

A close-up, profile view of a woman's head and shoulders. She has dark, wavy hair and is looking down. A sword is held horizontally in front of her face, its tip pointing to the right. The sword has a dark, textured blade and a hilt visible on the left. The background is a solid, muted blue-grey color.

EXEMPLARY WOMEN FROM IRAN

Excerpted from
Jewels of Allah: The Untold Story of Women in Iran
by Nina Ansary



Exemplary Women from Iran

(in alphabetical order)

The following are Iranian women whom Nina Ansary highlights in *Jewels of Allah: The Untold Story of Women in Iran* to acknowledge and celebrate their outstanding accomplishments and advocacy on behalf of women's empowerment.

Learn more or connect with Nina at NinaAnsary.com.



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Los Angeles, California

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**“Don’t let anyone define
who you are or what
you should be.”**

—NINA ANSARY



ROSLAN RAHMAN/COLLECTIONS/GETTY IMAGES

Hamideh Abbasali

In 2014, Abbasali became the first Iranian to win a medal at the World Karate Championships.



SCU.EDU/ETHICS/ARCHITECTS-OF-PEACE/

Mahnaz Afkhami

Iran's second female minister, **Afkhami** served as Minister for Women's Affairs (1975–1978) during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi.



YORKPRESS.CO.UK

Haleh Afshar

First Iranian woman awarded the OBE (Order of the British Empire) and First Iranian woman formally introduced into the British House of Lords.



LILY AFSHAR

Lily Afshar

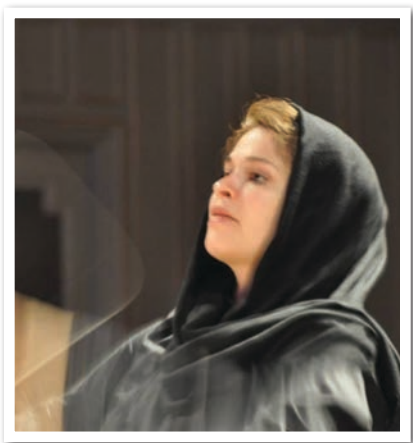
World-renowned, award-winning Iranian classical guitarist and the first woman ever to earn a Doctorate of Music in Guitar Performance.



THEGLOBEANDMAIL.COM

Nazanin Afshin-Jam

A notable public speaker and human-rights activist. In 2007, Afshin-Jam received the Global Citizenship Award from the University of British Columbia, and in 2009 she was honored with the Human Rights Hero Award from UN Watch in Geneva, Switzerland.



PRI.ORG

Nazanin Aghakhani

First female orchestra conductor in Iran.



LAPHIL.COM/PHILPEDIA

Shohreh Aghdashloo

A prominent stage and screen actress. In 2003, Aghdashloo became the first Iranian woman to be nominated for an Academy Award, and in 2009 she hit another cultural milestone by becoming the first Iranian to win an Emmy from the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.



PEN-INTERNATIONAL.ORG

Shiva Nazar Ahari

Notable Iranian journalist, award-winning human-rights activist, and founding member of the Committee of Human Rights Reporters (CHRR). “When your heart trembles for the right of another human.... that is when you become the accused.”



Haideh (Aida) Ahmadzadeh

Iran's first prima ballerina.



BAHA'IBE

Qurrat al-'ayn (aka Tahirah)

Tahirah (1817–1852), considered the first suffrage martyr in Iran, was imprisoned for courageously defying societal customs by appearing unveiled in public. Her pioneering spirit is hauntingly captured in a final rendition prior to her strangulation with a silk scarf. “You can kill me as soon as you like, but you cannot stop the emancipation of women.”



FACEBOOK

Masih Alinejad

Iranian activist and award-winning journalist who received the inaugural Women's Rights Award at the Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy for creating "My Stealthy Freedom" Facebook page, inviting women in Iran to post photos of themselves without their headscarves. "These women need their own platform. They want to express themselves [and] they don't have any voice inside Iran."



WIKIMEDIA.ORG

Goli Ameri

First Iranian woman to serve as U.S.
Assistant Secretary of State.



EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG

Maryam Amid-Semnani

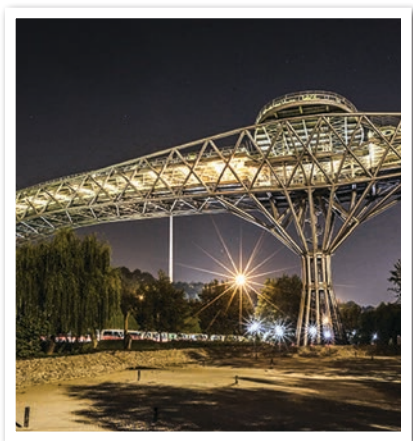
Amid-Semnani is considered to be one of the first female journalists in Iran. A leading pioneer of the early women's movement, Semnani was the founding editor of *Shokoufeh* (*Blossom*, 1913), one of the earliest and most influential women's newspapers in Iran.



