

FOLK SONGS AND DANCES OF



# IRAN

NOTES ON PERSIAN MUSIC BY  
ANTHONY BYAN SHAY

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FOLKWAYS RECORDS FW 8856

M  
1820  
F666  
1960

MUSIC LP

# FOLK SONGS AND DANCES OF IRAN

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VARSAGHI—folk song from Mazandaran  
DAMKOL—folk song from Kurdistan  
RAGHSE CHUPI—folk dance of the Bakhtiari Tribe  
RAGHSE GHUCHANI—from Khorasan  
DANE NAR—folk song from Khorasan  
DANE BOLAND—folk song from SHIRAZ (province of Fars)  
AY SAR KOTAL—folk song of The Mamsami  
PACHE LEYLI—folk song from Gilan  
KORASHIM—folk song from Gilan  
LEY LI—folk song from Gilan

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43 W. 61st ST., N.Y.C., U.S.A.

Library of Congress Catalogue Card No. RA 66-320

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

FOLKWAYS FW 8856

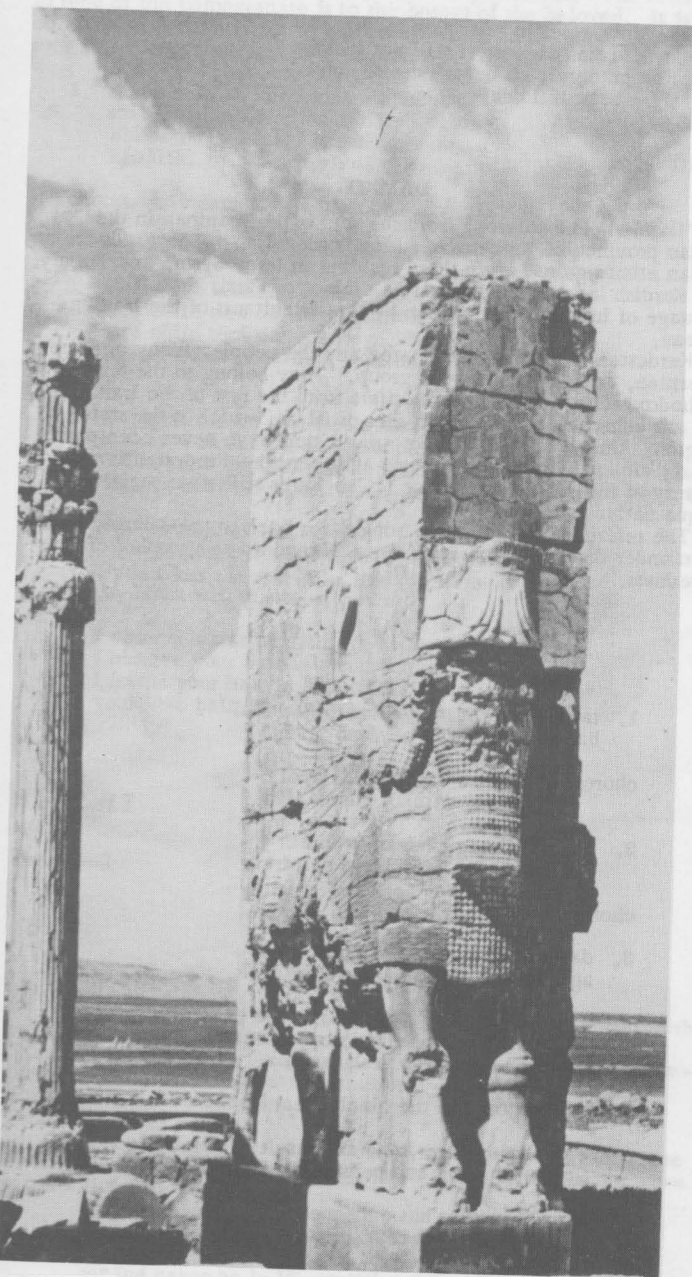
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# FOLK SONGS AND DANCES

# OF IRAN

NOTES ON PERSIAN MUSIC BY  
ANTHONY BYAN SHAY



Iran has the oldest existing culture in the Middle East today. The far-reaching influence of Persian music is felt in Europe, the Soviet Union, Africa, and the Far East.

