MULTICULTURAL FUTURES:
THE NEGOTIATION OF IDENTITY AMONGST SECOND GENERATION
IRANIANS OF MUSLIM AND BAHÁ'Í BACKGROUND
IN SYDNEY, LONDON AND VANCOUVER

by

CAMERON McAULIFFE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of

Doctor of Philosophy

School of Geosciences
The University of Sydney
NSW 2006, Australia

July 2005
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have many people to thank across three continents and four years for their interest, enthusiasm, and, ultimately, their time and effort, in helping me to complete this thesis. I apologise in advance to anyone I neglect to mention. It does not mean I failed to appreciate your help.

An undertaking such as this relies on the goodwill of many. In each of the three cities I have had a great deal of support from the academic community. In Vancouver, I wish to thank Dan Heibert in the Department of Geography at UBC for agreeing to sign me on as an ‘exchange student’ after a cold call email, and then being so accommodating when I was there at UBC. Thanks must go to Claire Dwyer for opening her door to me and seeing to it that I had a desk amongst the postgrads in the Geography Department at UCL, despite my being only a visitor in the department. I also thank Claire for suggesting that I present my preliminary results in the UCL Geography Department’s Cultural and Historical Geography seminar series. Minelle Mahtani at UBC was also very supportive, listening to my wild ideas and helping me to fill in some of the theoretical holes.

I thank all of my respondents for the trust you have placed in me to represent your stories, and for the passion which many of you displayed for the ideas that underscored this analysis. It was your interest and enthusiasm for my research that buoyed me from the beginning. In particular, I thank those key people in each of the three cities that not only took part in the research, but helped to introduce me to their lives, and the lives of their friends and families, to allow me to better understand the complexities and everyday contradictions that made them who they are. I look forward to working with some of you again as I work towards publication and exhibition of some of the many interesting aspects of this research.

Many people helped me with information and advice throughout my fieldwork in London, Vancouver and Sydney. In Sydney, thanks to Afagh Afaridin at the Iranian Community Organisation, Sheikh Mansour Leghaei at the Imam Husain Islamic Centre, Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, Ahmad Aniss, Archbishop Baliozian, Claudia
Chidiac, Hashim Durrani, Hadi, Arezoo and Monir. In Vancouver, thanks to Minoo Greenall, Gerald Filson, the Yadegari family, Jan Westerdorp and the students involved in Window to Iran, Massoumi Price, the staff of the North Shore Multicultural Society, and the secretaries of the Vancouver Baha’i LSAs that took part in the trial mobility study. In London, thanks to Mrs White and Shahrokh Pirnia at the Rustam Iranian School, Mark Irani, Amy Youssefian, Carmel Momen, Manijeh Afnan-Murray, the Chehravani family, Mirta Lopez, Arman Farakhish and Hamed Hadadi. All of these people and more opened their doors to me and made the fieldwork experience both rewarding and informative.

Finally I would like to thank those who have been around me during the writing process. Thanks to Simon and Krishna for finishing with me – the ‘collegiate’ experience was great. Thank you to those who took the time to read my drafts (Kurt) and those who wanted to (Bob). Thanks to John Twyman for IT support. The largest thanks are due to John Connell, my supervisor, who has been great source of knowledge and a tremendously thorough editor. Over the last six months in particular John has helped me to re-learn that most awkward of languages, English. If this reads well, it is due to John’s editing. Where it does not, it is wholly my fault.

The last word goes to Sasha. Thanks for sharing ‘the process’ with me. It’s been lovely.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapters</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>..................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contents</td>
<td>..................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>..................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>..................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td>..................................................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1 Introduction – Multi cultural futures .................................................. 12

1.1 CULTURES, CULTURALISMS, AND MULTICULTURALISMS .................................................. 14
1.2 STRUCTURE AND AGENCY .................................................. 16
1.3 THE SECOND GENERATION: HYBRID AND/OR HYPHENATED .................................................. 18
1.4 BEYOND THE NATION: INTRODUCING COMPLEXITY .................................................. 20
1.5 RELIGIOUS IDENTITY .................................................. 21
1.6 A QUESTION OF IDENTITY? .................................................. 22
1.7 DEFINING THE NATION .................................................. 24
1.8 GEOGRAPHY OF FEAR .................................................. 29
1.9 THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS .................................................. 30