MAXIM MARMUR/COLLECTIONS/GETTY IMAGES

Anousheh Ansari

In 2006, engineer and entrepreneur **Ansari** became the first Iranian woman in space. “I hope to inspire everyone, especially young women and young girls... to not give up their dreams....”



REALIRAN.ORG

Leila Araghian

An award-winning architect, Araghian designed Tabiat Bridge (Nature Bridge, 2014), Iran's largest pedestrian bridge.

**“Never underestimate
the ripple effect
of a random act of
compassion.”**

—NINA ANSARY



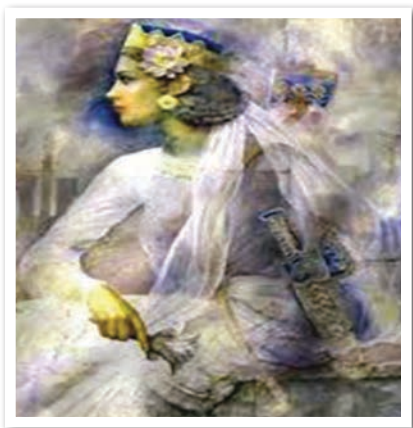
Parvin Ardalan

Notable Iranian journalist and founding member of the One Million Signature Campaign for Equality was honored in 2007 with Sweden's Olof Palme Prize. Ardalan dedicated her award to "all those who fight for freedom of expression in Iran."



Dr. Marzieh Arfaee

In 1935, **Dr. Arfaee** became the first woman to hold the rank of general in the Iranian military.



Pantea Arteshbod

Arteshbod (559 B.C.) was one of the all time greatest Persian Commanders of the Achaemenid Empire (550–330 BC). The wife of General Aryasb (Achaemenids Arteshbod), she played a crucial role in keeping law and order in Babylonia after the conquest of the Neo-Babylonian Empire in 547 B.C. by Cyrus the Great.



ROOHOLLA VAHDATI / ISNA.IR

Nafas Asnavandi

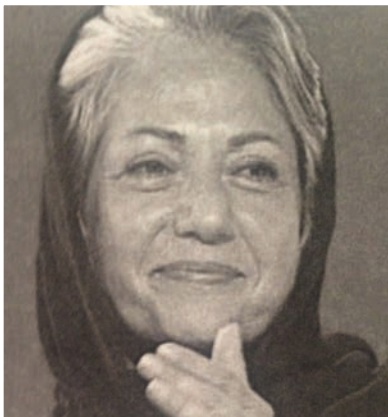
Three-year-old Iranian girl who is the first child in Iran to join Mensa, the largest and oldest IQ society in the world.



GHADIMA.COM

Golnar Bakhtiar

Iran's most famous female equestrian competed in seventeen national and international competitions. In 1977, Bakhtiar broke the Iranian record by clearing a wall at 2.05 meters.



IRANREVIEW.ORG

Rakhshan Bani-Etemad

Referred to as the “First Lady of Iranian Cinema,” internationally acclaimed director and screenwriter **Bani-Etemad’s** unique cinematic style captures the bitter realities of a suffocating atmosphere for women in post-revolutionary Iran.



COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA.ORG/WIKI/FILE:TALAT_BASARI.JPG

Dr. Ta'lat Basari

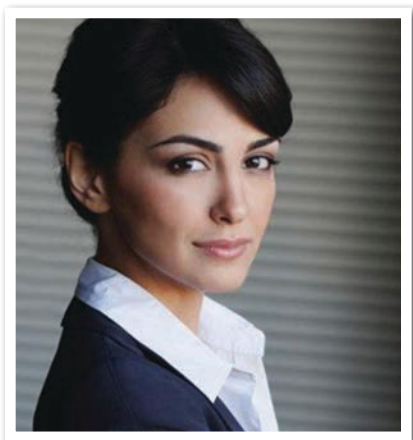
In 1965, **Dr. Basari** became the first female vice-chancellor of an Iranian university. She held this post at the Jundishapur University in Ahwaz.



ZEYNEP ATAMER / PERSIAN-STAR.NET

Simin Behbahani

Referred to as the “Lioness of Iran,” this two-time Nobel nominee and recipient of numerous accolades and awards is considered the greatest living female poet and one of the most celebrated figures of modern Persian literature.



NAZANINBONDIADI.COM

Nazanin Boniadi

Prominent Iranian actress, award-winning women's rights activist and official spokesperson for Amnesty International USA, focusing on the unjust conviction and treatment of Iranian women, youth and prisoners of conscience.



Sissy Cambis

Cambis (381 BC) was the Empress of Persia and mother of Darius III, the last king of the Achaemenid Empire (336–330 BC). A remarkable Achaemenid noblewoman, she valiantly fought, resisted, and did not surrender to Alexander of Macedonia.



FA.WIKIQUOTE.ORG

Simin Daneshvar

Daneshvar (1921–2012) was widely regarded as Iran’s premier female novelist and the first woman in Iran to publish her collection of short stories. “I wish the world was run by women. Women who have given birth and know the value of their creation.”



EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/PARVIN_DARABI

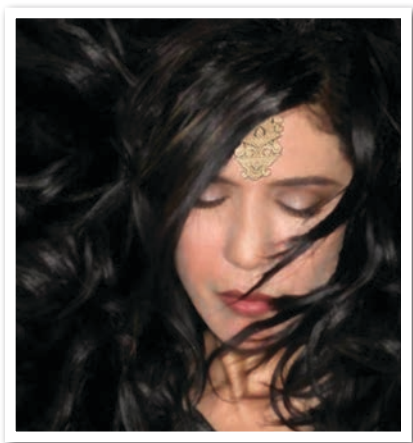
Dr. Parvin Darabi

Born in 1941, **Dr. Darabi** was Iran's first female Ph.D. in Electronics.



Iran Darroudi

Darroudi is considered one of the most renowned contemporary Iranian painters. Darroudi, who studied at École des Beaux-Arts and École du Louvre in Paris, cultivated a unique style that merged elements of Western surrealism with Eastern mysticism. “I have learned the culture of today’s painting in France, but I am rooted in my fatherland’s culture.”



SUSSANDEYHIM.COM

Sussan Deyhim

Internationally renowned Iranian composer, vocalist and performance artist. Cited as “one of Iran’s most potent voices living in exile,” Deyhim has an elastic musical approach blurs the boundaries between various vocal traditions.



WWW.PERSIA4ALL.COM/ACHMAENENIDS.HTM]

Azad Deylami

Female guerrilla commander (751 AD), considered to be the symbol of Persian resistance against forced religion by the Arab invaders.



WIKIPEDIA.ORG

Sadiqeh Dowlatabadi

Persian feminist activist, journalist and one of the pioneering figures in the women's movement in Iran. In 1918, **Dowlatabadi** opened the first school for girls in Isfahan, Iran. "I will never forgive anyone who visits my grave veiled."

**“Our past is the canvas
that illuminates
our future.”**

—NINA ANSARY



FIS-IRAN.ORG

Mehrangiz Dowlatshahi

In 1976, social activist and politician **Dowlatshahi** (1919–2008) became Iran's first female diplomat when she was appointed ambassador to Denmark.



LINDA SPELLERS / HISTORYCOMMONS.ORG

Sibel Edmonds

A former FBI agent and founder of the National Security Whistleblowers Coalition (NSWBC). Edmonds is considered the “most classified woman in the U.S.” after discovering serious security breaches, cover-ups, and intentional blocking of intelligence.



VOGUE.COM/874279

Dr. Haleh Esfandiari

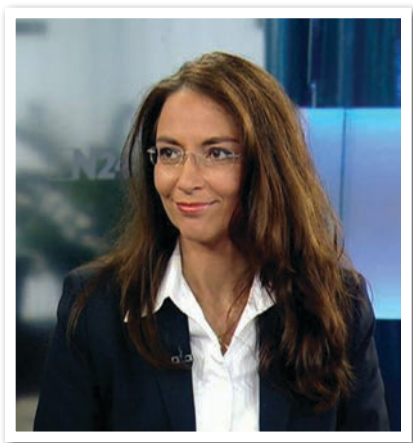
A feminist scholar and the Director of the Middle East Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC. In 2007, she endured four months in solitary confinement in Tehran's Evin Prison. "Iranians want evolution not revolution."



ISABELLESHRAGHI.COM

Isabelle Eshraghi

Internationally acclaimed award-winning Iranian photographer, **Eshraghi** rediscovers her roots in Isfahan, Iran, through a photographic lens. “My photographs interrogate my roots and question the condition of Iranian culture.”



Yasmin Fahimi

In 2014, **Fahimi** became the first Iranian woman Secretary General of the Social Democratic Party of Germany.



Sattareh Farman Farmaian

Widely regarded as the “mother of social work” after establishing the Tehran School of Social Work in 1958. This institution was the first of its kind in Iran.



COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA.ORG/WIKI/FILE:ZOHREH_MALILEH_FARSHID

Zohreh Malileh Farshid

In 1974 Farshid, Iran's youngest female architect, designed the Ahwaz Sports Complex.



WWW.COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA.ORG/WIKI/FILE:FOROUGH.GIF

Forough Farrokhzad

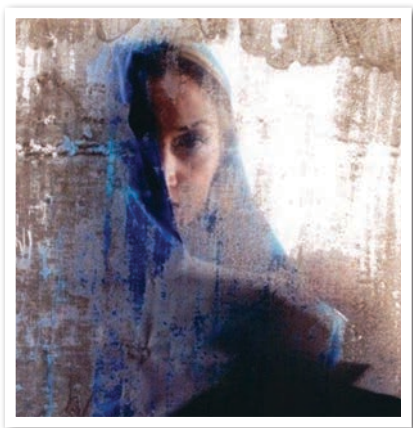
Widely regarded as one of the most influential female poets of 20th century Iran, **Farrokhzad** was a brilliant modernist and iconoclast who broke new ground with her strong feminist voice criticizing social taboos including love, lust and sexuality.