The Persians have always maintained a sedentary and insidious culture and for this reason were able to develop all forms of fine arts to great heights in Iran.

Persian music is the basis for nearly all other Middle Eastern and North African music; this includes Spanish flamenco which employs a sobbing effect akin to, but not as versatile as, the Persian classical *avaz*.

Persian music, like Western music, may be divided into classical, popular, and folk. All real Persian music is cast into one of the *dastgah*, which comes close to being similar to the Indian Raga. The *dastgah* is very difficult to explain, but for Persian folk music it is not necessary to have more than a basic idea of this musical form. A *dastgah* contains many *gushe* which are, again roughly, comparable to modes. Not only do the *dastgah* and *gushe* determine the tonality of a composition but also the character and emotional content of the music. An extensive knowledge of the *dastgah* is necessary in order to know or perform classical music.

That these *dastgah* are Persian and ethnic is attested to by the fact that all Persian folk songs are cast in one or more of these *dastgah*. Many of the *dastgah* contain place names and purely Persian words that are used by the Turks, Arabs, and many of the Soviet groups. Some of the *dastgah* are more native to particular areas.

Although war and heroic songs do occur in Persian folk music, if it were to be compared to Jugoslavia, Greece, or Turkey, all of whom are influenced heavily by Persian music, nearly all of the folk poetry of Iran is steeped with love. Unrequited love fills the greatest portion of both classical and folk lyrics.

The various colorful national and ethnic groups which populate Iran are all to little known. It is from these groups that the folk-music comes.

It is well to mention here that the influence of Islam has a direct bearing on the quantity and type of music found in present day Iran.

Music and dance flourish in areas where the influence of Islam is least felt.

When Islam was brought to Iran and the peoples of Iran were forcibly converted, music and dancing were forbidden. However, the Arabs concentrated their conversions on the urban populations on the great Iranian plateau, and due to Iran's rugged terrain, largely neglected the outlying populations. Today ethnic folk music is not found for the most part in the Central Plateau. That is not to say classical music did not remain. However, among the peasantry (sedentary) around the cities in Central Iran such as Tehran, Isfahan, Yazd, and Qom, which are located in the very center of Iran, folk music and dancing are extinct.

The other areas of Iran, however, are full to bursting with untapped folklore which is the culture of real Iran.

Here in this album, due to lack of space, are included only a few of the most well-known of Iranian folk songs. This collection can only begin to hint at the beauty and variety of folk music found in Iran.

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Anthony Bijan Shay. Born in Los Angeles, California, October 31, 1936. A graduate of U. C. L. A. in International Relations with a minor in Middle Eastern Studies, B. A.

Started learning Persian from friends in 1955. Learned some Persian folk songs and in 1958 was sent by the Iranian Students Association to represent Iran in a series of programs to acquaint Americans with Persian folk music. He took part in the music and dance programs, which were given in several Eastern cities.

When the Shah came to the United States in early 1958, he directed a program of Iranian folk arts and was sent that same month to Iran to study in the University of Tehran.

While in Iran he appeared many times as a featured folk singer with the Iranian National Radio Orchestras in the Iranian Radio in Tehran, as well, as gave programs in outlying provincial radio stations. He also appeared in many concerts with noted Persian performers.

In addition to Persian, he also speaks Spanish, Serbian, Portuguese, Italian, French and has a reading knowledge of Arabic.

I would like to dedicate this to the people of Iran, whom I dearly love. In my collection I was aided a great deal by Mr. Ahmad Ashoupoor and Mr. Manouchehr Javid, both of whom checked my translations.

