

This Day in History

(July 15)

Today is Wednesday; 24th of the Iranian month of Tir 1394 solar hijri; corresponding to 28th of the Islamic month of Ramadhan 1436 lunar hijri; and July 15, 2015, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

1164 lunar years ago, on this day in 272 AH, the prominent Iranian-Islamic astronomer, philosopher and hadith scholar, Abu Mash'ar Ja'far ibn Mohammad al-Balkhi, passed away in Waset, Iraq, at the ripe old age of 102. Born in Khorasan in the city of Balkh, which is presently in Afghanistan, he flourished at the Abbasid court in Baghdad as the greatest astronomer of the era and the subsequent centuries. He wrote a number of practical manuals on astrology that profoundly influenced Muslim intellectual history, and through Latin translations of his works, left a profound impact on Western Europe and Byzantium. He was well versed in Persian, Arabic, Greek and Sanskrit languages. Abu Ma'shar, who was Latinized by medieval Europe as Albusasar, Albusar, or Albuxar, wrote several books including *“Kitab Tahawil Sini al-Mawalid*” (‘Book of the Revolutions of the Years of Nativities’). These and other works were translated into Latin and Greek and had profound effect on western philosophers and scientists such as Albert, Roger Bacon, Pierre d’Ailly, and Pico Della Mirandola.

1017 solar years ago, on this day in 998 AD, the Islamic-Iranian mathematician and astronomer, Abu'l-Wafa Mohammad ibn Mohammad ibn Yahya al-Bouzjani, passed away in Baghdad at the age of 58. Born in the northeastern Iranian town of Bouzhgan (present day Torbat-e Jam) in Khorasan, at the age of 19 he moved to Baghdad and remained there for forty years. He made important innovations in spherical trigonometry, and his work on arithmetic for businessmen contains the first instance of using negative numbers in an Islamic text. He was the first to build a wall quadrant to observe the sky. Bouzjani participated in an experiment to determine the difference in local time between his location in Baghdad and that of his famous contemporary, Abu Rayhan al-Berouni in Kath, Khwarezm, which is now part of the Central Asian Republic of Uzbekistan. The result was very close to present-day calculations, showing a difference of approximately 1 hour between the two longitudes. The 3rd Lunar Inequality (the variation) was first discovered by Bouzjani, a fact admitted by European scientist, Tycho Brahe, who often quotes this Iranian Islamic scientist's work. His *“Kitab al-Majisti”* (Almajest) covers numerous topics in the fields of plane and spherical trigonometry, planetary theory, and solutions to determine the direction of Qibla – the focal point of the daily ritual prayers for Muslims worldwide. The crater *“Abu'l-Wafa”* on the Moon is named after him. Bouzjani wrote several books that have not survived, including *“Tarikh-e Ilm al-Hesab”* (The History of Calculus).

916 solar years ago, on this day in 1099 AD, Christian Crusader hordes from Europe burst into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Bayt al-Moqaddas massacring men, women, and children, including Jews and local Christians that had taken refuge there. Many Muslims sought shelter in the al-Aqsa Mosque, the Dome of the Rock, and what the Christians call the Temple Mount area. According to eyewitness accounts mentioned in the Gesta Francorum, speaking only of the Temple Mount area, *“four men] were killing and slaying even to the Temple of Solomon, where the slaughter was so great that our men waded in blood up to their ankles...”*

Fulcher of Chartres writes: *“In this Temple 10,000 were killed. Indeed, if you had been there you would have seen our feet coloured to our ankles with the blood of the slain. But what more shall I relate? None of them were left alive; neither women nor children were spared”*.

The Crusaders then assaulted the synagogue and burnt it down along with hundreds of Jewish men, women, and children trapped inside. In all 70,000 people were slain by the European invaders including Arabs, Turks, Iranians, Kurds, and Berbers.

533 solar years ago, on this day in 1482 AD, Mohammad XII was crowned the twenty-second and last Nasrid emir of Granada in Muslim Spain, which ten years later was occupied by Christian mercenaries, who perpetrated a great massacre of Muslims and expelled hundreds of thousands of them to North Africa, thus ending over seven centuries of glorious Muslim rule.

