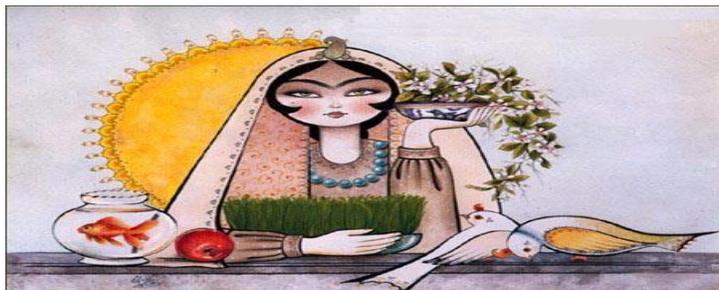




A. GIRL CALLED. SPRING.

By
JYOTSNALAL
I





Contents

Prologue

Chapter 1 The arrival of Spring

Chapter 2 The 13th Birthday

Chapter 3 The Umbrella and the. Motorcycle

Chapter 4 Shirin and Khosrow.

Chapter 5 Bahar's Blog

Chapter 6 The Email

Chapter 7 The Shrine

Chapter 8 The Ninja

Chapter 9 The Caged birds

Chapter 10 Spring blossoms

DR.JYOTSNA LAL

ASSOCIATE PROF IN CHEMISTRY

CHRIST CHURCH P.G. COLLEGE

KANPUR. UP .INDIA 208001



Chapter 1

The arrival of Spring

Vali. Asr. Avenue is a bit like a magnificent French boulevard, with thousands of sycamore trees lining it and drainage ditches that gush water straight from the mountains. It's about 12 miles long and runs north to south, so it connects two very different worlds: poor, working-class south Tehran and rich, gentrified north Tehran. It's a microcosm of the city.

Vali Asr is for all Iranians, from all walks of life, and everybody in Tehran will intersect with this road at some point. It's where people gather to protest



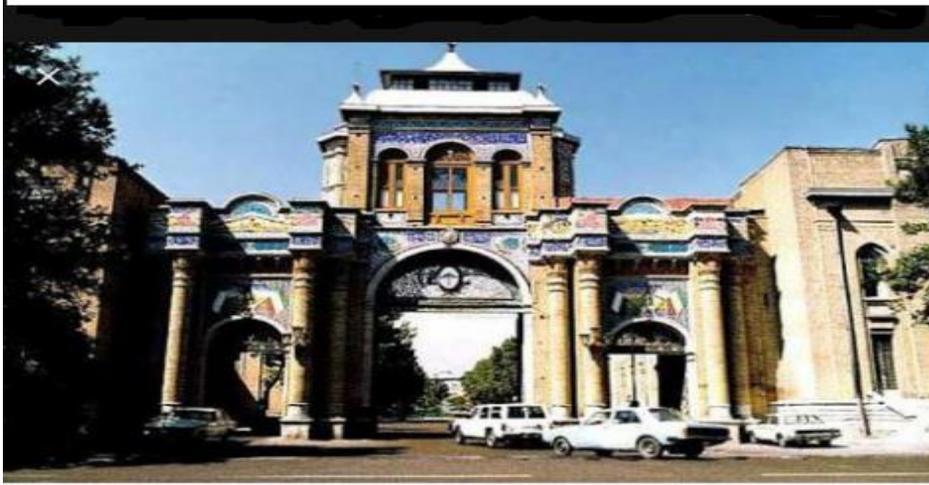
or march, to celebrate or to shop. Ask any Tehrani what their favorite road is, and nine times out of ten they will tell you Vali Asr Street. This street is the hub of activities. Saffron, a highly prized spice native to Iran, historically used in ancient Persia to medicate, dye, weave, and beautify. Today it gives Iranian cuisine its distinctive yellow pigment. 'Saffron' flavors the discussion of all things Iranian.

It was certainly "in the name of God" that Ayatollah Khomeini, whose massive mausoleum you pass on the way from the airport, spearheaded the revolution that turned Iran from a police state headed by a Monarch Shah to a police state headed by an Islamist cleric. Started in 1989, the mausoleum still isn't finished. Perhaps it's a metaphor. This task, this attempt to bury a country, and its history, and its exquisite art and architecture and poetry and life, in a black veil of bullying fundamentalism, will never finish. You can't hide the spirit of Iran, and of the ancient civilisation of Persia, any more than you can hide the beauty of so many Iranian women.

