

Persian Language: A Treasury of Knowledge, Identity, and Civilization in the Sphere of Human History and Culture



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A Scientific, Historical, and Civilizational Perspective

Abstract

As one of the ancient human languages, Persian has served not only as a means of communication but also as a cradle of thought, knowledge, and cultural system-building across the geographical expanses of Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and the Indian subcontinent. This article, from a scientific, historical, and civilizational perspective, examines the role of the Persian language in shaping the identity, intellectual, and political structures of Persian-speaking nations and its influence on global heritage.

1. Introduction

According to Edward Sapir, “Language is not merely a vehicle for communication, but a framework for thought.” Within this framework, Persian—one of the classical languages of civilization—has played a central role throughout the history and culture of Persian-speaking peoples. From pre-Achaemenid times to the present, Persian has continuously served as a medium for transmitting knowledge, literature, philosophy, mysticism, and intellectual systems across various fields.

2. The Supranational Role of Persian in the History of Civilization

2.1 From Cyrus the Great to the Present

The historical use of Persian as an administrative, literary, and cultural language dates back to the Achaemenid Empire (559 BCE). Cyrus the Great, often remembered as the founder of Iran's political and ethical identity, marks the beginning of the historical connection between the Persian language and the formation of state-civilization.

In later centuries, from the Sassanids to the Safavids, Persian became the official language of science, religion (within the framework of Iranian Islam), mysticism, and philosophy—spanning regions from Central Asia to the Indian subcontinent and the Caucasus.

2.2 The Cultural-Political Realm of the Persian Language

The Persian linguistic domain—whether as an administrative or cultural language—has historically encompassed regions including Afghanistan (Khorasan), Iran, Tajikistan, India, Pakistan, China (Xinjiang), Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Turkey, Russia, and countries in Central and Eastern Europe. In these territories, Persian has been more than a linguistic tool—it has been a foundational element of Islamic-Iranian civilizational identity.

3. Persian as a Platform of Knowledge in the Humanities and Natural Sciences

Over its 2,611-year journey, Persian has served as a scientific language and a medium for the transmission and production of knowledge in fields such as theology, theoretical mysticism, philosophy, literature, logic, medicine, chemistry, algebra, music, physics, astronomy, law, history, geography, social sciences, psychology, and political science.

Thinkers and authors such as Avicenna, Biruni, Razi, Rumi, Hafez, Ferdowsi, and Suhrawardi composed their works in Persian—transforming it into a global language capable of transmitting the spiritual and scientific traditions of the Islamic East across generations.

4. Linguistic Structure and Word Formation Capacity of Persian

From a structural linguistic standpoint, Persian boasts an exceptional ability for word formation and remarkable syntactic flexibility. Its ability to combine verbs and adjectives, create infinitives, and generate new compounds is among its unique features.

The capacity of Persian for word formation is estimated at over 225 million possible words—distinguishing it among Indo-European languages.

Example of dynamic syntactic structure:

“Dâshtam mi-raftam, didam, gereftam, neshastam, goftam, bezâr beporsam bebinam mi-âyad yâ nemi-âyad...”

This sentence illustrates temporal, causal, emphatic, and subjunctive functions all at once—something difficult to replicate in many other languages.

5. Persian as a Social and Spiritual Capital

In its modern sense, Persian is not only a means of communication but also a form of **social capital** that reflects the dignity, identity, and status of Persian-speaking individuals and communities. Much like oxygen, the Persian language is essential for the survival of the cultural identity of our people.

From a phenomenological perspective, Persian acts as a “second body” for Persian speakers—used not only for outward expression but for inner living and cultural self-awareness.

6. Persian and Political-Colonial Conflicts

Unfortunately, in recent centuries, Persian has been targeted by deliberate projects of elimination and de-Persianization.

In the 19th century, British colonialism undermined the civilizational ties between India and Iran by officially removing Persian from India’s administrative structure and replacing it with English.

In the 20th century, Soviet policies under Lenin and Stalin aimed to impose Russian and eliminate Persian in Central Asia—effects still visible in Bukhara and Samarkand.

In Afghanistan, from the era of Nader Khan to the present day, systematic political campaigns have worked against the Persian language—through non-Persian education policies, literary censorship, and marginalization of Persian-language media.

7. Conclusion

Persian is a treasure trove of meaning, thought, knowledge, history, and beauty. It is not merely a tool but a **civilizational asset**—neglecting it risks endangering the historical, spiritual, and cultural identity of Persian speakers. In a world where languages are considered capital, Persian stands as one of humanity’s greatest cultural riches.

As Auguste Comte said, language is a public wealth “that can be used by all without depletion, and collective use ensures its preservation.”

It is the duty of universities, cultural institutions, and Persian speakers around the world not only to preserve the language but to **continually produce knowledge and content in Persian**.

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