

The Blue Sky,

A tribute to those who maintain the Iranian nobility



Are you going mad? A close friend and colleague told me after I refused, about a year ago, an overseas academic job offer with the net annual salary of +160,000 € several ten times my university earnings. I took a similar blame when I decided to come back to Iran after finishing my PhD, while everyone advised me to remain in UK, including my supervisor, friends, colleagues and even the members of Iran embassy.

All generations have had their own difficulties. Some of us were grown up along with an ambitious vague revolution and engaged voluntarily or compulsory in a war which took the lives of innocent people and many shining stars. Some took many wrong steps due to lack of sufficient information and were misused through their truthful beliefs, no matter how right or wrong they were. Unfortunately, we all have witnessed a tragic free-fall of many social ideals. As a result, many new generations, especially the experts and students, may see no hope in remaining in an extremely limiting environment, so strange to their belief and the way they wish to live; with the optimism for a legitimate brighter prosperous future outside Iran. Does it really matter where we live in? Are we not supposed to live in a global village nowadays? Has the sky got a different colour overseas?

We are definitely not the last generation suffered to maintain the Iranian nobility. Some have decided to move overseas to settle for good or to wait for a glorious comeback; others have been forced to remain in Iran and to somehow adapt with living difficulties, and some have chosen to stay and share all the existing despairs. Though with different extents, all of us share the same determination and grief. "So let's grieve together. And let's give one another the space to be shocked, to be pissed, to appeal to God, to be angry with God, to find peace in God, to question God, to want to take action, to want to wait, to blame, to pray, to be afraid, to be speechless, to vent, to lament, to speak up, to be silent, to pull our families close to us, to need some time alone. Let's not tell each other how to grieve. Let's just grieve.", as R.H. Evans said.

I do not really know. Maybe I am not that insane! Having published three internationally reference textbooks and several papers, running a relatively active lab, and engagement in a number of major high-tech national engineering projects are the signs of a tiny step in the right path. Perhaps a much better outcome could have been achieved, had I resided overseas. But, I have never been a person after greatness or reverence. My small steps were towards giving my students the faith and confidence in themselves to accomplish what sometimes inspired me. I have tried to show them the available solutions but I never forced them to believe in what I may have believed, even in academic discussions.

Last year, when a close colleague passed away, many weepy students sadly but resolutely celebrated his life and achievements. It clearly showed that even an unfortunate loss could result in determination for many others. Is there any more satisfaction than raising so many talented experts for this country, helping them in finding the right path, having the credibility to recommend them for admission to top international universities or employment in renowned companies and even obtaining foreign citizenship to build a better future? Is there any replacement for having friends among a vast variety of students who have trusted you with sharing their private beliefs, photos and funny and serious facebook and twitter contributions? Can a teacher properly thank the gratitude of students even if it happens after they failed to pass a course? I see a bright blue sky, even though it looks much cloudy nowadays.

After all struggles and endeavors, sadness and joy, despairs and hopes, even I may decide to move to someplace else for the sake of my children to secure their right for prosperity and freedom, the right many of us ceased to hold and many more are struggling to obtain. While undoubtedly satisfied by being a teacher, determined to continue helping the students in any possible way, bound by ethics and responsibilities, and inspired by love and freedom, a time may arrive to watch, in a more relax environment, my children play and grow; to listen to the lovely sound of music and to read divine poems, with an active hope for a bright prosperous and free future for all fellow Iranians, including my family. Preferably, such a someplace else always remains under the Iranian sky, where when the life-end arrives there may even be someone to grieve. We build our sky in the place we choose, and it is up to us to decide if the sky is to remain blue. The fate is not written.