

Dr. Alavipanah was a member of the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils and has worked as coordinator of ITPS in Near East and North Africa (NENA) Region. Based on his suggestion in the Pillar II Compilation Group, (the Plan of Action for the Pillar Two, the Global Soil Partnership) which explores the issues of public awareness regarding soils, the importance of soil in culture and literature has been mentioned as one of the parts of this report, and two quatrains of Khayyam are included in the Pillar 2 report. These proposals were approved and the final report after being approved by the United Nations in 2015 was communicated to members.

*“Every unique herb vegetated next to a stream  
is as if grown from the lip of an angelical beauty  
don’t stampede (degrade) that herb  
because it is vegetated from the soil of a beauty whose face is like a  
tulip”*

**(Khayyam Neyshabouri)**

*Look how the morning breeze has helped the rosebud bloom  
And how at the sight of the rose the nightingale swoons  
Come sit in the shade of the rosebush for such a rose  
Has often grown out of the soil to fall dawn again*

**Khayyam Neyshabouri**

Following this report, to raise public awareness about global soil problems, Dr. Alavipanah proposed to set up a working group to raise public awareness and a working group entitled

"Cultural pattern of soil understanding" in 2017 has been established, he will be the founder of this team, along with a team of 36 earth scientist experts.

*Patrones culturales que inciden en la comprensión del suelo*

*Padrões culturais presentes na compreensão sobre o solo*

*Modèles culturels de la compréhension du sol*

*Культурные традиции для понимания почв*

*Kulturelle Muster im Bodenverständnis*

*Cultural patterns of soil understanding*

**土壤理解の文化的パターン (土壤理解の文化様式)**

الگوهای فرهنگی برای درک خاک

النمط الثقافي لفهم التربة

**토양의 문화적 이해**

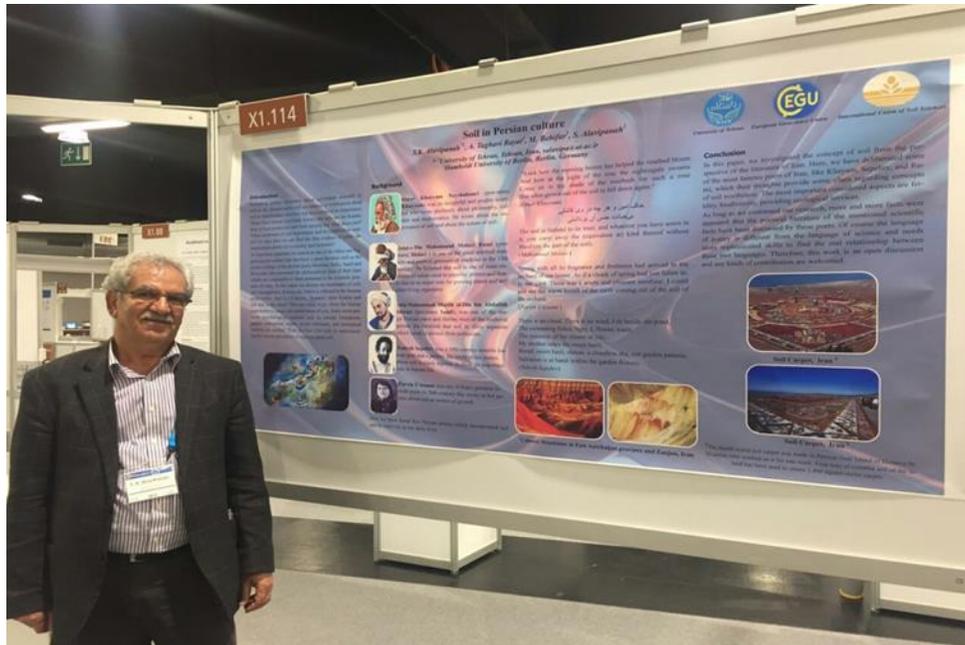


International Union  
of Soil Sciences

The International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS & FAO), founded in 1924, focuses on major issues of soil around the world. The Union brings together Scientists all around the world and holds important annual meetings. In fact, it is the magazine of the International Soil Association and FAO, which is specialized in scientific discussions and public awareness about the role, significance and status of the soil.

In the follow-up to this, two papers with content related to this activity are presented at the two major international conferences AGU and EGU.

The first he presented an article entitled "A Brief History of Fire, Heat and Their Manifestations in Remote Sensing" at the AGU (San Francisco, 2015) conference (American Geophysical Union). The article examines the importance of fire and shared views of the past generation with scientific facts in the present age regarding fire.