And beauty, it's clear, even among the dreary tower blocks in the suburbs of Tehran, is important. It's clear in the flowers on a roundabout, in a sudden, brilliantly coloured mural on the side of a concrete apartment block, and, weirdly, in the large number of bandages on faces. Thousands of Iranians



have nose piercing. Some of the people sporting bandages hadn't even had them. A nose job was a status symbol, and a bandage was better than nothing. This is a complicated culture in which all is not as it seems. Perhaps the most visible mark of Iran's Islamic leanings is the conservative dress expected of its citizens. Although normal, Western style clothing is acceptable in private homes, when in public women are required to cover everything but their face, hands and feet. The most common uniform consists of a head scarf (roo -sari), to conceal the head and neck, a formless, knee-length coat known as a roo-poosh and a long dress or pair of pants. In and around holy sites, women are expected to dress even more modestly in a chādor, a full-length swathe of black cloth designed to cloak everything but female face from view. Men have a slightly easier time of things. Short-sleeved shirts and t-shirts are acceptable for daily wear. Shorts and three-quarter length pants are only acceptable in the house. Female Muslim comic and Guardian and New Statesman journalist, Shazia Mirza, While she does not poke fun at her religion, Mirza does tell jokes about her culture and current events. For example when questioned she has



Iran Tehran National Garden-(Baq-e-Melli)-

responded, 'I always have men come up to me afterwards and ask me questions and say: "Is it true that [Muslim] women have to walk steps behind their husband, is that true?" I say "Yes, they look better from behind".'

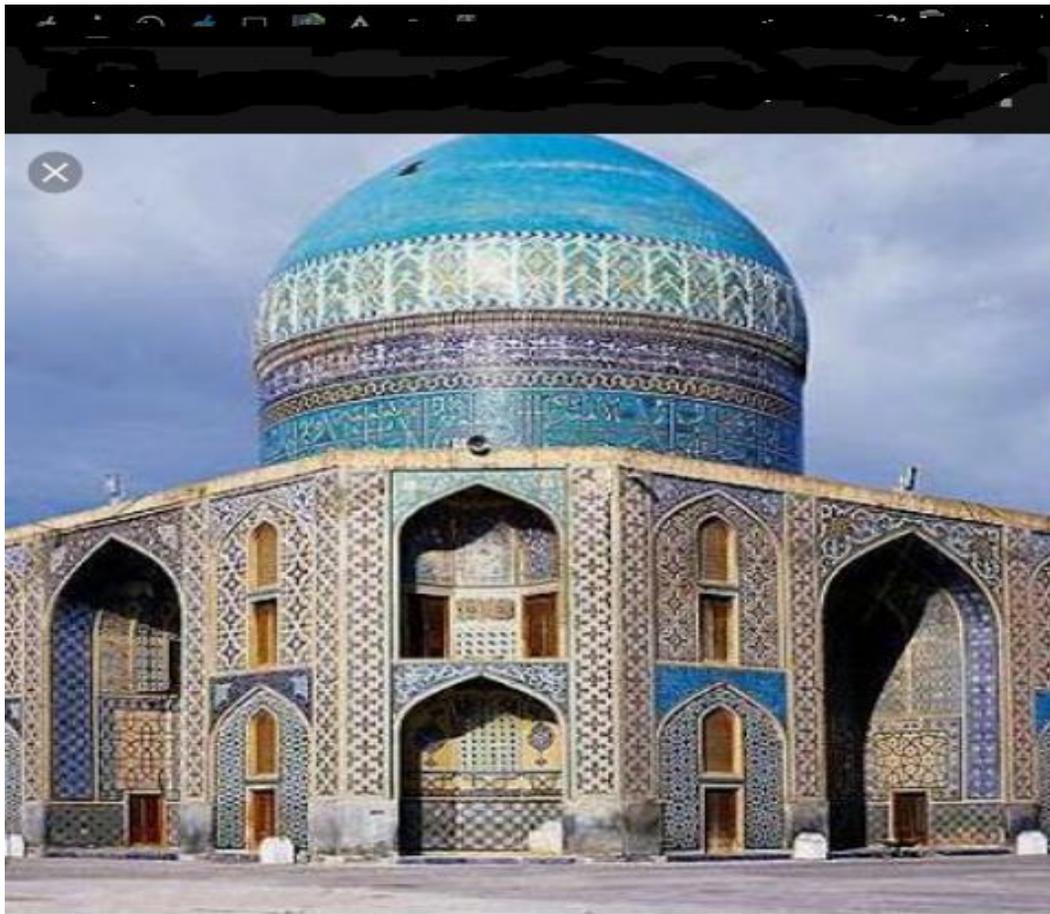
For the sake of brevity, let's just say oil (again). It was world's love of the sticky stuff that had Europeans installing a regime that led to the mass terror that led to the near-nightmare of now. Perhaps it's just as well that Iranians are adept at something they call ta'arof, a form of ritual politeness that allows the appearance of good manners without revealing the true feelings behind them.