### 2 The Multicultural Question .................................................. 33

2.1 THE MULTICULTURAL QUESTION .................................................. 33
2.2 RACE THEORY AND MULTICULTURALISM .................................................. 35
2.3 THEORIES OF MULTICULTURALISM .................................................. 38
2.4 CRITIQUES OF MULTICULTURALISM .................................................. 42
2.5 THE UNIVERSAL AND THE PARTICULAR .................................................. 46
2.6 MULTICULTURALISM AND THE NATION .................................................. 50
2.7 NATIONAL MULTICULTURALISMS .................................................. 52
2.8 THE NATURE OF IDENTITY .................................................. 55
2.9 GROUNDING MULTICULTURALISM: FROM THE TOP DOWN .................................................. 56
2.10 SEEKING THE MULTICULTURAL: FROM THE BOTTOM UP .................................................. 62
2.11 PLACING THE SECOND GENERATION .................................................. 64
2.12 DECENTRING THE NATION .................................................. 67
2.13 DISCIPLINARY RESPONSES .................................................. 68
2.14 CONCLUSION: MULTICULTURAL FUTURES .................................................. 70

### 3 Methodology .................................................. 73

3.1 THE FIELDWORK DECISION .................................................. 73
   3.1.1 The Second Generation .................................................. 73
   3.1.2 The Iranian Communities .................................................. 75
   3.1.3 Site Selection .................................................. 77
3.2 CONSTRUCTING THE METHOD .................................................. 79
   3.2.1 Phase 1 – Semi-structured Interview .................................................. 79
   3.2.2 Phase 2 – Photodocumentary Exercise .................................................. 83
   3.2.3 General ethnographic data collection .................................................. 85
   3.2.4 Media Analysis .................................................. 86
3.3 LIMITS TO IMPLEMENTATION .................................................. 86
   3.3.1 Armenians from an Iranian background .................................................. 86
   3.3.2 Insider vs Outsider argument .................................................. 87
   3.3.3 Gender Bias .................................................. 88
   3.3.4 The difficulty of talking to ‘Iranians’ about not being Iranian .................................................. 89
   3.3.5 The Recruitment Process .................................................. 89
   3.3.6 Impact of Sept 11, 2001 .................................................. 92
3.4 CONCLUSION .................................................. 92
4 Structuring the Nation ........................................................................................................94
  4.1 NATIONAL MULTICULTURALISMS ........................................................................... 95
  4.2 AUSTRALIAN MULTICULTURALISM: A PROGRAM FOR SETTLEMENT .................. 96
    4.2.1 The Anglo-Celtic Core ...................................................................................... 98
  4.3 CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM: MAINSTREAMING VISIBILITY ....................... 102
    4.3.1 Bi-cultural and Bi-lingual ................................................................................. 102
    4.3.2 Group Rights versus Individual Rights .............................................................. 108
  4.4 BRITISH MULTICULTURALISM: THE POSTCOLONIAL RACIAL DIVIDE .............. 109
  4.5 REPRESENTING IRAN: THE POWER OF THE MEDIA ............................................. 115
    4.5.1 From Visible Minorities to the invisible majority? .............................................. 117
    4.5.2 Photojournalism and the Image ........................................................................ 118
    4.5.3 Iranian ‘Muslims’ in the media ........................................................................ 120
  4.6 CONCLUSION – FROM THE TOP DOWN ................................................................ 126

5 Iranians In The Diaspora ...................................................................................................... 130
  5.1 DIASPORIC DRIVERS: REVOLUTION, WAR AND EDUCATION ............................. 132
    5.1.1 The 1978/79 Revolution .................................................................................. 132
    5.1.2 Iran-Iraq War .................................................................................................... 135
    5.1.3 Education ......................................................................................................... 136
  5.2 PERSIAN TAPESTRY: DIVERSITY IN IRAN .......................................................... 137
  5.3 RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY FROM ZOROASTER TO THE BAHÁ’ÍS ............................ 140
  5.4 BAHÁ’Í FAITH ........................................................................................................ 141
  5.5 LANGUAGE DIVERSITY .......................................................................................... 144
  5.6 IRANIAN ‘COMMUNITIES’: THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE IRANIAN-BORN ........ 146
    5.6.1 Australia .......................................................................................................... 148
    5.6.2 Canada ............................................................................................................. 151
    5.6.3 Britain ............................................................................................................... 153
  5.7 SECOND GENERATIONS ......................................................................................... 155
  5.8 INTRODUCING COMPLEXITY IN THE IRANIAN COMMUNITIES ....................... 156
  5.9 A VISIBLE COMMUNITY ....................................................................................... 158
  5.10 CONCLUSION ......................................................................................................... 166

