfrye.org)

**Richard Nelson Frye** has researched and taught the history of Iran, the Near East and Central Asia at Harvard University for over six decades. He earned his PhD in History and Philology at Harvard in 1946, where he has been Aga Khan Professor Emeritus of Iranian Studies, a chair he helped create. Referred to *a pro pos* as “dean of the world’s Iranists”, he needs little introduction to experts in the field. Born in Alabama in 1920, his parents had emigrated to the U.S. from Sweden in the early 1900s. He is married, and has had four children. Fluent in Persian, Turkish, Arabic, German, Russian, French, Italian and knowledgeable in other living and extinct languages, he has lived and worked in Iran, Afghanistan, and other regions of Iranian culture such as Tajikistan, and has conducted research and taught in Germany and other countries. Professor Frye was a founder of the Center for Middle East Studies (CMES) at Harvard University. His work has covered the spectrum of Iranian cultural studies and his books and articles over the years have served as reference works on the subject. Some of the scholars and professors in this field today were his students. In recent years he has delivered lectures before audiences in Iran (in Persian) and in the US, advocating restoration of the separation of religion and state in Iran, expounding its underlying basis in history and literature since 550 BC, through late antiquity and medieval times.

This work with Afshin Zand’s their prior works follow his lifelong vision to show the real Iran to the world. It is the last project he worked on. At age 94, after illness, Richard Frye passed away in March 2014.

The rest of their research and writings is to be published in a book, *Thomas Jefferson and Cyrus the Great*, in which this subject is articulated in greater depth and breadth.

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