"Whatever is with you will be exhausted," said one of the street signs designed to whip up Islamic fervour. Certainly, there's enough to see in Iran to tire you out. But what you do see, in architecture, and art, and gardens, and in the impeccable manners of a people who keep smiling against considerable odds, is almost enough to make you agree with the second part of the slogan:

"Whatever is with Allah will last."

Now I'm going to tell a story of an Iranian girl who found freedom because she was searching for it, fighting for it. Celebrating life and demanding life.

When we were children we listened to fairytales and believed in them. When



Khajeh-Rabi-Tomb-Mashad-Iran-

we grew up still wished for fairytale romances and happy endings.

The media and advertising world are full of fairy dancing . women with freedom of choice .

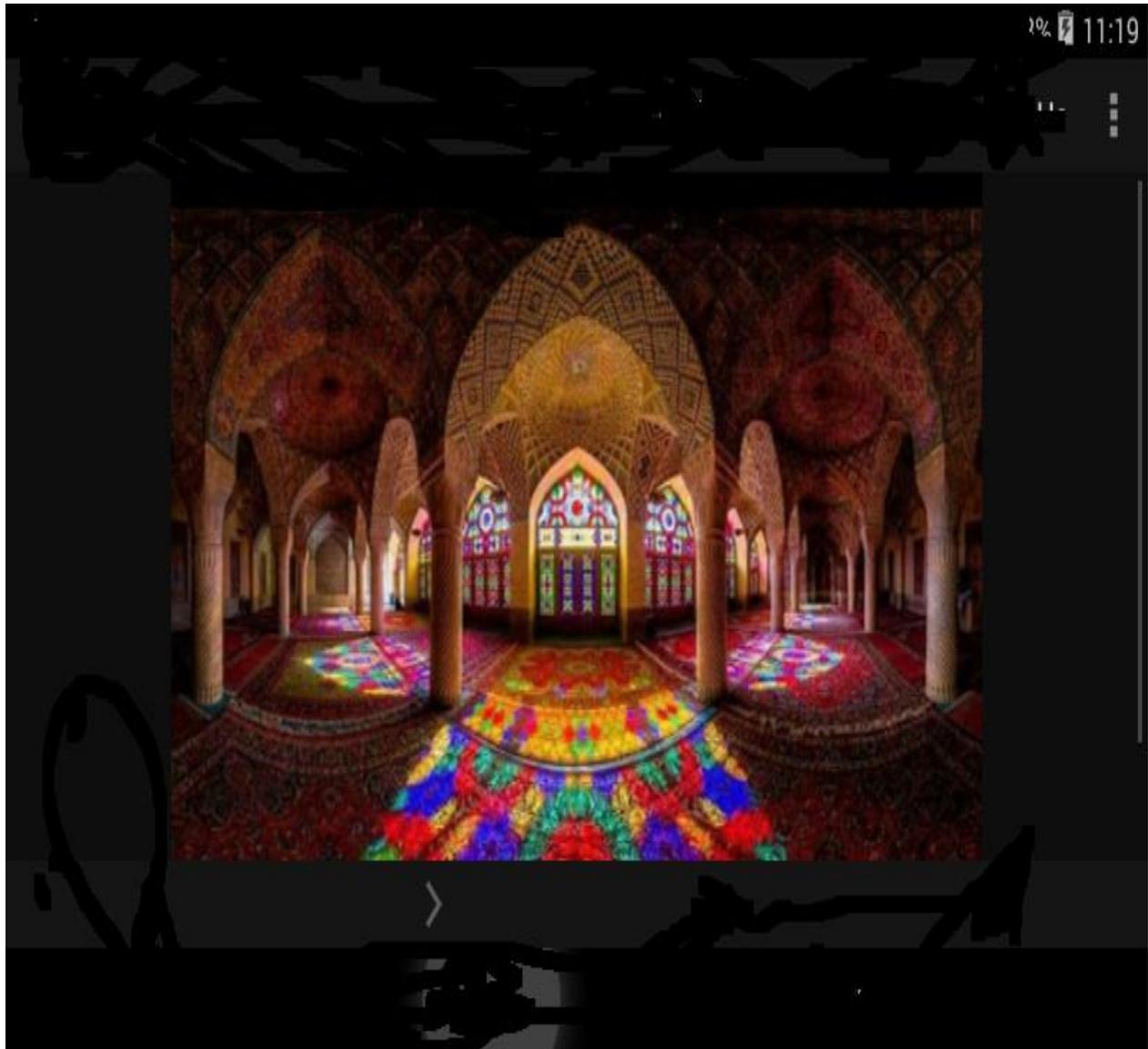
Almost all of the population in Iran is Muslim. —Islam honors and cherishes the women who give birth! Some religions view childbirth and labor pain as the necessary punishment for women, but Islam believes that childbirth is a sign of the Lord's —creation and majesty!

