Without the Window, It's Not Worthwhile

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Without the window it's not worthwhile. To think of the exorbitant rates of plane tickets, how soon the journey is over, clearly the most valuable item up for grabs is the view. Consequently, it is entirely unsatisfactory to slum it in the aisle or worse, squashed between unwelcome strangers in the middle seat, especially when the price is the same. Those other seats are simply a rip off for people who know no better, who cannot have enjoyed a window seat previously. Without a window seat it's not worth flying. It's perfectly reasonable not to board the plane.

These are not my words. While I tend to prefer the window I would not refuse to fly; nor would I expend so many words explaining my preference. For Iqbal, silence was a negative waiting to be filled. His tips and stories came like a flash flood, bowled you over with barely time to recover before the next flood began.

Farsi is a language of exquisite beauty. It's the language of great literature, of poets like Hafez and Saadi and simply to hear the language spoken is like a melody from heaven. The phrases used even for everyday speech are poetic and enlightening. Of course Iqbal couldn't appreciate the entirety of it, but from his Urdu he could glean enough. He was Pakistani and it was a dreadful loss for my Australian friend Lachlan and me to be in Iran surrounded by the sweetest language unable to comprehend a single word.

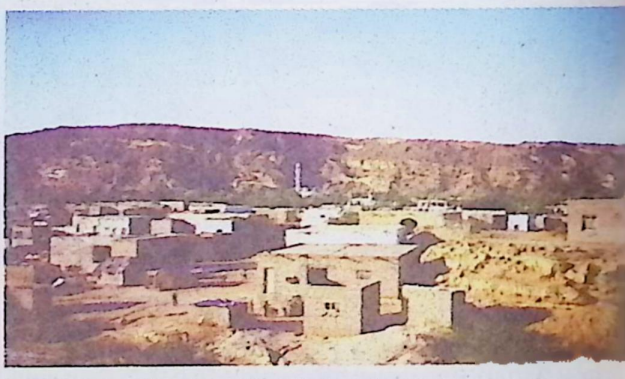
Farsi is beautiful. I would say we might have told Iqbal we had Farsi lessons and were more than beginners, but it's not easy to spit into a raging torrent. And yet, Iqbal was very likeable.

We were on the same flight from Bandar Abbas to Chah Bahar in eastern Iran, in Iran's Baluchestan. Flights were very cheap in Iran with one way fares as low as ten dollars due to the appalling, for the Iranians, exchange rate. I don't think we met on the plane, as Iqbal found the window seat in front of mine – but as we needed transport from the airport into Chah Bahar town, we shared a taxi.

It's unacceptable to use somebody else's bathroom. If one needs to use the bathroom they should certainly do it before leaving home, before arriving at another person's home as a valued guest. Children should be instructed same. There is nothing worse than visiting another man's bathroom – it will leave the host wondering if it was them you came to see or if you only came to use the plumbing.



A bazaar scene in eastern Iran.



The village of Tiss, near Chah Bahar airport.

No comment from me.

Chah Bahar has its Baluchi ways that were significantly different to most of Iran. Baluchis were mostly Sunni and their clothes harked more to the subcontinent than to the country's west. The only difficulty, common to all port cities in Iran, hotels for foreigners were expensive. As Iqbal really was a nice guy, the three of us agreed to share a room, with two single beds and a mat on the floor for me, in between.

It was in that small period between the turning off the light and the sleep arriving, with the very