

## What a beauty you are, you are the town's ravishing doll.

### Lu'bat and the literal pages of Tehran "*Mussavar*"



Lu'bat Vālā was a poetess. Her poems were printed in magazines. Lu'bat had come back from France. She had finished her work on designs and tailoring garments and now returned to Tehran to set up a new fashion hall. She was friendly with a bright face, with eyes somewhat brighter and a smile brighter than them both.

Tehran was just gaining calmness from the street demonstrations, the newspapers and magazine were also concentrating on stories, fashion, and local news as a pose to political issues.

Lu'bat had a page of literature in Tehran "*Mussavar*" magazine. To have had a literature page in those days was considered a literal credibility. After the closure of "*Kāvian*" the literature page in "*Itila'at-i haftegi*" was managed by Mr. A. Partu A'zam, the literature page in "*Rushanfekr*" magazine was managed by Mr. F. Mushiri, the literature page in "*Sepid u Siyāh*" was managed by F. Kār and the literature page in "*Mussavar*" was managed by Lu'bat Vālā, the presence of a woman among the men was a huge issue. This had nothing to do with the fact that Lu'bat was the

sister of the chief editor of the same magazine. She was chosen for the post due to her abilities and talent. She maintained a proper balance in her literature page. She printed classical poetry from classical poets and at the same time encouraged the new poets and new poetry. Contrary to "*Kār*" who always printed his own poems in the magazine on weekly bases she hardly printed her own, very rarely, and only when she composed new poems were they printed.

When Lu'bat left Tehran for America, she left the magazine to Simin Behbahāni and she continued the job since. In the pages of Tehran "*Mussavar*" if a poem was printed it would be the sign of recognition for the poet; hence, all the new and young poets would give their work to Lu'bat to print in the magazine. Poetries from Sirius Niru, Rezā Sābeti, Muhammad Tāheri, Sirius Tāhbāz were printed on that page.

I had just given up poetry and was being occupied with sports magazines, in addition, I also wrote notes for “*Sepid u Siyah*” under the title of “*Rāndeh*” and under *nome de plume* “*Kārun*” which had made a bomb. ‘Ali Dashti didn’t mind to act as the main figure in the story. One of the stories became very popular, titled: “*Pusht-i Pardehā-yi Makhmali*”. Obviously, readers saw similarities between the female stare of the story and the beautiful theatre actress Shalā. Lu’bat, also had seen this story and had read it. She liked it. She wanted to see me and I went to see her it was there and then that our friendship began. Few months later a bomb exploded in the building, Mr. Musta’ān who was the back bone of the magazine left the publication.

It was during this period that Lu’bat placed her trust in me and asked me to work and write for the magazine, but, could she trust a 23 year old young man? Tehran “*Mussavar*” was in a way on its knees. They asked Sa’id Nafisi and all other known writers to write something, but it was not an easy task. It was Lu’bat that recommended me saying that this young man is the man for the job. Therefore, I started

the job by writing a love, social, and a historical story they proved successful and I became a permanent employee of the magazine. Today, when I look back at those days I realise that all my profession and success is owed to a woman who helped me and through my employment stood by me as a true friend.

### **Democracy within a reactionary magazine**

The understanding we had of the Tehran “*Mussavar*” magazine was the image of a reactionary magazine whose policies were in line with the government policies. However, in coming years we came to realise that the meaning of press democracy in this magazine exceeds all other.

The chief editor of Tehran “*Mussavar*” was ‘Abdul Allah Vālā, an honourable human being, he was likeable and a very helping individual. He didn’t act like the traditional managers. Perhaps, he was more like our Dr Mesbāh Zādeh. He encouraged novelty. He was a talkative person and the interesting point was that before any decision making took place he consulted with Lu’bat.



During my editing position in Tehran “*Mussavar*” I found some of my best friends. Rajā, Ra’in, Rushaniān, Shifteh, Mansour, Karimiān, Barzegar, Khursandi, Yegānegi, and so on... they were so many that I cannot remember. They all liked Lu’bat and respected her not because of her relationship with the chief editor, because of her personality and talent. Perhaps, it was due to this fact that when the opportunity arose they all approached and asked her to become the chief editor of the magazine. This was the first time that a woman would sit as a chief editor of a political magazine.