6 National Discourses ............................................................................................................. 168
  6.1 ‘WHERE ARE YOU FROM?’: IRAN AS AN ONTOLOGICAL POSITION .................. 170
  6.2 IRAN OR PERSIA ..................................................................................................... 174
  6.3 THE UTILITY OF IRAN ............................................................................................ 175
  6.4 INVOKING THE GLORY OF PERSIA ....................................................................... 177
  6.5 NATIONAL CULTURAL FORMS: CELEBRATING NEW YEAR ............................... 180
  6.6 NATIONAL CULTURAL FORMS: MEHMUNI .......................................................... 184
  6.7 PERSIAN AS A COPING STRATEGY ........................................................................ 188
  6.8 PERSIAN CLUBS AND SOCIETIES: RE-IMAGINING THE NATION ....................... 192
  6.9 FLAGS AND NATIONAL CLUBS .............................................................................. 198
  6.10 HYPHENATED IDENTITY – OPPORTUNITIES AND LIMITATIONS ...................... 203
  6.11 CONCLUSION ......................................................................................................... 209

7 Religious Identities ............................................................................................................. 211
  7.1 GEOGRAPHIES OF RELIGION: BAHÁ’ÍS .............................................................. 213
  7.2 GEOGRAPHIES OF RELIGION: MUSLIMS ............................................................ 217
  7.3 BAHÁ’ÍS AND THE NATION ..................................................................................... 222
  7.4 A CULTURAL MUSLIM COMMUNITY ..................................................................... 229
  7.5 RACISM AND THE ‘MUSLIM IRANIAN’ ................................................................. 234
  7.6 CLASH OF THE RELIGIOUS AND THE CULTURAL ............................................... 240
  7.7 TRANSCULTURAL NETWORKS .............................................................................. 246
  7.8 BAHÁ’Í SERVICE ..................................................................................................... 252
  7.9 INTERNET AND THE DIASPORA ........................................................................... 253
  7.10 CONCLUSIONS ........................................................................................................ 258

8 Intersecting Identities ......................................................................................................... 261
  8.1 GEOGRAPHIES OF SCALE ...................................................................................... 262
LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Different forms of multiculturalism (based on Hall, 2000: 210-11). ........39

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1: Illustration of woman in the chador .................................................................122
Figure 4.2: Woman walking in front of mural of Ayatollah Khomeini.........................123
Figure 4.3: Image from Iranian election 2000 (used in later article)..........................124
Figure 4.4: Use of photographs in the media (SMH, Nov. 12, 2003: 12)......................124
Figure 5.1: Map of Iran detailing the major ethnicities (Source: Keddie, 2003)............139
Figure 5.2: Refugee flows by country of asylum for Iranian refugees 1992-2001.
(Source: UNHCR, 2002; Australian Immigration Consolidated Statistics; DIMIA, Settlement Database). .................................................................146
Figure 5.3: Iranian born immigrants to Canada, Australia and Britain from 1970 to
2003. (Source: CIC, Canada; ABS, Australia; DIMIA, Australia; Home Office,
Command Papers, UK). .....................................................................................147
Figure 5.4: Breakdown of religions of the Iranian born entering Australia with the
intention to remain from January 1998 to December 2003 (Source: DIMIA,
Settlement Database, 2004). See Appendix 6 for full details. ..............................149
Figure 5.5: Distribution of Iranian born population in Sydney by local government
area in 2001 (Source: ABS, Census Data, 2001). ................................................150
Figure 5.6: Distribution of Iranian born in Vancouver by municipality in 1996
(Source: STATCAN, Census Data, 1996). .........................................................153
Figure 5.7: Distribution of Iranian born in Greater London by borough in 1991
Figure 5.8: Language spoken by Iranian born migrants entering Australia with
intention to remain from January 1998 to December 2003 (Source: DIMIA,
Figure 5.9: Three Iranian shops just off Lonsdale St, North Vancouver (photograph by
author). .............................................................................................................158
Figure 5.10: Signage in Farsi and English in the window of Iranian baker, just off
Lonsdale St, North Vancouver (photograph by author). ......................................159
Figure 5.11: Persian Kebab (and Greek Souvlaki), just off Lonsdale St, North
Vancouver (photograph by author). ..................................................................159
Figure 5.12: Persian businesses on Lonsdale St, North Vancouver (photograph by
author). .............................................................................................................159
Figure 5.13: Persepolis Restaurant on Military Rd, Cremorne in Sydney. The bar can
be seen through the doorway (see Chapters 6 and 7) (photograph by author). ....160
Figure 5.14: Anahita Restaurant in Lane Cove, Sydney. The use of Farsi in these
restaurant signs is limited (see Chapter 9) (photograph by author).....................161
Figure 5.15: Orchid Persian Restaurant, Penshurst St, Willoughby (near Chatswood).
The sign shows a couple dancing to music (see Chapter 8) (photograph by author).
......................................................................................................................163
Figure 5.16: Iranian shops in Golders Green, London (photograph by author). ........164
Figure 5.17: Iranian shops in Kensington, London (photograph by author). ..............164
Figure 5.18: “The surrounding areas around Finchley: Golders Green, Maida Vale,
actually Finchley, Swiss Cottage, there is a vast population of Iranians there … a
lot of friends of mine, a lot of businesses, a lot of restaurants. All along Finchley Road.” Respondent 25, female Muslim, London (photograph by respondent).