Pregnancy is a natural condition ordained by Allah. ... The philosophy behind the —natural pregnancy and childbirth! movement is that trusting your body's instincts will allow you to proceed with minimal fear and pain, and will create the best situation for you and your unborn child. In Tehran, a baby shower is called a —sismoony! party. Farideh, the future grandmother

celebrated three months before the baby's birth. Family and friends brought baby shower gifts such as a cot, toys and baby clothes. she made sure there was a sufficient supply of pastry, cookies, fresh and dried fruits and special

nuts on hand, plus tea .Some names were suggested if it was a boy like EhsAn (Goodness of God) or Amjad(farsi Most excellent, glorious) Ofcourse if it's a girl child then BahAr Spring (season),BahArak Small Spring (season) or

BahAreh Someone who brings the spring (or a sprint flower)

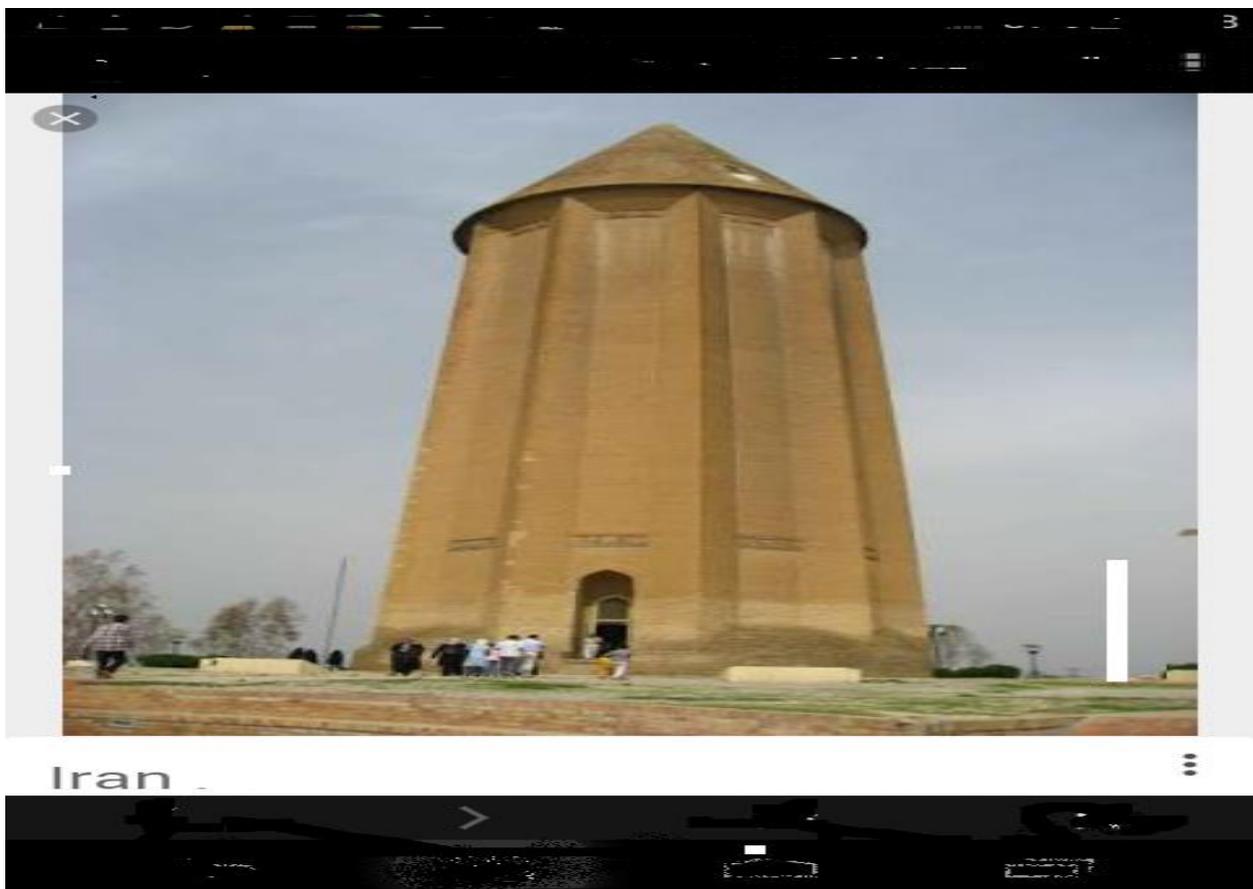




The Tomb of Cyrus the Great in
Pasargadae, Iran

Caesareans were traditionally frowned upon in Iran as a sign of ill-health and weakness, but they have become more popular since the 1979 Islamic revolution. It has become a fixture of modern medical practice: women giving birth in the comforting presence of the father-to-be. Now a custom long seen as a sign of western social progress is being adopted in the conservative setting of Iran as doctors seek to wean the country's women off their preference for caesarean births.

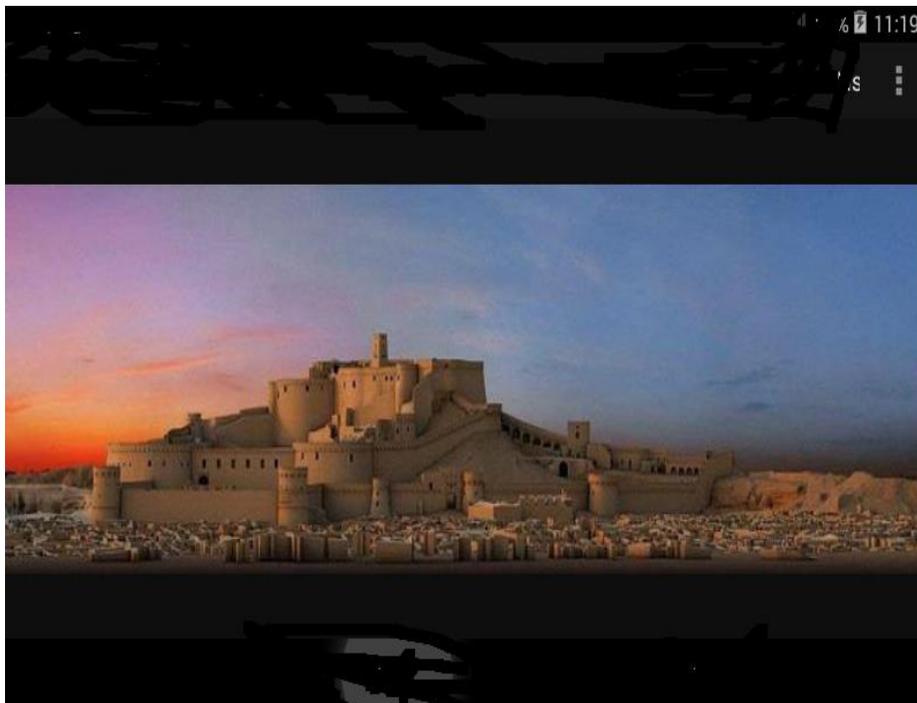
Sarem hospital in Tehran became the first in Iran to allow a father inside a delivery room for the birth of his child. The hospital is offering couples the chance to stay together during childbirth after being told that it is permissible under Iran's Islamic laws.