409 solar years ago, on this day in 1606 AD, Dutch painter and etcher, Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, was born. He is generally considered one of the greatest painters and printmakers in European art and the most important in Dutch history.

181 solar years ago, on this day in 1834 AD, the Spanish Inquisition was officially abolished after 356 years of terror and torture. Decreed in 1478 by Ferdinand II of Aragon and his wife Isabella I of Castile, it brutally imposed the beliefs of the Catholic sect of Christianity on Protestants and especially on those forcibly converted from Judaism and Islam. This persecution was intensified by the decrees issued in 1492 at the fall of the last Spanish Muslim kingdom of Granada, and again in 1501, ordering Jews and Muslims to convert or leave. Spanish Muslims were increasingly subjugated by alienation and torture. The Jews, who had previously thrived under Muslim rule, now suffered similar maltreatment. The Moriscos, as the Christians called the Spanish Muslims, were mostly concentrated in the regions of Granada, Aragon, and Valencia. Officially, all Muslims in the kingdom of Castile had been forcibly converted to Christianity in 1502. Muslims in the kingdom of Aragon were forced to convert by Charles I's decree of 1526, as most had been forcibly baptized during the Revolt of the Brotherhoods (1519–1523). Many Moriscos were suspected of practicing Islam in secret, and the secrecy with which they guarded the privacy of their domestic life prevented the verification of this suspicion. After the brutal suppression of the 1568-1570 Revolt in Granada of Spanish Muslims, the Inquisition was further intensified. In 1609 King Philip III decreed the Expulsion of the Moriscos. Hundreds of thousands of Spanish Muslims were expelled. The edict obliged: *“The Moriscos to depart, under the pain of death and confiscation, without trial or sentence... to take with them no money, bullion, jewels or bills of exchange.... just what they could carry.”*

Still an indeterminate number of Spanish Muslims secretly remained in Spain, and during the 17th century the Inquisition pursued trials against them, especially between 1615 and 1700, by which all vestiges of the almost millennium long presence of Muslims in Spain were removed.

177 solar years ago, on this day in 1838 AD, American author and thinker, Ralph Waldo Emerson, delivered the Divinity School Address at Harvard Divinity School, declaring Prophet Jesus (AS) a great man, but not God, as claimed by Christians. Born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1803, on his visit to Europe, Emerson studied continental literature and published his first book: *“Nature”*. He is the first American author, who became familiar with the rich Iranian literature and managed to introduce to the Western world, Persian poetry and literary figures such as Hafez, Sa'di, Mowlavi, and Khayyam. He was particularly captivated by the beauty of the lyrics of Hafez. Comparing Hafiz with some leading Western poets, Emerson pointed out Hafez's more mystical attitude towards nature, saying: *“Hafez is the prince of Persian poets, and in his extraordinary gift adds to some o the attributes of Pindar, Ansacreon, Horace, and Burns the insight of a mystic, that sometimes affords a deeper glance at Nature than belongs to either of those bards. He accounts all topics with an easy audacity.”* Emerson died in 1882.

105 solar years ago, on this day in 1910 AD, the prominent freedom fighter of the Constitutional era, Ayatollah Seyyed Abdullah Behbahani, was martyred by terrorists. He was born in the holy city of Najaf in Iraq, where after learning Islamic sciences under his virtuous father, Seyyed Ismail Mojtahed Behbahani, he became a student of Ayatollah Mirza Hassan Shirazi. On coming to Iran, he became active in the Constitutional Movement in cooperation with Ayatollah Seyyed Mohammad Sadeq Tabatabai. He played a pivotal role in the victory of the Constitutional Revolution, making utmost efforts to this end, which led to his martyrdom.