Figure 5.19: Mercedes Benz outlet in Swiss Cottage, London (photograph by respondent).

Figure 5.20: “The ones of the water are of the dam right behind our house. Sort of like a street away ... It’s called Manly dam ... and it’s important because we grew up there … On those rocks … there’s an aboriginal art thingy. … I guess it’s sort of like the clash between Persian culture and Australian culture ... that’s what it stands for.” Respondent 37, female Muslim, Sydney (photograph by respondent).

Figure 5.21: “This is Jericho Beach. … I sometimes go with my family but usually I go by myself just to get some fresh air from school … In the background is the city … downtown Vancouver.” Respondent 39, male Bahá’í, Vancouver (photograph by respondent).

Figure 6.1: The haft seen at a Norooz celebration in Lonsdale Mall, Vancouver (photograph by author).

Figure 6.2: The haft seen in the family home of a respondent (photograph by respondent).

Figure 6.3: A Norooz event in Lonsdale Mall, North Vancouver attracts a large crowd (photographs by author).

Figure 6.4: Norooz celebration in a respondent’s home in Vancouver (photograph by author).

Figure 6.5: Chahar shanbeh souri at Ambleside Beach, West Vancouver. People jump over fires to cleanse the soul of the previous year’s ill will (photograph by author).

Figure 6.6: Image of significant archaeological sites and architecture in Iran on the first page of a clubs online discussion group (http://au.groups.yahoo.com/group/arya1979/ , accessed: 1st Dec., 2004). Figure 6.7: The Shirokhorshid flag of modern Iran, 1907-1979.

Figure 6.8: The flag of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 1979 to present.

Figure 6.9: One respondent places himself within the fabric of multicultural Australia through his conscious inclusion of the Sydney Harbour Bridge (photograph by respondent’s mother).

Figure 7.1: The Sydney Bahá’í House of Worship is an important point of pilgrimage but does not figure in the day-to-day maintenance of religious action (photograph by respondent).

Figure 7.2: Men chanting in Farsi in commemoration of Ashura in the month of Moharram outside the Holland Park Mosque (photograph by author).

Figure 7.3: The importance of British citizenship for one London Bahá’í was reflected in this photo of his Union Jack boxer shorts (photograph by respondent).

Figure 7.4: Ninth day of Moharram in the Cricklewood (Iraqi) mosque in London (photograph by respondent).

Figure 7.5: Dancing at a Norooz party in a club in London (photograph by respondent). During Moharram and Norooz some respondents moved easily between parties and the mosque.

Figure 7.6: London female respondent with her school friends, ‘the scarfies’ (photograph from respondent).

Figure 7.7: Kings Iranian Society party at Corks, “2 for 1 Drinks till 11”.

