

# This Day in History

(June 23)

Today is Thursday; 3<sup>rd</sup> of the Iranian month of Tir 1395 solar hijri; corresponding to 17<sup>th</sup> of the Islamic month of Ramadhan 1437 lunar hijri; and June 23, 2016, of the Christian Gregorian Calendar.

**1438 lunar years ago**, on this day in the year before Hijra, the “Me’raj” or the Ascension to the heavens of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA) took place from Mecca, as indicated by the opening ayah of Surah al-Isra’. It is indeed God’s greatest favour to His Last and Greatest Messenger to physically lift him, in a fraction of a night, to the highest echelons of the ethereal heavens where no creature including Archangel Gabriel, can venture, and then return him to Plant Earth. The Unseen but Omnipresent Creator, whom no eye could perceive, showed Prophet Mohammad (SAWA) the mysteries of the heavens and the earth, and the fate of mankind in afterlife. God, Who is far Glorious to have shape, form, place, time or voice, spoke to him in the voice of his dear cousin, Imam Ali (AS), since this was the most soothing voice for the Prophet.

**1435 lunar years ago**, on this day in 2 AH, the pagan Arabs imposed the first ever armed encounter upon Prophet Mohammad (SAWA), near a well called Badr, some distance from Medina, but thanks to divine support, the poorly armed group of 313 Muslims emerged victorious over the fully equipped, almost 1000-strong armed-to-the-teeth Arabs. For the first time, the Prophet’s young cousin and defender, Imam Ali (AS), displayed his brilliant swordsmanship by disposing off several Arab champions.

**1379 lunar years ago**, on this day in 58 AH, Ayesha bint Abu Bakr died in Medina at the age of 65. She was one of the nine wives Prophet Mohammad (SAWA) had married out of social necessity in the last ten years of his life, following the passing away of the First Lady of Islam, **Omm al-Momineen** (Mother of True Believers), Hazrat Khadija (SA), with whom he spent 25 years of marital bliss and through her became the father of the noblest-ever lady, Hazrat Fatema Zahra (SA). Ayesha was actually killed by the Omayyad ruler Muaw’iyya ibn Abu Sufyan who had usurped the caliphate and intended to pass it on to his lecherous son, Yazid. Thus, in order to remove a potential opponent to his plan, he devised the death of Ayesha by inviting her to a feast and seating her over a booby-trapped limestone well into which she fell and died. Muaw’iyya had not forgotten Ayesha’s rabble-raising role decades earlier against his Omayyad kinsman the 3<sup>rd</sup> caliph, Othman bin Affan, whom she used to call an apostate and who was eventually murdered. He was also well aware that she was the cause of the first armed fitna (sedition) in Islam when she led an army of oath-breakers against the Prophet’s rightful successor, Imam Ali ibn Abi Taleb (AS) at Basra in Iraq, where she was soundly defeated, but magnanimously treated and allowed to go back respectfully to Medina.

**1313 lunar years ago**, on this day in 124 AH, the scholar Mohammad Ibn Muslim Ibn Obay-dullah Ibn Shihab az-Zuhri al-Madani, passed away. He studied for a time under Imam Ja’far as-Sadeq (AS), the 6<sup>th</sup> Infallible Heir of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA). He was a central figure among the early collectors of Sirah (biographical accounts) of the Prophet, and played a role in standardizing Islamic jurisprudence in those dark and oppressive days of Omayyad rule, when the laws of the state functioned according to the Byzantine or Sassanid rules.

**736 solar years ago**, on this day in 1280 AD, the Spanish Muslim defenders of the Emirate of Granada decisively defeated an invasion by European Christian mercenaries at the Battle of Moclin. Amir Mohammad II personally led the attack on the Castilian and Leonese invaders around the city of Moclin, inflicting heavy casualties. In addition to the common foot soldiers, over 2,800 Castilian-Leonese knights, most of the knights in the service of the Order of Santiago, were defeated and killed by the Muslim forces.

**593 lunar years ago**, on this day in 844 AH, Amir Ali Shir Navai, the acclaimed Central Asian politician, mystic, linguist, painter, and poet, was born in the Khorasani capital, Herat, which is currently in western Afghanistan. He is considered the Father of Chaghatai Turkic literature, and was a prolific author. He also wrote and composed poems in Persian under the penname “**Faani**”, and has excellent compilations in this language as well. He studied in Mashhad, Herat and Samarkand, and when his childhood friend, Sultan Hussain Bayqarah became the principal Timurid ruler of Khorasan, he joined his service and for almost 40 years devoted his efforts to cultural developments, including fine arts and the building of public utility works like schools, mosques, caravanserais and hospitals. In Mashhad, he carried out extensions in the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS), the 8<sup>th</sup> Infallible Successor of Prophet Mohammad (SAWA), and on his death in Herat at the age of 63 his body was brought to this holy city and laid to rest in the Aivan (porch) of the grand mausoleum of the 8<sup>th</sup> Imam. He is regarded as a national hero in the modern republic of Uzbekistan, and in addition to his popularity in the Persian speaking countries of Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan, he is famous all over the Turkic-speaking world.