Also I would like to thank Dr. Ali Amini, former Ambassador to the United States, who was instrumental in having me sent to Iran and who was a constant friend and guide to me during my stay there.

#### PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

ā	as in the a in father
a	" " " a in fat
b	same as in English
d	" " " " " " " " " " " "
e	as in the et in ballet
e	as in the e in set
f	same as in English
g	as in the g in garden, not gem
h	more aspirated than h in English
i	as in ee in feet
j	as in the j in Jack
k	as in the k in kite
l	as in English
m	" " " " " " " " " " " "
n	" " " " " " " " " " " "
o	as in the o in rope
o	as in the ou in could
p	as in English
r	as the rolled, single r in Span.
s	as in English
t	" " " " " " " " " " " "
ū	as in ou in you
v	as in English
w	" " " (only in Kurdish)
y	as in y in you
z	as in English

ch	as in ch in church
gh	a sound not found in English. It is a guttural by closing the palate and the tongue together sharply, as in swallowing.
kh	another guttural pronounced as ch in Bavarian German or ch of the Scottish dialect as in Loch Lommand
sh	as in English
zh	as in z in azure

#### SIDE I

#### Band 1

##### VARSAGHI OR NUMZE JUN

"Numze Jun" (Dear Betrothed) is a song which is known throughout the region of Mazandaran and the province which joins it to the east, Khorasan.

Mazandaran is the province which extends over the south-eastern shore of the Caspian Sea and forested by a myriad variety of fruits and nuts, which includes the only wild pomegranate forest in the world. The People, a good portion of them fair, are like their neighbors to the west, the Gilakis, more ethnically pure Persian than those inhabiting the great Iranian Plateau because the towering Elborz

mountains protected them from the countless savage invasions inflicted on the Iranian nation at the hands of maurading Arabs, Mongols, and other invaders.

This song is one of the most typical and well-known of this region and is sung in the Mazaderani Dialect.

1. dasté, dasté chō mene nūmze jūn ene  
nōghré dasté " " " " "  
bā cheshmé siah " " " "  
nokone negah " " " "
2. sad bār gōftam, hamchin makōn  
zōlfé siah por chin makon  
ay r'anā, ay delkhāh, ay zibā jān
3. saré rāhat gōl berizam  
khanjar bārad, bār nakhizam  
ay r'anā, ay delkhāh, ay zibā jān

Group by group they come after my betrothed  
Her hand is like silver  
With black eyes she comes  
My betrothed does not look at me

One hundred times I have said don't do this  
Don't curl your black hair  
oh graceful, oh heart's desire, oh  
beautiful dear

I strew roses in your path  
If it rains daggers, I will not leave  
oh graceful, oh heart's desire, oh  
beautiful dear

#### Band 2

##### DAMKOL

"Damkol" is a folksong from the city of Kermanshah in the Iranian province of Kurdistan, which borders Iraq. The Kurds are an Iranian ethnic group, even those residing in Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. The Kurdish language is actually a dialect of Fārsi, the official language of Iran and that spoken by the inhabitants of the Iranian Plateau.

Kurdistan is a mountainous area and the people, many of them tribesman, are a fiercely loyal group. They belong to the Sunni (Orthodox) sect of Islam which differs from the rest of the Iranians, who are adherents to the Shi'eh sect of Islam, which is the state religion. Unlike the Shi'eh sect, the Sunnis have never been particularly violently opposed to music and therefore Kurdistan is today a treasury of folk music and dance. The Kurds still wear their very unique native costumes.

The reference to fire in the song dates back to pre-Islamic Iran when under the Zoroastrian faith fire was revered as a symbol of sacredness.

