

**ABOUT THE LANGUAGE:**

**Western Farsi**

Number of speakers: 24,316,121

Rank: 46

Western Farsi (known also as Persian) is spoken throughout Iran, with most speakers concentrated in the central, south central and northeastern regions. It is spoken in over two dozen countries, especially in Iraq, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Tajikistan and Oman. As expected with a language with a wide geographical dispersion, there are many dialects – at least 17. Persian dialects blend into Dari (Eastern Farsi) in Afghanistan and Tajiki in Tajikistan. Judeo-Persian or Dzhidi, Persian written in Hebrew characters, is one of the oldest and yet least-studied of all Jewish languages. It was spoken by Jews for the past 1,000 years living in the current areas of Iran, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and parts of India. After Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution, most moved to Israel; about 30,000 are now in California.

Modern Persian appeared in the 9th C. Written in a version of Arabic script, it is full of words of Arabic origin. An even earlier manuscript is a 37-line merchant's letter dating from 750, the oldest example of Judeo-Persian writing. Throughout history, Persian was written with many different scripts, including *Old Persian Cuneiform, Pahlavi, Aramaic and Avestan*.

**ABOUT THE TRANSLATOR AND SPEAKER:**

**Iraj Samiee**

Age: 40s Recorded: 1998

Towns: Karachi, Pakistan / Teheran, Iran / UK / NJ

Dr. Samiee was raised in Karachi and Teheran and received his higher degrees in the UK (Exeter and Cambridge Universities). He currently researches mathematical aspects of network design at Lucent Laboratories. A translation was also worked on by Behzad Benyaminii.



Photo by Mohammad Hafezi

Translation note: The 4th question uses "eating comfortably" as an idiom for "eating while reclining".

Beautiful Mount Damavand, an inactive volcano, is less than 50 miles from Teheran. At 18,600 feet, it is the highest peak in Middle East and West Asia

# Farsi / Persian

چرا امشب با سایر شبها فرق دارد؟

■ Chera emshab ba sayere shab-ha fargh darad?  
 ■ Why is this night different from all other nights?

در سایر شبها، ما یا نان میخوریم یا مصا؛ ولی در این شب فقط نان مصا میخوریم.

■ Dar sayere shabha, ma ya nan mikhorim ya matza; vali dar in shab faghat nan-e matza mikhorim.  
 ■ On all other nights we eat either leavened bread or matzah, on this night only matzah.

■ Dar sayere shabha, ma hame goneh senez jat miخوریم؛ اما در این شب مخصوصاً سبزجات نخ میخوریم.

■ Dar sayere shabha, ma hameh ghoneh sabzi-jat mikhorim; lakan dar in shab maksusam sabzi-jat-e talikh mikhorim.  
 ■ On all other nights we eat all kinds of herbs; on this night only bitter herbs.

■ Dar sayere shabha, ma sabzi-jat ra dar ab-nank; nemizanim vali dar in shab ma dober mizanim.  
 ■ On all other nights we do not dip even once, on this night we dip twice.

■ Dar sayere shabha, ma neshaste ya takleh dadeh ghaza mikhorim vali emshab faghat takleh midehim.  
 ■ On all other nights we eat either sitting up or reclining on this night we recline.

■ Dar sayere shabha, ma kheliy maamuli ghaza mikhorim; ama emshab ba marasem maghsus ghza mikhorim.  
 ■ On all other nights we eat in an ordinary manner, on this night we dine with special ceremony.

سایر شبها، ما سبزیجات تر آب نمک؛ اما در این شب ما دو بار میزنیم.  
 سایر شبها، ما همه گونه سبزیجات نخ میخوریم؛ اما در این شب مخصوصاً سبزیجات تلخ میخوریم.  
 سایر شبها، ما سبزیجات را در آب نمک؛ اما در این شب ما دو بار هم میزنیم.  
 سایر شبها، ما نشسته یا تکه دانه غذا میخوریم ولی امشب تکه دانه میخوریم.  
 سایر شبها، ما خیلی معمولی غذا میخوریم؛ اما امشب با مراسم مخصوص غذا میخوریم.  
 سایر شبها، ما در این شب فقط نان مصا میخوریم؛ اما در این شب ما نان مصا میخوریم.