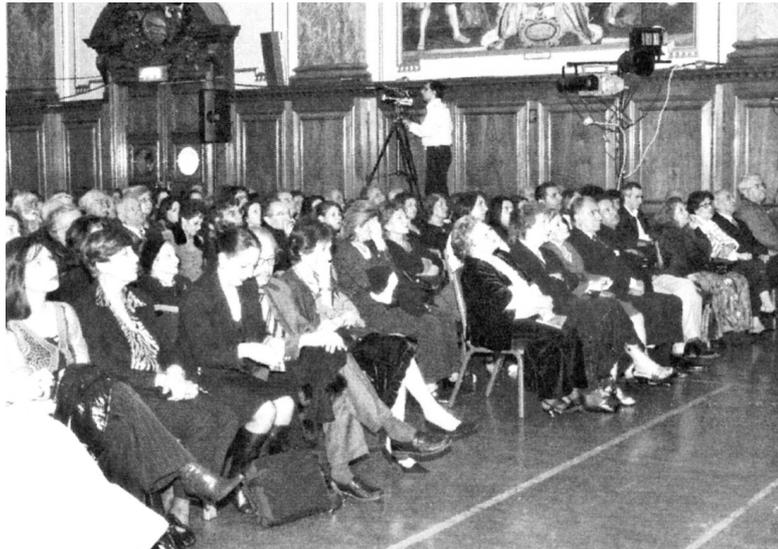
She accepted the position and became the chief editor of the magazine. Her ideas were fresh and new, her decisions would make a difference to the weekly sales of the magazine. Women don’t always get along well at work; however, the leadership of Lu’bat encouraged many women to take employment with the magazine. Mrs. Bāygan, Mrs. Sepeh Khādem, Simin Behbahāni, Bahrāmi, Gudarzi, Khātereh Parvāneh, and many more...

## To choose a name for the story, consulting Lu'bat

The first successful story written by myself in Tehran "*Mussavar*" was "The Blond of our town". The name was chosen by consulting with Lu'bat. In those days there was shortage of blonds in Tehran. The most popular blond was a woman who was mostly talked about and I chose her name as "Zari" on purpose so that it would be easy to remember. Everyone was keen to know who Zari the blond was?

One day Colonel Kiāni who was later promoted to the rank of General came to the office of Tehran "*Mussavar*" in the room Mr. Vālā, Rajā, Lu'bat and I were present. They closed the door and he tried by hook and the crook to find out who this Zari the blond was? Anyway, he read the story a few times and said: there are no clues! However, it seems that the star of the story is a famous lady. We looked at each other. Vālā said in a modest way: Colonel, who? And while stressed out he shouted: how do I know? Pari Ghafāri. I was pleased knowing that I have done my job right.

Months after the end of the story, one day a lady came to the office of



Tehran "*Mussavar*" to settle up and get paid, when she saw a young boy before her as the writer of the story she lost her temper and began using foul language. Iraj Dāvar Panāh calmed her down the same day and gave her a lift in his famous V.W. seemingly; she was paid; because we never heard from her again. Later, 'Abbas Shabāviz made a film titled "The Blond of our town" and this lady was the star in that film, a blond lady whose hair is now silver.

## The lights and shades of the celebration night

### Lu'bat's credibility in the world of writings

Dr Mesbāh Zādeh, the owner of Keyhan Empire used to say to us:

Journalists, usually gain their reputations by working in a reputable publishing company; however, this can be other way around too. You must try to be smart, a good journalist, and above all a decent human being. Only then you would bring credibility to this publication. Lu'bat falls into this category. Her presence brings credibility to wherever she goes.

### The admirers were left behind closed doors

Last Sunday around 1000 people went to the celebration event held in Chelsea Town Hall for Lu'bat Vālā's event; however, only 700 hundred could get in and the remaining 300 hundred were left behind due to the shortage of seats. The police had to get involved due to the pressure by the admirers

who wanted to get in. A few of our colleagues were also among those left behinds. Alas! The coordinators should have made exceptions and made some special reservations for Keyhan newspaper journalists. Tufiq, the programme manager whose efforts for the past six months was the very foundation of this event, hoped that the speeches would take no longer than three hours; however, that wasn't the case and the speeches, jokes, and the memories took much longer. After all, whatever was said and read was interesting.