1. tarsam bemiram, nakonam kāmṛāni  
har āh bekisham, péyé nō javāni

chorus: damkōl ō damkōl, damkōl  
damkōl, damkōl chaow siah

2. sé dašom begir bezān to diram  
bachwa mōnājāt balkam nāmīram

chorus:

3. dāyeké pir kam taniā man dārṵā  
agar man bemiram, āgar māwarṵā

(I) fear (I) shall die and never attain happiness  
Always I sigh for a fresh youth

Damkol of the black eyes

Take hold of my hand and put it over my heart  
Go pray for me and perhaps I will no die

My old mother has only me  
If I die, fire will rain.

## Band 3

## RAGHSE CHUBI

"Raghse Chubi" (stick dance) is a dance of the rugged Bakhtiari tribe. This tribe received international attention after the film "Grass", which depicts the tribe's annual migration to the mountains, was released.

Prior to these migrations the tribes gather together and this is one of the many dances performed. It is a men's dance in which the dancers, armed with sticks attempt to crack the shins of their fellow dancers.

## Band 4

## GÖLÉ GHÜCHĀNI

"Gole Ghuchani" (Flower of Ghuchan) is a dance done with handkerchiefs and comes from the region of Ghuchan in the north-eastern province of Khorasan. Also known as "Rashid Khan", this dance is also a famous song which tells of Rashid Khan, a legendary Robin Hood. If you listen closely, you can hear the sound of night-ingales, for which Iran is famous.

## Band 5

## DĀNĒ NĀR

"Dane Nar" (a pomegranate seed) is a folk song from Khorasan, near the town of Gorgan, and is particularly melodic. The reference to seed of the pomegranate is to the bosom of the beloved. It is common in Persian lyrics to compare a youth to the moon and in this song this comparison is a play on words.

1. shabé mahtāb bībō mahtāb bōbūbe  
shabe mahtāb ō nōmzād dāre' khūbē  
Khōdā tārik ō māhi berēsānē  
ké tārik, māh ō āshegh dāre' khubē

chorus: hamdam yār nemiāiōm, dānē nār nemiāiōm  
tā na būsōm labé gōlé yārē khōd  
delom begharar nemiāiōm

2. sētare dar kēnārē jolge bēgirōm  
saré zōlfé tōrā dar mah bēgirōm  
saré zōlfé tōrā dar nōghrēyé khūb  
tōrāzé khōdegi darmān bēgirōm

A moonlit night and the moon (girl) is shining  
Having a betrothed on a moonlet night is nice  
O God send the darkness and the moon  
that the darkness, the moon, and being in love is nice

(My) lover I will not come  
" pomegranate seed I will not come  
Until I kiss the rose-like lips of my loved one  
My heart will not be at peace

I observe a star at the edge of the steppe  
I observe your hair in the moonlight  
I frame your hair in beautiful silver  
your love balances my sanity (of being in love)

## SIDE II

## Band 1

## BĀMĒ BOLAND

"Bāmē Boland" (the High rooftop) is a famous folk song from the very charming and famous city of wine, roses, and poets, Shiraz. Shiraz is the capital of Fars, the center of Persian Culture and Empires. Not far from this city of enchanting gardens and turquoise domes lie the fabulous ruins of Persepolis, mighty evidence of Persia's glorious past.

The people of Shiraz are famous for their hospitality and sense of humor. Their kindness and tenderness are reflected in the three songs which follow.

1. Ān bāmē boland ké mibini, bāmē mōne hōlālā  
ān cūādōr sefid ké mibini, yārē mōne hō lā lā  
jānānē nakon ho la lā, jānānē nakon

2. az bāmē boland nayōfti, āvāre' shavi  
shuyat bémiré, begham gereftār shavi  
jānānē nakon ho la lā, jānānē nakon
3. ān bām labé darakhté na'al bandānē  
āshegh bēmiāne kūrché sar gardānē  
jānānē nakon ho la lā, jānānē nakon

That high roof which you see if my roof  
(here roof means an ivory tower)  
That white veil which you see is my lover  
Don't do that dear, Don't do that