Figure 7.8: “This is just that Friday night party. This is a picture ... people playing Persian music and dancing, and having a good time.” Respondent 7, male Bahá’í,
Vancouver. Dancing at the UBC Baha’i community feast to commemorate Norooz (photograph by respondent). .................................................................244

Figure 7.9: Joint Norooz party for the Persian clubs of London..................................................245

Figure 8.1: Many of the home interiors focused on the ubiquitous Persian rugs. Here we can also see the coffee table set with small treats and sweets that are commonly laid out for visitors (photograph by respondent). ............................................264

Figure 8.2: This image, taken during a young child’s birthday party, shows the Persian rugs, food and the stereo, common themes in photographs and discussions (photograph by respondent). .................................................................265

Figure 8.3: The samovars seen here are often brought out when people come over for mehmuni and other visits (photographs by respondents). ........................................265

Figure 8.4: Photographs of archaeological sites, such as Persepolis, etchings, and needlework depicting ancient Persia were common features in the houses of many respondents (photograph by respondent). ................................................265

Figure 8.5: The kitchen has a central place in the family home as the scene of the production of Iranian food and a place of family interaction (photograph by respondent).................................................................267

Figure 8.6: The kitchen also plays a role in constructing a gendered place where women are in charge, but also a place where women congregate (see below on gender) (photograph by respondent). .................................................................267

Figure 8.7: Persian food is seen as an integral part of mehmuni and other occasions when people visit (photograph by respondent). .................................................................268

Figure 8.8: Cooking dinner for one (photograph by respondent). ................................................268

Figure 8.9: “This is another one of my shirts. This is black, white, I think, brown, native Indian, Chinese” Respondent 39, male Baha’i, Vancouver (photograph by respondent). .................................................................270

Figure 8.10: “These are college friends. ... These are the people I hang around with most ... She’s Lebanese, and she’s from Pakistan. And (she) is from Somalia, and (she) is English” Respondent 19, female Muslim, London (photograph from respondent) .................................................................276

Figure 8.11: “(He) is from Brunei. (He’s) Afghan, and (he) is Pakistani. Yeah, so all random, yeah.” Respondent 23, male Muslim, London (photograph from respondent) .................................................................277

Figure 8.12: Dancing during a Norooz celebration in the home (photograph by respondent). .................................................................281

Figure 8.13: Persian classical concert in an Anglican church in London (photograph by author). .................................................................283

Figure 8.14: Advertisement for a classical music concert organised by a London student club. ............................................................................283

Figure 8.15: “Really the only music I listen to is Persian music. I’m not into English music. I’ll never go and buy an English CD.” Respondent 22, male Muslim, London (photograph from respondent) .................................................................287

Figure 8.16: “My CDs … Two of Ben Harper. Celine Dion, Bob Marley, Eminem, David Gray and Lauren Hill. Pretty diversified.” Respondent 42, female Baha’i, Vancouver (photograph by respondent) .................................................................287

Figure 8.17: Playing the saucepan during hosarghadi (photograph by respondent). 288

Figure 8.18: Promotional fliers for London Persian club nights .................................................................290

Figure 8.19: ‘Gher in the City’ with Pulse on stage in Sydney .................................................................292

Figure 8.20: Belly dancer at a London night club (photograph by author). .................................................................293
Figure 8.21: “This was an Iranian party I went to … This was Opium Bar … Iranian do, about 300 people … That’s the one (belly dancer) that (the promoter) always brings.” 
Respondent 23, male Muslim, London (photograph by respondent) .................................................. 293

Figure 8.22: Indoor soccer team made up of players from an Iranian background in a UBC weekly competition (photograph by the author) ........................................................................ 299

Figure 8.23: Supporters at the UBC indoor soccer competition (photograph by the author) .......................................................................................................................... 299

Figure 8.24: Local football final near Ealing, London between an ‘Iranian’ team and an ‘English’ team (photograph by respondent) ...................................................................... 300

Figure 8.25: “This is the crowd. There was about 80 to 100 of us there … So they were all cheering for us. It was really good, ‘Eeran, Eeran’, that kind of thing”. 
Respondent 22, male Muslim, London (photograph by respondent) .................................................. 300

Figure 8.26: “This is the UCL football team … Yeah, they’re a lovely bunch … it’s a real mix. That guy’s my best friend from University … he’s an Afghan … It’s just a random bunch of guys.” 
Respondent 23, male Muslim, London (photograph from respondent) .......................................................................................................................... 301

Figure 8.27: The shoe collection (photograph from respondent) .......................................................... 309

Figure 8.28: Waitrose (the building in the background) as an exclusive grocery shopping experience (photograph by respondent) .......................................................... 309