**480 solar years ago**, on this day in 1536 AD, French priest, John Calvin formally raised his objections in Geneva, Switzerland, against the beliefs of the Catholic Church, as part of the Protestant Movement founded earlier by Martin Luther. He set up a council of priests to administer Geneva as per his beliefs which he elaborated in a book, in which he rejected the power of the Pope and the Church. Calvinism, as his belief is known, erred in ascribing predestination to God Almighty, alleging that good or bad deeds committed by human beings have no impact on their fate in afterlife. This wrong belief led many Christians to freely commit all sorts of abominable sins on the false assumption that Jesus will save them in the Hereafter. Calvin was burnt alive in 1564 by the orders of the Catholic Church for distorting the teachings of the Bible.

**451 solar years ago**, on this day in 1565 AD, Ottoman naval commander, Turgut Ra’ees, died during the Siege of the Mediterranean island of Malta by the Turks. Born into a Greek family, he had converted to Islam at an early age, and grew up into an expert gunner and sailor, whose services were utilized by the Ottomans during the conquest of Mamluk Egypt. He subsequently served as admiral in the Mediterranean Sea, and for over forty years subjugated and captured many islands and the coastal areas of the Italian kingdoms and Spain, never allowing the Genoese, the Venetians, and the Spanish fleets to dominate the region or setting foot on the north African coast. He freed the Libyan sea port of Tripoli from the 21-year occupation of the Christian Knights. He liberated the fort of Jerba near Tunis from Spanish occupation after a 63-day siege, and earlier he took control of the Mediterranean island of Corsica and the city of Catania in Malta to free some seven thousand Muslim captives. For his services, Sultan Sulaiman appointed him Beglarbeigi of Algeria and later promoted him to Pasha (governor) of Tripolitania. He greatly adorned Tripoli and made it the most beautiful of the Mediterranean coast. He also built Tunis and made it into a leading trade centre. At the time of his death, he was serving as supreme Ottoman naval commander of the Mediterranean, having succeeded to the post in 1546 on the death of the famous Khayr od-Din Pasha (Barbarosa or Redberard).

**259 solar years ago**, on this day in 1757 AD, the Battle of Plassey took place in Bengal between the forces of Nawab Mirza Mohammad Siraj od-Dowlah and the British, who with the help of traitors like Mir Ja’far, Rai Durlabh and Omichand, defeated the Indian forces. The young Siraj od-Dowlah, who was of Iranian origin was caught and murdered, and Robert Clive, the commander of the British forces, installed Mir Ja’far – also of Iranian origin – as the new Nawab of Bengal, after extracting huge concessions from him. With this battle the British established their foothold in India and would over the next half-century century take control of most of the Subcontinent.

**119 lunar years ago**, on this day in 1318 AH, the prominent Islamic scholar and Source of Emulation, Mirza Mohammad Hashem Khansari, passed away in Isfahan. He was an authority in theology, jurisprudence, hadith, and exegesis of the Holy Qur’an. He groomed many students and compiled several valuable books, including “**Jawaher al-Uloom**”.

**115 lunar years ago**, on this day in 1322 AH, the well-known Source of Emulation, especially in Azerbaijan and the Caucasus, Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Fazel Sharbani, passed away. Born in northwestern Iran, he became a unique lecturer of Islamic sciences, and besides mastery over Hadith and its sources, was a prominent exegete of the Holy Qur’an. He has left behind a nine-volume book on the treatises of the celebrated Iranian head of the Najaf Seminary, Ayatollah Shaikh Morteza Ansari.

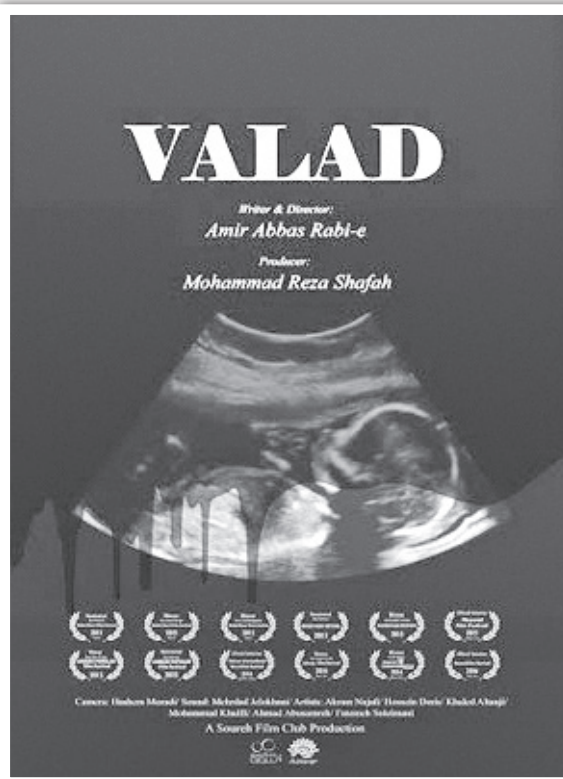
**108 solar years ago**, on this day in 1908 AD, a day after the artillery shelling of the Majlis or Parliamentary building by Mohammad Ali Shah Qajar, martial law was declared in Tehran and two leading reformists were hanged, thereby ending the first phase of the Constitutional Movement after a two-year period of people’s success against despotism. The martyred figures were Mirza Jahangir Khan Shirazi – the editor of the newspaper Sour-e Israfeel – and the famous preacher and orator Mirza Nasrollah Malik al-Motakallemin. Despotism, however, did not last long, and inspired by the religious scholars the Iranian Muslim people rose against the regime and its British and Russian colonial masters, to force Mohammad Ali Shah Qajar to abdicate the throne and flee Iran.