What has become common practice in the west was still unknown in Iran, where pregnancy and birth are still seen as women's business. But Dr Abutaleb Sarem, a western-trained specialist obstetrician and medical director at Sarem hospital, was urging patients to bring in husbands for health and psychological reasons. He believes the presence of fathers is necessary to soothe women's nerves and make them more willing to give birth naturally.

Dr Sarem came up with the proposal after Iran's health ministry asked doctors to reduce the number of caesarean births. About 70% of babies in Iran are born by caesarean section, largely due to women's fears about the pain of childbirth and the worry that natural births make them less attractive to their husbands.

Dr Sarem said the fears about pain could be eased by fathers attending the births. "Our hospital advertised that we had all the latest facilities to make natural childbirth painless but patients were still insisting on caesareans, despite the high risks of infection and serious side-effects," he told the Guardian. "I remembered that when I worked in Austria and Germany, women were forgetting about the pain when their husbands were present at the births.



The atmosphere in delivery rooms seemed so peaceful and I wondered if it was because the fathers were there. So I offered it to the husband Karim whose name in farsi means 'Generous ' of one of my patients Najmeh Fakhraie

"He agreed after we asked if it was religiously permissible and were told that

it was. We gave the mother a low epidural. The environment was very

spiritual and friendly, with husband and wife laughing and joking. The

mother was able to help the medical team a little and delivered the baby, a

girl, without great discomfort. The husband was emotional and in tears."

his mother was also present . This baby born on June 14, 1985 was called

Bahar

.***



Imam Reza Shrine, Iran

Same day, Trans World Airlines Flight 847, a flight from Cairo to San Diego with en route stops in Athens, Rome, Boston, and Los Angeles. After an uneventful flight from Cairo to Athens, a new crew boarded Flight 847. The new crew in Athens were Captain John Testrake, First Officer Philip



Maresca, Flight Engineer Christian Zimmermann, Flight Service Manager Uli Derickson, Flight Attendant Judith Cox, Flight Attendant Hazel Hesp, Flight Attendant Elizabeth Howes, and Flight Attendant Helen

Sheahan.[3] On the morning of Friday, June 14, 1985 Flight 847 was hijacked by members of Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad shortly after take off from Athens. Most important, the hijackers were identified by an accomplice as

members of Islamic Jihad (or Holy War), the shadowy Shi'ite Muslim organization that is regarded as a sort of umbrella for various fundamentalist terror groups operating in Lebanon and other Middle East countries.

Sympathetic to Iran's revolutionary ruler, the Ayatullah Ruhollah Khomeini, and quite possibly subsidized by the Iranian leadership, Islamic Jihad and its confederates are blamed for many of the suicide bombing missions that have afflicted American and other Western military bases and diplomatic missions

in the Middle East in the past two years. At 10:10am, Flight 847 departed

Athens for Rome. It was commandeered shortly after takeoff by two Arabic -

speaking Lebanese men who had smuggled a pistol and two grenades through

the Athens airport security. One was later identified as Mohammed Ali

Hamadi, who was later captured and sentenced to life imprisonment in

Germany. [The Shiite Hezbollah terrorists who immediately demand to know the

identity of those with Jewish-sounding names.] Two of the Lebanese

terrorists, armed with grenades and a 9-mm. pistol, then forced the plane to

land in Beirut, Lebanon. On a political level, the hijackers of Flight 847 called for the release not only

of the Lebanese Shi'ites still held by Israel, but of a few others imprisoned in

Cyprus and Kuwait. They also demanded the immediate withdrawal of Israeli

forces from southern Lebanon (a pullout has been under way since January

and, except for patrols and forays back into the border area, is now virtually

complete) and international condemnation of the U.S. and Israel. In a broader sense, the Shi'ites of Lebanon, newly radicalized by the violence that has plagued their country, particularly since the Israeli invasion of June 1982, are seeking a fairer shake after generations of neglect and discrimination by Lebanon's wealthier and more powerful Maronite Christians and Sunni Muslims. The hijackers were seeking the release of 700 Shi'ite Muslims from Israeli custody. Beyond all that, the Shi'ite fanatical fringe, inspired by the



example of the Iranian revolution, wants to destroy the last vestiges of

Western "decadence" in the Islamic world, particularly the presence of the U.S., that "Great Satan." Whether the hijackers of Flight 847 fitted into that category, or were exemplars of a more classical political terrorism, bent on achieving specific ends in the region, was not yet known.