Then, an article entitled "Soil in Persian Culture" presented at the European Geosciences Union General Assembly (EGU) International Conference (2017). In this paper, the topic of soil in Iranian culture, its significance and its historical status has been investigated. Also, the evidence of the status and importance of soil in the Persian from previous centuries to the present has been analyzed and finally, the need for public awareness of the role of soil is mentioned.



After greeting the paper presented at the EGU conference, a request for publication of it was presented in the IUSS newsletter, and therefore a summary of this article was published in Newsletter 6, July 2017, which was fully printed and the first page of the newsletter is dedicated.





ARTICLES

## Soil in Persian culture

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**Introduction:** Increasing public awareness about soil-related outreach involves the dissemination and acceptance of information about soil to stakeholders who have not been aware of its importance. These days almost everybody knows that soils are the foundation of food production and food security but, what about past? When awareness of soil importance and its conservation started? At what time we can find the first evidence of public announcement about soil in history and literatures? To find these questions we search in one of the oldest and biggest ancient culture Iran that have great ancient history and rich literature such as the poetic writings of the old poets Mowlana, Hafez, Saadi and Khayyam who presented the philosophical ideas of their time which are comparable to ideas presented in the scientific journals of today. The issues related to soil like the importance of soil, soil management, farming etc., are discussed in the Old Iranian traditions and literary works. Soil is a Complex, Dynamic, Open System and life also is the same! There are many ways, where the human contributes to usage and conservation of soils. Some more pertinent psychological research such as concept formations, graphic perception, expert, novice difference, and perceptual learning are needed.



**Background:** On the basis of evidences and texts remained from ancient Iran, Persians were believed that world created from four fundamental elements, which soil is one of them. In old literary texts soil is called mādar (mother) and godly element. As one of the four elements, soil is considered to be "maintainer of the nature" (dāragxēm) of the heavenly glory (xavarrah). Moreover in creation of the material world in seven chronological stages, the earth/soil (zamiǧ), is the third one. As a holy creation, it is belongs to the "Bounteous Devotion." The holiness of soil in ancient Iran was as much so that people were not allowed to bury corpse, which regarded to be greatly polluted.

**Conclusion:** Investigation and study of old Iranian people' history and literature confirm their awareness and knowledge on several issues relating to the concept of soil. The holiness of soil to old Iranians caused them to reverence and protect it from pollution. It is a noticeable issue since it is regarded by modern humans just from some decades ago. Moreover, Ancient Iranian rightly called soil "mother" and as we know nowadays it is the foundation of food production and food security, supplying plants with nutrients, water and supports for their roots, etc. Furthermore here, we have deliberated some of the most famous poets of Iran, like Khayam, Sepehry, and Rumi, which their thoughts provide some clues regarding concepts of soil worthiness. The most important considered aspects are fertility, biodiversity, providing ecological services. As long as we continued our research, more and more facts were appeared that the poetical literature of the mentioned scientific facts have been discussed by these poets. Of course the language of poetry is different from the language of science and needs more sophisticated skills to find the real relationship between these two languages. Therefore, this work is an open discussion and any kinds of contribution are welcomed.

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The fourth world soil carpet was made in Persian Gulf Island of Hormoz by 30 artists who worked on it for one week. Four tons of colorful soil of the island (Ref: IRNA)

بی‌خیانت جنس آن برداشتی

خاک امین و هر چه در وی کاشتی

*The soil is faithful to its trust, and whatever you have sown in it, you carry away the (equivalent in) kind thereof without fraud (on the part of the soil)*

( Mohammad Molavi)

This one is good (fertile) soil and that one brackish and bad; this one is a fair angel and that one a devil and wild beast.

این زمین پاک و آن شوره ست و بد \*\* این فرشته‌ی پاک و آن دیو است و دد

If both resemble each other in aspect, it may well be (so): bitter water and sweet water have (the same) clearness.

هر دو صورت گر بهم ماند رواست \*\* آب تلخ و آب شیرین را صفاست

Who knows (the difference) except a man possessed of (spiritual) taste? Find (him): he knows the sweet water from the brine.

جز که صاحب ذوق کی شناسد بیاب \*\* او شناسد آب خوش از شوره آب

The sunbeams of Wisdom struck on soil and clay, so that the earth became receptive of the seed.

پرتو دانش زده بر آب و طین \*\* تا شده دانه پذیرنده‌ی زمین