**77 solar years ago**, on this day in 1939 AD, the French colonialists illegally handed over to Turkey the Syrian port city of Iskenderun, along with the historical city of Antakya (Antioch) and what is now called the Hatay Province, as reward to Kamal Ataturk for his anti-Islamic policies. This led to flare up of anti-French sentiments in Syria, which has not given up its claim to this region, which has now become the base of terrorists operating against the government of Syria with the support of Turkey, France, Britain, the US, Israel, Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

**55 solar years ago**, on this day in 1961 AD, during the Cold War, the Antarctic Treaty, which set aside Antarctica as a scientific preserve and banned military activity on this continent of the South Pole, came into force.

**31 solar years ago**, on this day in 1985 AD, a bomb planted by Sikh terrorists aboard Air India Flight 182 brought down the Boeing 747 down off the coast of Ireland killing all 329 aboard. The flight was on its way from Montreal, Canada to Delhi, India, with a stopover in London.

(Courtesy: IRIB English Radio – <http://parstoday.com/en>)



# ‘Valad’ Wins Special Jury Prize at IOFF

TEHRAN (MNA) – Iranian short film Valad won Special Jury Prize at Women’s Film section of International Open Film Festival (IOFF) of Bangladesh.

Directed by Amir Abbas Rabi-e, Valad is produced in Arabic and narrates the story of a new guest at a small hospital in Gaza where every part of it is destroyed under bombardments. It is a short story of a mother struggling with child-killing bombs.

Valad which is produced by Soureh Film Club, has so far grabbed many titles and awards at various film festivals, to name one, Best Social Short Film at Tracce Cinematografiche Film Fest.

International Open Film Festival (IOFF) is an initiative to explore the film with no border and it’s an independent film festival.

## High Levels of Education Tied to Brain Tumors

TEHRAN (FNA) - A university degree is linked to a heightened risk of developing a brain tumor, suggests a large observational study. Gliomas, in particular, were more common among people who had studied at university for at least three years than they were among those who didn’t go on to higher education, the data show.

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The researchers base their findings on more than 4.3 million Swedes, all of whom were born between 1911 and 1961 and living in Sweden in 1991.

They were monitored between 1993 and 2010 to see if they developed a primary brain tumor, and information on educational attainment, disposable income, marital status, and occupation was obtained from national insurance, labor market, and national census data.

During the monitoring period, 1.1 million people died and more than 48,000 emigrated, but 5735 of the men and 7101 of the women developed a brain tumor.

Men with university level education, lasting at least three years, were 19% more likely to develop a glioma—a type of cancerous tumor arising in glial cells that surround and support neurons in the brain—than men whose educational attainment didn’t extend beyond the period of compulsory schooling (9 years).

Among women, the magnitude of risk was 23% higher for glioma, and 16% higher for meningioma—a type of mostly non-cancerous brain tumor arising in the layers of tissue (meninges) that surround and protect the brain and spinal cord—than it was for women who didn’t go on to higher education.

This is an observational study so no firm conclusions can be drawn about cause and effect, and the researchers point out that they were not able to glean information on potentially influential lifestyle factors.

## Muslims Serve Free Meals to Homeless in Washington

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Tasnim) – Dozens of fasting Muslims have started an initiative to provide free meals for a number of homeless and poor people in the US capital.

According to Tasnim dispatches, more than 40 young Muslim volunteers, in a social program named “Sympathy Project”, on Sunday provided the homeless with a variety of hot and cold meals in a shelter on Massachusetts Avenue in Washington.

The group of young Muslims implement the “sympathy project” every 2 weeks, distributing food among homeless and poor people living on the streets.

Given the limited capacity of the shelter, hot meals are only served to those inside, and cold meals are delivered to those on the streets.



The initiative is especially important these days as it is the holy month of Ramadan now.

Helping the poor has been emphasized in Muslims’ holy book, the Quran, which was first revealed to the Prophet Mohammad

(PBUH) during Ramadan.

Muslims around the world fast during the hours of daylight in the holy month, which is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. This year, Ramadan began on June 7.

## Iran, France Universities to Develop Co-Op



TEHRAN (IRNA) – French Institute of Petroleum (IFP) and Iran’s Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch will develop cooperation in a number

of scientific areas.

Representatives of the two universities have held talks on signing an agreement on cooperation.

The talks were held at the Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch in Tehran.

IFP is the biggest research center in France.

## Picture of the Day



People of Qazvin gather during Ramadan nights to watch the artists performing Shahnameh narrating tradition. Image credit: Mehr News Agency