WARREN LITTLE/COLLECTIONS/GETTY IMAGES

Shirin Gerami

Iran's first female triathlete made history in 2013 by competing in the World Triathlon Championships in London.



SHADI GHADIRIAN / ONEART.ORG

Shadi Ghadirian

Photographer **Ghadirian's** stunning images document the challenges faced by women in Iran trapped between tradition and modernity. Ghadirian's work is represented in numerous major public collections, including the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



CNN.COM

Roya Hakakian

Acclaimed Iranian author and founding member of the Iran Human Rights Documentation Center. Recipient of the 2008 Guggenheim Fellowship, Hakakian has been highlighted among the “20 most important activists, academics, and journalists of our generation.”



KIANA HAYERI / CUERNSEY PHOTOGRAPHY FESTIVAL.COM

Kiana Hayeri

In her 2012 project, “Your Veil Is a Battleground,” twenty-six-year-old Iranian-born documentary photographer **Hayeri** captures the dual lives of a new generation of young women in Iran. “Everything that is banned by the government is being practiced, but behind closed doors.”



PERSEPOLIS.NU

Iradabama

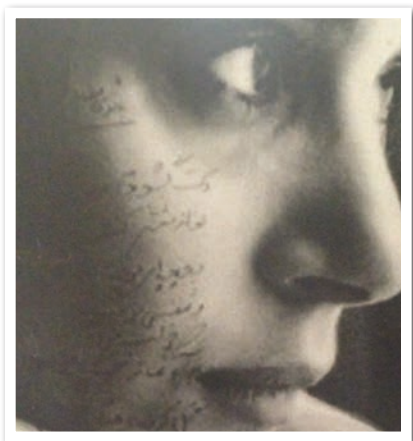
Iradabama (488 BC): Highly successful Persian businesswoman, most notable for running a flourishing wine and grain business that employed a large workforce during the reign of Xerxes the Great.



PERSIAN.FI

Sarvar Kaboli

Kaboli in a performance of *Cinderella* by the Iranian National Ballet Company, Roudaki Opera House, Tehran c. 1970s.



WIKIWAND.COM/EN/NEGAR_ASSARI

Sheema Kalbasi

Award-winning Iranian poet, human-rights activist, and documentary filmmaker. One of the few literary figures to promote poets of Iranian heritage, Kalbasi's work is distinguished by her passionate defense of ethnic and religious minorities.



LEONHARD FOEGER/REUTERS

Marjan Kalhor

Alpine skier and the first Iranian woman in Winter Olympics history. Leading her country at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics Opening Ceremony, Kalhor stated, “I want women to know if they want to, they can. I want them to know it is possible.”

**“There is no resolution
in war, no glory
in violence, and
no redemption
with injustice.”**

—NINA ANSARY



LISA MAZZUCCO / NEWLIVESTREAM.COM

Tara Kamangar

World-class Iranian composer and classical pianist. A graduate of Harvard University and London's Royal Academy of Music, Kamangar is renowned for her diverse repertoire, ranging from classical to rarely-heard works by Iranian composers of the past.



DENHAAGDIRECT.NL

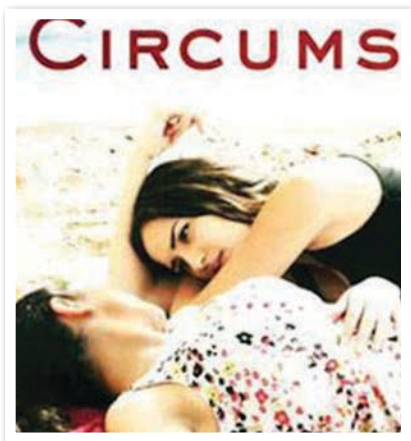
Farah Karimi

In 1998, Karimi became the first Iranian woman elected to the Dutch Parliament.



Mahtab Keramati

In 2006, acclaimed Iranian actress **Keramati** was appointed UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador. Keramati has since taken part in the launch of the Global Campaign on Children and AIDS, and more recently chaired a debate on Iranian Women's Day.



ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS

Maryam Keshavarz

Critically acclaimed Iranian filmmaker whose 2011 narrative feature *Circumstance* received over a dozen awards, including Best Film at the Rome Film Festival and the coveted Sundance Film Festival Audience Award. “In Iran, anything illegal becomes politically subversive.”



Najmeh Khedmati

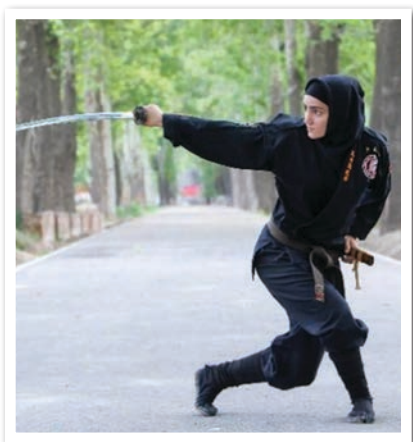
In 2014, eighteen-year-old Iranian female sport shooter **Khedmati** won the Gold Medal at the Women's 10m Air Rifle shooting competition at the Asian Games.