76 solar years ago, on this day in the year 1939 AD, the Leader of Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Hussein Khamenei, was born in the holy city of Mashhad. He learned Islamic sciences under his scholarly virtuous father, Seyyed Jawad, and in 1958 left for the holy city of Qom where he stayed for seven years studying theology, jurisprudence and Islamic philosophy under prominent lecturers such as Grand Ayatollah Seyyed Hussain Boroujerdi, Allamah Seyyed Mohammad Hussain Tabatabai, and the Father of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini (RA). For a brief period he was in holy Najaf in Iraq, before returning to his hometown Mashhad, where he became a leading preacher, opposed to the oppressive Pahlavi regime. As a result he was detained and exiled on several occasions for disclosing the corruption of the British-installed and US-backed regime. On the threshold of the victory of the Iranian people's movement, he was instated by Imam Khomeini as a member of the Islamic Revolution Council. Following the victory of the Islamic Revolution, he was assigned important posts such as the Imam's representative at the High Defence Council. In 1981, he was elected as president of the Islamic Republic and four years later was re-elected for the second term. In 1981, while preaching in a mosque, he was the target of a terrorist bomb blast, and sustained serious injuries. In June 1989, after the passing away of Imam Khomeini, he was elected as the new Leader of the Islamic Revolution by the Assembly of Experts in view of his piety, prudence, popularity, political acumen, knowledge, managerial skills, and familiarity with current issues in Iran, the region, and the international arena.

71 solar years ago, on this day in 1944 AD, during World War II, US B-29 bombers mercilessly pounded Japanese civilians, killing tens of thousands of men, women, and children, to try to force the surrender of the country. When the Japanese refused to yield to US crimes, Washington, in an unpardonable act of state terrorism, dropped atomic bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to kill hundreds of thousands of more innocent people.

21 solar years ago, on this day in 1994 AD, the renowned Iranian theologian, astronomer, philosopher, and poet, Ayatollah Shushitari Jaza'eri, passed away in the southern city of Shushtar. He learned Qur'anic sciences, mathematics, and astronomy under his father, and later completed his studies under prominent ulema in the holy city of Qom, including the Reviver of the Qom Seminary, Grand Ayatollah Abdul-Karim Ha'eri Yazdi. He was a staunch opponent of the anti-Islamic Pahlavi regime, and spent his life grooming students and writing books.

5 solar years ago, on this day in 2010 AD, two terrorist bomb blasts at the Jame' Mosque in the southeastern Iranian city of Zahedan, left 27 people martyred and 169 others wounded, while ceremonies were underway in celebration of the birth anniversary of Imam Husain (AS), the younger grandson and 3rd Infallible Successor of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA). The devilish outfit, which wrongly styles itself 'Jundullah' or soldiers of God, claimed responsibility for this cowardly act of terrorism.

(Courtesy: IRIB English Radio – <http://english.irib.ir>)

Iran, Algeria to Boost Cultural Ties



Minister of Culture meets Algerian ambassador to Tehran.

TEHRAN (farhang.gov.ir) - Min-

ister of Culture and Islamic Guidance met Algerian Ambassador to Tehran on Monday morning July 13, 2015 and called for promotion of cultural ties between two nations. According to Public Relations and Information Center of Ministry of Culture, Mr. Ali Jannati in his meeting with Abolmomen Ahriz, congratulated him on the occasion of Algerian Independence Day and said Iran and Algeria have historical relations and ties between

two countries have expanded during the past decade. He added that Iranian have always supported the struggle of Algerian people against French and keep the memory of their heroic sacrifices. Referring to cultural agreement between Iran and Algeria, Mr. Jannati said this agreement has been signed long time ago and still is valid but every two or three years an agreement should be concluded between Tehran and Algiers for cultur-

al exchange. Iranian Minister of Culture said we should make use of our cultural potentials to expand mutual ties and by holding reciprocal cultural weeks provide the opportunity for our people to become more familiar with each other's culture, traditions and rituals. He also called for participation in international book fairs, exchange of cultural delegations, musicians and other artists between two countries.

‘No Plastic Bag Campaign’ Underway

TEHRAN (IRNA) - No Plastic Bag Campaign Week (July 12-18) is underway in Tehran to cut down on plastic litter in the megacity, said the head of Tehran Fruit and Vegetable Organization, affiliated to the municipality.