Don't fall from the high roof (ivory tower)  
or you will become a vagabond  
Your husband will die and you will be  
overcome by grief

That roof is near the tree where they shoe horses  
My love is wandering in the lane

## Band 2a, 2b

## ĀY SAR KŌTAL

"Ay sar Kōtal" (at the top of the hill) and "Massom, Massom" (I'm drunk, I'm drunk with love) are from the Mamsami tribe, part of the larger tribal grouping the Khamsé (five), live near Shiraz. Massom, Massom is perhaps the most popular Persian folk song and has been made into a popular song in Arabic, Turkish, Urdu and English, which was used in the film "Zarak Khan" and called "Climb the Wall".

1. ay sar kōtal, pā'in kōtal  
vāy dōdar ōru diārē  
āy nā'i gōl, gōl nā'i gōl  
vāy dōdar nōmadi mumurdōm

2. āy gōlé gōlé afshūn kerd ō raft  
mārā parishūn kerd ō raft  
jāyē digar āshēnā shōd  
jāyē mā vel kerd ō gōzašt ōraft

At the top of the hill, at the bottom of the hill  
Oh the girl is at the campsite  
Oh my flower, my flower  
Oh the girl didn't come and I died

Oh the flower blossomed and left  
She made us unhappy and left  
She became acquainted elsewhere  
She left us and passed and went away

1. yek gōlé sāyē kamar, sāyē kamar  
tāze shekōfte, tāze shekōfte  
na dassōm bēsh mirese, besh mirese  
na khōsh miōfte, na khōsh miōfte

chorus: massom, massom, massom  
tighat boridē shasom

2. biōberim shāyē cherāgh, shāyē cherāgh  
ahdi bebandim, ahdi bebandim  
har kōdum ahd bēshkanim, ahd beshkanim  
kamar nabandim, kamar nabandim

chorus:

3. biō berim ghebli kōti, ghebli kōti  
ghāli konim farsh, ghāli konim farsh  
ghūrihāye sōrkh ō sefid, sōrkh ō sefid  
manghale por tash, manghale por tash

A flower in the shade of a mountain  
freshly blossomed  
My hand cannot reach it  
Nor can it bend down to me

I'm drunk  
Your thorn pierces my thumb

Come let us go to Shaye Cheragh  
and make an oath  
Whoever breaks the vow first  
Will break his back

Come let us go to Ghebli Koti  
and spread the rugs  
Red and white teapots  
The stove is full of fire

### Band 3

#### "PACHE LELI" (Little Lily)

The emerald of Iran is the province of Gilan. Gilan is beheld with pride by all Iranians as being the stronghold of real Iran. Set in the green forests of the Elborz, it sets down in shimmering greenery into the Caspian Sea. Here is the area which abounds in beautiful songs and dances and colorful, unique costumes.

These songs are sung by my dear friend, Ahmad Ashourpoor, in the Gilaki dialect. Mr. Ashourpoor is one of the foremost performers in music of this region. He is a native of Ghazi district of Bandar Pahlavi on the Caspian Sea and his voice is well known by all of the Gilakis, who call him the "Nightingale of Gilan". He is an agricultural engineer currently residing in Tehran with his wife and two daughters.

1. amū dōkhtar bāmōm ti bār dené ré jān, jān  
ashirfi gūl bihem ti gardené ré jān, jān  
ishab bāmōm ti var ja nishtené ré, pāche Léli  
ti khātar khān bāmōdmé kūshné ré, pāche Léli
2. tu bālaye tālāt man dar zaminam jān, jān  
tu nārenj pust kuné man dar kaminam jān, jān  
agar dāneste bem tu bivafā'i, pāche Léli  
ti var bāmōmé tā avval tu ba'i, pāche Léli
3. būshū kōri ki man dilgiram az tu jān, jān  
bā fikram ki das vigiram az tu jān, jān  
hezār afsūs ki mi ghadrā nadāni, pāche Léli  
hāto shama marā de den natāni, pāche Léli

(Girl) cousin I have come to take you, dear, dear  
I throw a garland of calendulas around your neck; dear, dear  
Tonight I sit by your side, Little Lily  
I would kill myself for you, Little Lily

You are up on the balcony, I am on the ground, dear, dear  
You peel an orange and I await in hiding, dear, dear  
If I had known you would be unfaithful to me, Little Lily,  
I always come to your side first, Little Lily.