**600 hours of work  
100 hours of phone calls**

The preparations for this programme took over six months. Tufiq Mumtāz and few others were involved in four corners of the globe to contact artists and singers connected to this programme. Some had to travel to London, and some were set to send visual messages. In the United States 'Asal Pahlevān and Farāmarz Khudāyāri were gathering the messages. Sirus Malakuti also had this responsibility in Paris. After all, what turned all these efforts into reality was the financial support of the Toos Foundation and its founder Mrs. Jamileh Kharrazi. To coordinate and setup this

programme a total of 600 hours of work was involved, and some 100 hundred hours of telephone conversations took place. Three groups were filming the event and seven technicians were handling the technical sides of the programme and an active team was responsible for the transportation of the guests, taking them to their hotels and bringing them to the Hall.

**'Atā, a God's gift to the grandmother**

Lu'bat has a special love for her grand son 'Atā, who is a professional piano player. As his mother says: 'Atā has been brought up by Lu'bat, they are very dependant on one another, 'Atā announced at the beginning of the programme: this piece that is called "Ufuq-i Nu" I have composed for my grandmother. And Lu'bat has also composed a poem for her grand son in her last collection titled: "Par Gushudanhā be Havā-yi Parvāz".

**To my talented grand-son "Atā"**

*I can see:*

*When your green voice  
Echoes in every corner of  
the house  
The Sun gets filled with  
lyrics  
The birds of the garden*

*Start whirling dance  
And the wave of the buds  
Together with the breeze,  
begin to dance*

*And the autumn of my  
soul, borrows a thousand  
Springs from the light of  
your songs*

*And my wintery eyes  
stare at the wedding  
place of the roots and the  
soil  
So that they can witness;*

*The glory of love,  
flourishing of hope,  
fruitfulness of unity,  
and the growth of a  
different tomorrow*

*I can see:*

*The unwritten poems of  
my soul*

*You shall write.  
You shall sing.*

*The multitude birds of  
my imaginations  
From the loneliness of  
the cage,  
From the thorny borders  
of explosions  
You shall free.*

*You shall shout my  
unsaid discourse.*

*You shall, with a fiery  
voice a better world,  
a world filled with love  
and truth, establish.*

*And with the melody of  
compassion, and the tales  
of kindness,*

*You shall rebuild the retarded periods of my ruined mind.*

**The definition of a mother in law in the dictionary of the son in law**

Dr. Bizhan Shafiqiān, Lu'bat's son in law said: Lu'bat was silent for 20 years; because, she looked after her old mother. He said if all mother in laws were like Lu'bat, the word mother in law would find a different meaning in our minds. He talked about Lu'bat's peaceful soul and mentality and at the same time told a memory.

**...My Lu'bat ...My Simin**

Lu'bat Vālā and Simin Behbahāni have a special friendship. And they call each other "my Lu'bat" and "my Simin". Following Simin's speeches that night, Lu'bat read 6 couplets for Simin which she had composed specially for her. One of them is this:

*Simin! You are the pride and joy of utterance  
You are the freest speakers of the homeland  
With all these fame, glory and titles  
You are humble, and my loyal friend*

During the event, various interview tapes recorded during 1962-1972 in radio Iran were played.

Shushā Gāpi (Shamsi 'Asār) the daughter of professor Muhammad Kāzem 'Asār one of the contemporary and a most distinguished theologian and a man of letters at the University of Tehran "in the old days" who now for many years lives in London and has published a few valuable books in English about Iran, spoke of the high school days and her friendship with Lu'bat. She said: we used to read her poems at school. She finally, read a poem of Lu'bat which was translated by Shivā into English.

**The scattered papers**

At that night of the celebration Lu'bat talked about her family pictures and the way they were scattered and plundered by the authorities' right after the Islamic revolution. She talked about how they were being thrown into the rubbish bin while her niece rescued some of them and what has survived today is what they could save at that time. Lu'bat is a woman of many talents. She is a good writer, poetess, tailor, and a designer. She started to study again at Melbourne University right after the revolution

and began the student life once again at the age of fifty.

**The flower from friends**

On the night of the event some of the admirers and friends who were not able to attend, sent baskets of flowers as tokens of appreciations. Among those baskets of flowers there was one sent by Mrs. Marziyyeh the prominent Iranian singer from Paris, and one from Mrs. Ta'idi and her husband Behnezhād.

On Saturday night at a concert held by Gulpā, once again Lu'bat was commemorated and once the audience realised that she was at the concert they gave her another warm reception. Gulpā who had received a basket of flowers from some of his fans gave the basket to Lu'bat.

The above picture shows



Mrs. Jamileh Kharrazi the founder of the Toos Foundation during her speech.