Figure 8.29: “I recently got my car. I like it a lot. It’s a part of my life.” 
Respondent 22, male Muslim, London (photograph from respondent) ............................................. 310

Figure 8.30: “I got it just before I turned 18 … My dad had put it on order. So a total surprise.” 
Respondent 40, female Baha’i, Vancouver (photograph by respondent) ............................................ 310

Figure 8.31: “Yeah, that’s my car … my first car.” 
Respondent 34, male Muslim, Sydney (photograph by respondent) .................................................. 311

Figure 8.32: “Ok, makeup and girls, and Iranian girls is very important. They spend a lot of time doing it. They spend a lot of money on it.” 
Respondent 25, female Muslim, London (photograph from respondent) ............................................. 325
**GLOSSARY**

The terms in the glossary are given with spelling that is not based on any standard code of transliteration from Arabic or Farsi.

**Ashura** commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (Hussein) in the Shi’i Islam tradition in approximately 680 CE. Celebrated on the tenth day of the month of Moharram in the Islamic calendar.

**bazaaris** community of merchants associated with the bazaar (market).

**chador (chadar)** an all-covering usually black garment for women. Standard dress for women in Iran following the revolution.

**chahar shanbeh souri** A celebration of ritual purification by fire of Zoroastrian origin celebrated on the eve of the last Wednesday of the year. People leap over fire chanting

(Sorkhi-e to az man) Give me your beautiful red colour
(Zardi-e man az to) And take back my sickly pallor!

**dohre** study group, or group of friends you meet with on a regular basis; sometimes associated with women.

**Eid** festival or celebration of happiness related to the Eid prayer in Islam. Associated with the breaking of the fast at the end of Ramadan (Eid ul-fitr) but also related to other events. Sometimes mentioned regarding the celebrations around Norooz.

**Farsi** the Iranian name for the Persian language.

**Feda’iyan** another word for Mujaheddin. Feda’iyan-e Islam was an Islamic terrorist group founded around 1945 operating in Iran prior to the revolution (Keddie, 2003: 70, 120).

**haft seen** the setting of seven items starting with ‘s’ for the period around New Year, culminating in the throwing away (into water) of the sabzeh (wheat grass) at sizdeh bedeh.

**hijab** the act of veiling (verb); the veil or headscarf (noun).

**hosarghadi** tradition of engagement in Iran.

**Majlis** the Iranian parliament.

**mehmuni** family gatherings with a group of friends and/or relatives of usually 4 to 6 families that moves in a circuit of reciprocity.
Informal in structure throughout the year, it becomes more structured around **Norooz**.

**Moharram**

the first month of the Islamic calendar. For Shi’i Muslims it is important as it is related to **Ashura**.

**Mujaheddin**

“self-sacrificing fighters for faith” (Keddie, 2003: 70). Associated with leftist guerrillas during the revolution and persecuted as Communists after the revolution by the **mullahs** under the lead of Khomeini.

**mullah**

Muslim cleric.

**Norooz**

(also **Nowruz; Nawruz; Nawrooz; Nawrouz**) Persian New Year celebrated at the vernal equinox (21st of March); also New Year for the Baha’i Faith. The celebration is of Zoroastrian origin.

**Ramadan**

(also **Ramazan**) the ninth month of the Islamic calendar that is the month of fasting culminating in **Eid ul-fitr**.

**sabzeh**

wheat grass grown for the **haft seen**.

**samano**

paste from the juice of germinating wheat mixed with flour.

**seeb**

apple; a part of the **haft seen**.

**seer**

garlic; a part of the **haft seen**.

**senjed**

wild olives; a part of the **haft seen**.

**serkeh**

vinegar; a part of the **haft seen**.

**soumac**

a spice mix; a part of the **haft seen**.

**Shi’a**

the Twelver, or **Imami** form of Islam that is dominant in Iran.

**Shi’i**

adjectival form of Shi’a.

**Shirkhorshid**

the flag of Iran prior to the revolution that consists of the green, red and white tricolour with a lion, sun (and sword) symbol at its centre.

**sizdeh bedeh**

literally thirteen out; relating to the tradition of leaving the house on the thirteenth day after **Norooz** to throw the **sabzeh** into a body of water.

**Ulama**

the group of religious learned men in Islam. The community of the **mullahs** in Iran.

**Umma**

the (global) community of Muslims.