SHARGON.COM/FA/WP-CONTENT

Noushin Ahmadi Khorasani

Notable Iranian journalist, women's rights activist and founding member of the One Million Signature Campaign for Equality. "For me the struggle for equality is life itself."



SHARQ PARS

Lady Ninjas of Iran

Ninjutsu, a Japanese martial sport, is fast becoming a popular activity with women in Iran, where thousands currently practice in over twenty-two provinces.



Shahla Lahiji

As the founder of prominent publishing house Roshangaran Press (1985), **Lahiji** was the first Iranian woman to secure a publisher's license in her own name.



IRANIANS.KODOOM.COM/EN/SAMIRA_MAKHMALBAF

Samira Makhmalbaf

In 2000, Iranian filmmaker **Makhmalbaf** was the youngest director ever to compete for the prestigious Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival for her film *Blackboard*.



CITYTOMB.COM/BIOGRAPHY/FA/MEHRANGIZ_MANOUCHEHRIAN

Dr. Mehrangiz Manouchehrian

In 1947, Dr. Manouchehrian becomes Iran's first female lawyer, and in 1963, she was one of two women appointed as the first female senators in Iran.



IMDB.COM

Arefeh Mansouri

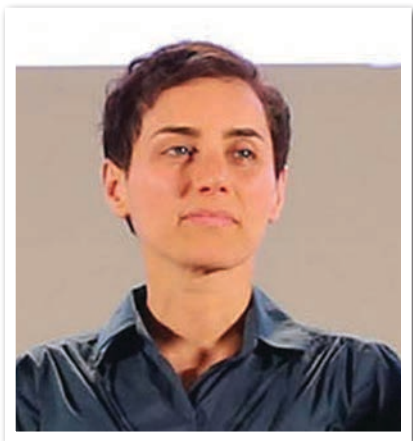
Award-winning Iranian fashion and costume designer, whose “avant-garde masterpieces” have been showcased in major Hollywood productions and featured in fashion magazines including *Vogue*, *Elle*, and *Marie Claire*. “My designs are created for the unafraid. Decisive women who are non-conforming.”



SEEMORGH.COM

Tahmineh Milani

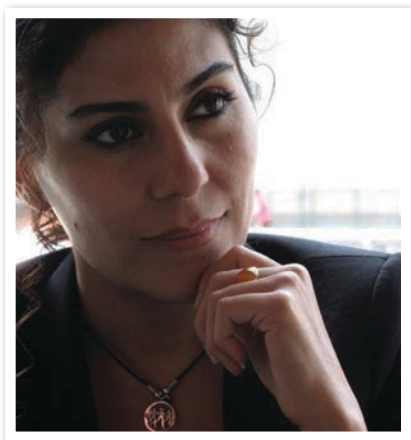
Feminist Iranian filmmaker Milani's numerous controversial features showcase women's lives under an oppressive regime. "When I make a movie, my aim is to challenge society."



DAILYMAIL.CO.UK

Maryam Mirzakhani

In 2014, Iranian mathematician and Stanford University professor **Mirzakhani** became the first woman to ever win the Fields Medal, known as the “Nobel Prize of mathematics.” Upon receiving the award, she said, “I will be happy if it encourages young female scientists and mathematicians....”



MARY A MSINAIEE / EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG

Mahnaz Mohammadi

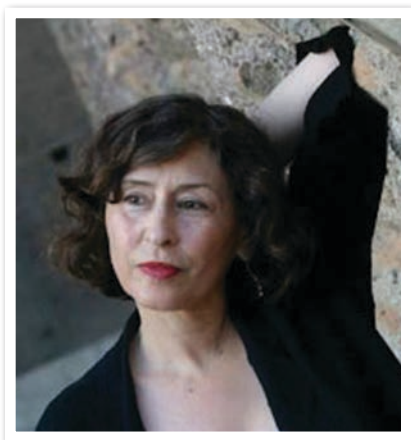
In 2014, award-winning Iranian documentary filmmaker and prominent women's rights activist **Mohammadi** began serving a five-year prison sentence. "I am both a woman and a filmmaker: sufficient to be arrested."



VALERIE BENNETT / MOCACLEVELAND.ORG

Farshid Moussavi

Award-winning Iranian architect recently chosen as one of “Five Women Changing the Face of Architecture,” has co-authored numerous critically acclaimed projects, including the mirror-clad Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland. “Architecture is a creative field ... and my strength is actually my difference.”