Ahmad Safavi added reusable and degradable paper and cloth bags are distributed among shoppers during the week to eliminate single-use plastic bags and promote the culture of using environment-friendly bags, Tehran-based English newspaper, Iran daily, reported.

‘The campaign - with the slogan ‘Less Plastics: Less Pol-

lution and Healthier’ - aims to change the pattern of using plastic bags among Tehran residents,’ he said.

The official noted that customers to grocery stores supervised by Tehran Municipality have been provided with degradable plastic bags for the last six years.

‘About 400 million of these bags are produced by the municipality every year,’ Safavi said.

Mohammad Ali Shaeri, the head of Tehran Municipality's Environment and Sustainable Development Office, said two million tons of plastic materials are used in the country annual-

ly. ‘About 600,000 tons of single-use plastic containers and 200,000 tons of plastic bags are used each year nationwide.’

Noting that plastic bags pose risks to wildlife and the nature, Shaeri said the citizens should be made more aware of the dangers posed by plastic bags.

‘Iranians are using less cloth and paper bags these days than in the past. This is because plastic bags that are made of petroleum are much cheaper in Iran, as the country is the biggest oil producers,’ he said.

Every day, 3.5 million tons of plastic bags are produced

worldwide, while Iran's share is 40,000 tons.

About four percent of the world's annual oil production goes for producing plastic bags. In other words, between 60 and 100 million barrels of oil are consumed for producing plastic bags annually in the world.

Iranian officials believe even one less plastic bag in a week is a right step in saving the planet.

If every family reduces its use of plastic bags by one per week, the consumption of plastic bags will decline by 816 million every year in the country.

Tehran in Children’s Hands

TEHRAN (Tehran.ir) - More than 2,700 elementary students have participated in a City program that aims to provide the opportunity for kids to learn about urban management.

The program, dubbed City in Children's Hands, was initiated last year in order to introduce urban management concepts to children through visits to Tehran Municipal-

ity headquarters, Metro, Fire Departments, etc.

The program, has involved 2,764 Tehrani students mostly from schools carrying out the School Mayor plan.

The plan pursues a variety of policies, such as communication between students, local centers, and institutions. It also offers basic citizenship education in an effort to strengthen the spirit of cooperation and accountability.

Iran, Denmark Call for Marine Sciences Coop.

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iran and Denmark have called for closer cooperation in marine and ocean sciences with the focus on information and PhD student transfer.

During the visit of the Danish Ambassador to Tehran Anders Christian Hougaard to the Iranian National Institute of Oceanography and Atmospheric Sciences, Naser Hajizadeh-Zaker, head of the Iranian institute, expressed interest in expanding cooperation with marine-based scientific and research centers in Denmark. After touring the research center, the Danish official noted the many attractive areas for research cooperation between the two countries, saying Danish organizations would gladly facilitate communication with Iranian research institutes. He also added that Iran could expand cooperation with universities and institutes in Greenland, Faroe Islands and other Danish islands in the Atlantic Ocean on exchanging information and transferring PhD students.

Iranian Quranic Delegation Selected for Hajj

TEHRAN (IQNA) – A group of Iranian Quran reciters and memorizers have been selected to hold Quranic programs for Iranian and non-Iranian pilgrims in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina during the Hajj pilgrimage this year.

Hossein Rostami, Hamid Shakernejad, Masoud Sayyah Gorji, Mohsen Hajihassani Kargar, Hassan Danesh, and Mokhtar Dehqan are some members of the delegation.

They have been selected by the Committee of Inviting and Dispatching Quran Reciters after a

test last month.

Last year, some 1000 Quranic programs were held by Iranian Quran activists during the Hajj season in the two holy cities.

This year, the hajj season, which is in the month of Dhul Hajja in the lunar Hijri calendar, will fall in late September.

Every year, millions of Muslims from around the world gather to perform the Hajj ritual in Saudi Arabia.

All able-bodied Muslims are religiously obliged to perform the Hajj pilgrimage once in their lifetime.

Picture of the Day



Holey Quran calligraphy competition – Tehran – Iran

Courtesy: Tasnim