Millions around the world watched their television sets or listened to their radios as the horrific drama unfolded. "He has pulled a hand-grenade pin and is ready to blow up the aircraft if he has to. We must, I repeat, we must land at Beirut. We must land at Beirut. No alternative." After much delay, the curious, grudging reply of the Beirut control tower: "Very well. Land. Land quietly. Land quietly." Then another desperate plea: "They are beating the passengers. They are threatening to kill the passengers. We want fuel now. Immediately. Five minutes at most, or he is going to kill the passengers." After that, another, more excited, more hostile voice, in broken English: "The

plane is booby-trapped. If anyone approaches, we will blow it up. Either refueling the plane or blowing it up. No alternative."

The plane was diverted from its original destination of Rome, in airspace over Greece, to the Middle East and made its first stop, for several hours, at the Beirut International Airport in Lebanon, where 19 passengers were allowed to leave in exchange for fuel. Shortly before landing, air traffic control initially refused to let them land in Beirut. Captain Testrake argued with air traffic control until they relented. "He has pulled a hand-grenade pin and is ready to blow up the aircraft if he has to. We must, I repeat, we must land at Beirut. We must land at Beirut. No alternative.

During this time, Lebanon was in the midst of a civil war, and Beirut was divided into sectors controlled by different Shia militia Amal and Hezbollah. Beirut International Airport, surrounded by a Shia neighborhood, had no perimeter security, which had been over-run by Islamic militias, and nearby residents could simply drive onto the runway. The hijackers had systematically and regularly beaten all the military passengers, but during this stop they selected U.S. Navy diver, Robert Stethem, beat him, shot him in the right temple, and dumped his body out of the plane onto the ramp and shot him again, seeking permission from other Shia Muslims operating the control tower to obtain more fuel. Seven American passengers, alleged to have Jewish-sounding surnames, were taken off the jet and held hostage in a Shia prison in Beirut.

After airport authorities complied, the stricken plane took off from Beirut, where it had landed after having been hijacked out of Athens. Hours later, it landed in Algiers, then took off again and returned late that night to Beirut, the tension rising, the crew bone-weary. And minutes after landing, the senseless slaying of a hostage, and a harsh voice over the plane's radio: "You see? You now believe it. There will be another in five minutes," and the

nightmare rolled on.

On 15 June The proud parents Karim and Najmeh Fakhraie brought home Baby BahAr with much rejoicing ,she was the first girl among many brothers. The Family knew nothing about the hijacking byThe Shiite Hezbollah terrorists. Typically, the relatives and friends visit the new baby, The visits naturally have to be relatively short, . Every relatives announces in advance to the family and which days of the week or holidays are their reception days.

In the beginning, the hijackers were outnumbered by their captives 153 to 2, and U.S. authorities tended to believe that the terrorists would soon be overwhelmed by exhaustion if nothing else. By Sunday morning, however, with the plane on the ground in Algiers, the ranks of the hijackers had swelled to between twelve and 15, and all but 32 male American passengers and crewmen had been released (another passenger was later freed in order to receive medical treatment). The gunmen set a 10 a.m. deadline (5 a.m. E.D.T.) for their demands to be met, but then inexplicably left Algiers more than an hour ahead of time. Once again, their destination was Beirut. On landing there, they demanded the release of 50 fellow Shi'ite Muslims currently detained in Israel; such a gesture was justified, the hijackers said, by their freeing of three American men the night before in Algiers. The terrorists had been seeking the release of 700 Shi'ites from Israeli custody, and this appeared to be the first step in realizing that goal. If Israel and presumably the U.S.) balked, declared the hijackers, "our blood will be a witness." Nearly a dozen well-armed men joined the hijackers before the plane returned to Algiers the following day, Saturday, 15 June, where an additional 65 passengers and all five female cabin crew members (flight attendants and purser) were

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