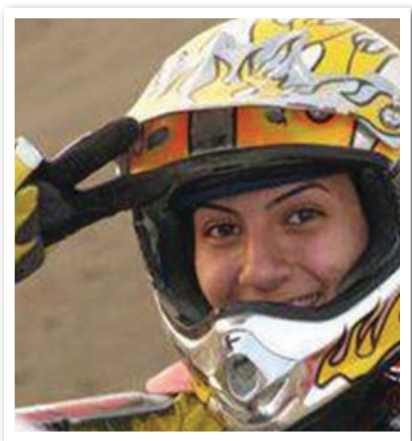
VEEOZ.COM

Dr. Azar Nafisi

Prominent professor and author of the critically acclaimed long-running *New York Times* bestseller *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books*. Since 1997, Dr. Nafisi has been living in exile in the United States. “I left Iran but Iran did not leave me.”

**“You will never find
what lies deep within
if you choose to remain
in shallow waters.”**

—NINA ANSARY



HOOKIT.COM/MEMBERS/NOORA/

Noora Naraghi

Naraghi is an Iranian motocross racer. In 2009, she won Iran's first-ever female championship in motocross.



KUNACA

Marina Nemat

Author of the international best-selling memoir, *Prisoner of Tehran*. **Nemat** is the recipient of the European Parliament's inaugural Human Dignity Award and Italy's prestigious literary Grinzane Cavour Prize.



HARRY ENGELS/COLLECTIONS/GETTY IMAGES

Zahra Nemati

First Iranian woman to win a Gold Medal in archery at the 2012 London Paralympic Games. Paralyzed in an earthquake, Nemati dedicated her medal to “all of the people who prayed for me to achieve success.”



SHIRIN NESHAT / EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/SHIRIN_NESHAT

Shirin Neshat

Internationally acclaimed Iranian visual artist and the recipient of numerous accolades and awards for her creations reflecting the paradoxes and complexities of a life in exile. “An artist like myself finds herself in the position of being the voice, the speaker of my own people... art is our weapon, culture is a form of resistance.”



Mahin Oskouei

A pioneering figure in theater arts, Oskouei was Iran's first stage actress and first female theatre director.



AP / IRANIAN.COM/ARCHIVES

Princess Fatemeh Pahlavi

Half-sister of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the late Shah of Iran, was the first woman in Iran to be issued a helicopter license.



PARSTIMES.COM/WOMEN/PAHLAVI

Princess Shams Pahlavi

Elder sister of the late Shah of Iran. An international Red Cross leader, she built the Red Lion and Sun Society, Iran's Red Cross. As the country's largest charitable organization, the group supported hundreds of hospitals, orphanages, youth activities, and disaster relief efforts.



Farokhroo Parsa

Iran's first female minister **Parsa** (1922–1980) served as Minister of Education (1962–1979) during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi.



RAPHAEL GAILLARD/COLLECTIONS/GETTY IMAGES

Zoya Pirzad

In 2014, Iranian novelist **Pirzad** received France's prestigious Chevalier Legion of Honor award.



ZAHRA RAMEZANI / HONARONLINE.IR

Polaris

First all-female Iranian pop band to perform live in concert in Iran since the Islamic Revolution (1979). “We spent three years getting authorization to perform... We aim to show that Iranian women are also able to work in this field.”



JESSICA LUND

Laleh Pourkarim

Iranian singer-songwriter and producer. Since her 2005 debut on the Scandinavian music scene, **Pourkarim** has been awarded multiple Swedish Grammys including Artist of the Year, Newcomer of the Year, and Producer of the Year. “Just because it is black in the dark, doesn’t mean there is no color...”



Azita Raji

In 2014, Raji became the first Iranian woman, as well as the first female, to be nominated as U.S. ambassador to Sweden.



ALAHWAZ.INFO

Sheyma Rashidi

The only female firefighter in the city of Ahvaz, Iran.



FESTIVALOFARTS.COM/ACTORS

Shahla Riahi

In 1956, **Riahi** (1926–present) became the first Iranian woman to direct a feature film, *Marjan*.



ANVARLORG/IRAN

Atoosa Behnegar Rubenstein

Former editor-in-chief of *Seventeen* and the founding editor of *CosmoGirl*. Honored in 2004 by Columbia University as one of the “Top 250 Alumni” through the ages, Rubenstein is a strong advocate for girls to resist the pressure to be perfect. “Your greatness is about the kind of person you are and the contribution you make to humanity.”



I.A.W.FOUNDATION.ORG

Shahla Sabet

In 1993, Sabet became the first Iranian woman appointed as judge in the United States.

**“Fight hatred with love,
war with peace, and
sin with absolution.”**

—NINA ANSARY



PBS.ORG/WGBH/NOVA/SCIENCENOW/

Dr. Pardis Sabeti

Iranian computational geneticist and lead singer of the critically acclaimed alternative rock band *Thousand Days*. A graduate of Harvard Medical School and recipient of *Smithsonian* magazine's Ingenuity Award, Sabeti has been named one of the “Top 100 living geniuses.”



EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/ROOHANGIZ_SAMINEJAD

Roohangiz Saminejad

Iranian actress **Saminejad** (1916–1997) was the star actress in the first sound film made in the Persian language. Famous for playing the heroine Golnar in the film *Lor Girl* (1934), she suffered social ostracism from the conservative culture of the time. She had to change her name and live in anonymity and seclusion.



Pourandokht Sassanid (aka Buran)

First woman to become queen of the Persian Empire (629–632). Daughter of Khosrow Parviz II, the King of the Sassanian Empire (590–628). Pourandokht, who preached egalitarianism, infamously wrote in a letter to her troops, “A monarch, regardless of being a queen or king, must defend his or her land and treat the people with justice.”



GRADESAVER.COM

Marjane Satrapi

Academy Award-nominated director and author of the internationally acclaimed best-selling graphic novel *Persepolis*. “It’s true that in Iran women have half of the rights that men do. And yet 66% of students are women.”



ZAMANEH.COM

Dr. Fatemeh Sayyah

In 1942, Dr. Sayyah became Iran's first female professor when she was awarded the chair of Russian Language and Comparative Literature at Tehran University.



SPORTSTAN.COM

Maryam Sedarati

In 1973, Iranian female high jump star wins the Bronze medal by setting the 1.60-meter record at the Asian Track and Field Championships in Manila, Philippines.



NAVAHANG.COM

Hila Sedighi

Renowned Iranian poet and female activist. Recipient of the Human Rights Watch's prestigious Hellman/Hammett grant in 2012, Sedighi's poems depict pain, suffering, and oppression in Iran. "But I shall still remain ... in this place, in my homeland... I am rooted here in this soil."



ITTF.COM

Neda Shahsavari

The first Iranian woman to compete in table tennis at the 2012 Olympic Games in London. “The fundamental problem facing female national table tennis players is a lack of financial support for (Iran’s) Table Tennis Federation.”



IRANJOURNAL.ORG/POLITIK

Mansoureh Shojaee

Leading Iranian women's rights activist and founding member of the 2006 One Million Signatures Campaign for Equality. "We have so many successful women in the fields of art and culture, but for that we cannot say the situation of women is acceptable. We will only accept women's situation when women and men share the same right by law."



PARSTIMES.COM/FASHION/PRE_REVOLUTION

Dr. Shahla Solhju

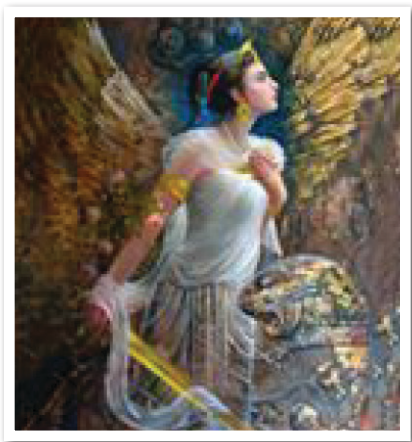
Iran's first professional female astronomer and first codirector of Pahlavi University's Abu Reihan Observatory.



CASPIAN NAKAN/AP

Neda Agha Soltan

A moment of silence for the beautiful and courageous **Soltan** (1983–June 2009), whose shooting death for protest against the 2009 presidential elections made her an iconic symbol of Iran's struggle.



CHESS.COM/GROUPS/VIEW/ARTEMIS

Sura of Parthia

One of the greatest heroines of Persian history. A strategical and military genius, the daughter of Ardavan V, the last king of the Parthian (Ashkanid) Empire, Sura held the rank of Ashkanid's General Sepahbod (Lieutenant General).



INSPIRALLY

Parisa Tabrizi

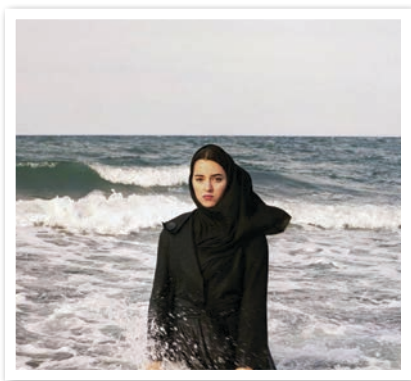
Google's "Security Princess": As head of security at Google Chrome, Iranian hacker **Tabrizi** protects the tech giant from cybercriminals in a booming industry in which women are vastly underrepresented.



JOSE DIAZ / MELISSAIMAGES.COM

Niloufar Talebi

Award-winning Iranian librettist, poet, and theater artist. The recipient of numerous translation prizes from the international community, Talebi is the creator and visionary behind multimedia projects and theatrical pieces designed to pay homage to the Iranian culture on the world stage.



NEWSHA TAVAKOLIAN / PRINCECLAUSFUND.ORG

Newsha Tavakolian

Self-taught photographer **Newsha Tavakolian** began her career as a photojournalist at the age of sixteen, publishing work in *National Geographic*, the *New York Times*, *Le Monde*, *Newsweek*, and *Time* magazine. Tavakolian's captivating images document the evolving role of women in Iran and their struggle to overcome gender-biased restrictions.



