addition to Pa’iz dar Zendan (Autumn in Prison), Zendegi Miguyad … (Life Says …) and Duzakh Amma Sard (Hell Yet Cold).

17 For the text of the poem see Dar Hayat-e Kuchek-e Pa’iz dar Zendan, pp. 71–83.

18 For the text of the poem see Dar Hayat-e Kuchek-e Pa’iz dar Zendan, pp. 84–88.

19 Mehdi Akhavan Saless, To Ra Ay Kohan Bum o Bar Dust Daram. I owe the information on this book to Majid Roshangar, founder of Morvarid Publishing House and a longtime friend of Akhavan.

Chapter 8 – A Storyteller and His Times

1 Almost all Persian-language newspapers published in the US have given extensive coverage to the unfolding event. However, Khavaran, a weekly newspaper published in San Francisco, has been exemplary in its precise and comprehensive treatment. In this essay all reports of events ensuing from Sirjani’s arrest come from Khavaran unless otherwise indicated.


3 Ibid., pp. 8–27.


5 These are Suz o Saz [Burning and Bearing], 1951; Akherin Shararehha [The Last Sparks], 1953; Afsanehha, Dastan-e Manzum [Fables: A Verse Story], 1963; Khakestar [The Ashes], 1964; and Zir-e Khakestar [Under the Ashes], 1965.


10 On the details, scope, and effects of the ban see Guardians of Thought: Limits


13 I have not seen this work, but Sirjani refers to it in his letter to Khameneh’i.


15 ‘Ali-Akbar Sa’idi-Sirjani, ed. & comm., Bichareh Esfandiar, Bethesda, MD., Iranbooks, 1992. The book, a retelling of an episode from the Shahnameh, was offered as a gift to those who would contribute at least fifty dollars to a fund to pay back the publishers in Iran affected by the ban on Sirjani’s works.

16 ‘Ali-Akbar Sa’idi-Sirjani, letter to “Your Excellency Mr. Khameneh’i,” undated xerox copy. In all likelihood, the letter was written late in 1990.


18 Ibid., p. 10.