Go away girl, I am hurt by you, dear, dear  
I am thinking of a way to escape from you, dear, dear  
A thousand regrets that you do not know my worth, Little Lily,  
I would have not let you ever see me, Little Lily.

### Band 4

#### "KORASHIM"

"Korashim" (Where shall we go) is a song from Bandare Pahlavi on the Caspian Sea.

1. ti dilā be tāyed bebishim békhāna  
itā kāri nibé ti mār bedāna  
agar ti mār terāy bidiné ti amrā  
terā birum kune az khōdeshe khāna

chorus: arashim, urashim, korashim  
aziz, korashim, kijay korashim  
ti amra bel bebal dariya kenarashim

2. kuji kori man ti nāmā nadānam  
agar ti nāmā dānam terā dukhānam  
kuji kori man ti nām ré bēmīram  
ti jā hargez natānam das vigiram
3. kuji kori tera badban fukusham  
kenāre sefid rūd sāman kunam sham  
kenāre sefid rūd mitavam bejāre  
itā kōrā ūrā midil dōchāre

4. kūji kori chērā andāré malūsi  
agar sad sāl bēmā fi mi arosi  
kūji kōri man ti dōre den natanam  
ti jā béhtar dé man giftan narānam

Keep your heart still till we arrive home  
Don't do anything to let your mother know  
If your mother sees you with me  
She would turn you out of her house

This way, that way, where shall we go?  
dear where shall we go, girl, where shall we go?  
Come with me and let us to to the sea side

Little girl I do not know your name  
If I knew your name I would make you my wife  
Little girl I die for your name  
I can never let you leave my hand.

Little girl I will open the sail for you,  
At the side of the White River I'll settle down;  
I can grow rice by the shores of the White River,  
One girl has captured my heart.

Little girl why are you so cute?  
If a hundred years pass you will still look like a bride;  
Little I can not see you,  
I know not a better place to see you.

### Band 5

#### "LELI" (Lily)

1. ti gham o ghosé bā mōmy ghame ro jān  
māgar ān hamé gham mi jāne kam bō jān  
tu mi dardā dāni darmānāham to jān

mi jāne dilbar jān  
az hamé behtar "  
ipchi bé mi var jān  
ashēgh bubom Léli, Léli shēda bubom khēli

2. Kuji kōri mi pā ni var jāgire jān  
ti mār marā pāye chi nām aliré jān  
kūshem har kas tōrā az man fāgire jān

Mi jane dilbar, (etc.)

3. chere birum ayam tera bidinam jan  
ti khana man payam tera bidinam jan  
ti donbal har janam tera bidinam jan

shēdā bubom man jān  
rōsvā " " "  
bēpā " " "

ay Léliam, Léli, Léli, shēdā bubom khēli

Your sorrows and troubles are my sorrows and troubles, dear  
All that sorrow took away my life, dear;  
You know of my illness and its cure, dear,

My beloved dear, dear  
Better than all "  
Always at your side "

I am the lover of Lily, madly in love.  
This little girl wont sit still by my side, dear  
By what name does your mother call me, dear  
I will kill anyone who tries to take you from me, dear.

My beloved dear, dear (etc.)

Why don't you come outside so I may see you, dear  
I will watch your house till I see you, dear  
I will follow you everywhere to see you, dear

I am madly in love dear  
I am discovered "  
I am on my feet "

Oh my Lily, I am madly in love.