Effat Tejaratchi

In 1939 Tejaratchi became the first Iranian woman to earn a pilot license using a Tiger Moth aircraft.

**“Let the desire to make
a difference become
the opiate of your
mind, body, and soul.”**

—NINA ANSARY



EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/ALENUSH_TERIAN

Dr. Alenush Terian

Iran's first female physicist. Referred to as the "Mother of Modern Iranian Astronomy," Dr. Terian was Iran's first female physics professor and founding member of the solar observatory of the Institute of Geophysics at the University of Tehran.



COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA.ORG

Badri Teymourtash

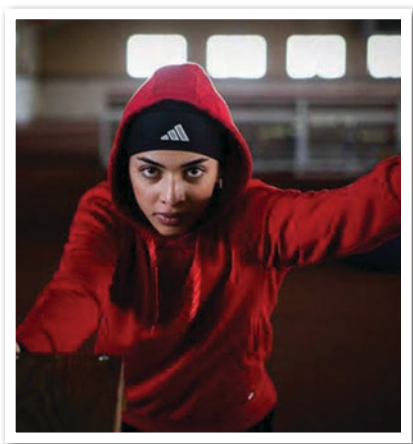
Iran's first female dentist and one of the founding members of Mashad University's School of Dentistry.



EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/IRAN_TEYMOURTASH

Iran Teymourtash

A pioneer among women activists, **Teymourtash** was the country's first female editor of an Iranian newspaper.



PARSINO.IR

Maryam Tousi

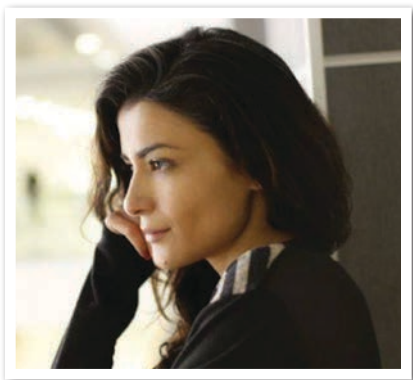
Known as “The Fastest Woman in Iran,” sprinter **Tousi** is the Iranian record holder in the 400m relay, and Gold Medal winner at the 2012 Asian Indoor Championships. “As a female sprinter, there is no future for me... You can’t hide the discrimination. But I am still hopeful for the future.”



DESIGNATOR.IR

Monir Vakili

Celebrated opera singer **Vakili** (1923–1983) started the first opera company in Iran. A pioneer in the true sense, she gave performances as Madame Butterfly, Mimi in *La Boheme*, Violetta in *La Traviata*, and many others in Tehran's famed Rudaki Hall.



CARLOS OSORIO / THESTAR.COM

Maryam Nayeb Yazdi

The internationally renowned Iranian human-rights activist and heroine to Iran's political prisoners, **Yazdi** is the founder of Persian2English.com, a blog exposing human rights infractions by the Islamic regime to a global audience. In 2013, she was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in recognition for achievements in social activism.



EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG/WIKI/IRENE_ZAZIANS

Irene Zazians

Regarded as the *Elizabeth Taylor* of Iran, “Iren” was the first Iranian actress to appear in a bikini, in the 1959 Persian film *The Messenger from Heaven*.



IRANIAN.COM/ARCHIVES

Iranian Girl Scouts prepare for a parade in their uniforms: Tehran, c. 1950s.



SHAHYAR MAHABADI / KAVEH FARROKH.COM

Iranian women from Malayer (near Hamadan in the northwest) engage in target practice, c. late 1950s.



FIS-IRAN.ORG/EN/GALLERIES/WOMEN

Iran: Women's orchestra, c. 1960.



PARSTIMES.COM/FASHION/PRE_REVOLUTION

Female Pilot: Iran, c. 1960s.



IRANPOLITICSCLUB.NET

Imperial Iranian female police officers:
Tehran, c. 1970s.



FIS-IRAN.ORG

Women parliamentarians of Iran, c.1970s.



Female motorcycle officers: Tehran, c.
1970s.



PARSTIMES.COM/WOMEN/PAHLAVI

Imperial Iranian female naval officer, c.
1970s.



Imperial Iranian female military rifle training, c. 1970s.

**“Your moral compass
should always be
pointed in the direction
of peace, resolution,
and humanity.”**

—NINA ANSARY



IRANPOLITICSCLUB.NET

Imperial female Air Force cadet of the Pahlavi era: Tehran, c. 1970.



PARSTIMES.COM/SPORTS/WOMEN/HISTORY

The Iranian Women's Fencing Team, winners of the Gold Medal at the 1974 Asian Games.

Exemplary Women from Iran profiles more than 100 women that are highlighted in Nina Ansary's book *Jewels of Allah: The Untold Story of Women in Iran*.

It is a celebration and acknowledgment of their outstanding accomplishments and advocacy on behalf of women's empowerment.

NinaAnsary.com

